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BDB ACHIEVES LEVEL 1 NCEG CERTIFICATION

The Business Development Board of Palm Beach County has achieved a Level 1 program certification from the National Center for Economic Gardening (NCEG). The BDB is an Entrepreneurial Support Organization for GrowFL, the Florida Economic Gardening Institute at the University of Central Florida.

Often referred to as a “grow from within” approach, economic gardening helps existing companies grow larger – providing a more balanced approach to economic development. To achieve a Level 1 certification from NCEG, an organization must exhibit a general interest in the local entrepreneurial movement and have publicly stated support for the “growth from within” rationale for economic development.

Level 1 programs support the movement and philosophy of economic gardening but do not have a local strategic research team in place. The BDB works in conjunction with GrowFL, the state’s designated Economic Gardening initiative and the only Level 3 certified organization in Florida. As part of this initiative, GrowFL, who receives programmatic support from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, provides strategic research to CEOs of second-stage companies by employing experts in market research, geographic information systems, search engine optimization and social media marketing.

“At GrowFL, we put the CEO in the center of everything we do. By providing strategic research, CEO Roundtables and CEO Forums to our clients, we offer a tremendous asset to the CEO that would typically come at a very high cost to them. Being certified at Level 3 provides the authenticity needed to work closely with CEOs and give them the confidence in us that is needed in order to truly support them in their growth,” says Tom O’Neal, Executive Director of GrowFL and Associate Vice President at UCF.

“Working with the Statewide Entrepreneurial Support Organizations, now all at Level 1 certification, will benefit the CEOs doing business in those regions by bringing a new level of understanding to the concept of Economic Gardening.”

“Economic gardening in a community leads to economic prosperity and employment,” said Kelly Smallridge, President and CEO of the Business Development Board of Palm Beach County. “It is this tailored, hands-on program that supports the transformation of entrepreneurs into successful enterprises.”

About GrowFL:

Economic gardening is a philosophy that embraces strategies to grow existing businesses in a community, region or state and is the basis for the entrepreneurship programs at the Florida Economic Gardening Institute (GrowFL). Initially created in 2009 as a pilot program, GrowFL, at the University of Central Florida, is now a critical component to Florida’s entrepreneurial ecosystem and the state’s overall economic development strategy. GrowFL focuses its efforts on initiatives that strengthen the service offerings of entrepreneurial support organizations throughout Florida and by delivering critical research and strategy support to help second-stage growth entrepreneurs prosper. GrowFL has helped more than 400 companies create more than 1,400 new jobs statewide since 2009. Website: growfl.com.

About the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity:

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity combines the state’s economic, workforce and community development efforts. This new approach helps expedite economic development projects to fuel job creation in competitive communities. For more information, including valuable resources for employers and job seekers, please visit floridajobs.org.

About the Edward Lowe Foundation:

Hosted by the Edward Lowe Foundation, the National Center for Economic Gardening (NCEG) delivers strategic research services and maintains national standards for state and regional economic gardening networks. To learn more about economic gardening, visit the Edward Lowe Foundation’s website and click on “Tools & Programs”. edwardlowe.org

About the BDB:

The Business Development Board of Palm Beach County is the official public/private economic development organization for Palm Beach County and Enterprise Florida. Founded in 1982 as a not-for-profit corporation, our primary purpose is to attract and retain new industry, business investment, high quality jobs and workforce development through corporate relocations, expansions and international trade. During the past five years, the BDB has assisted companies that have created more than 7,900 direct jobs with average salaries greater than \$55,400, resulting in more than \$400 million in capital investment to Palm Beach County and an economic impact that exceeds \$1.8 billion. Additional information can be found at the BDB’s Web site, BDB.org.

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