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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GAINESVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EARNS 5-STAR ACCREDITATION FROM U.S. CHAMBER

GAINESVILLE, Fla. – At the Chamber Lunch on June 16, the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce announced to its membership that the United States Chamber of Commerce had awarded the organization with 5-Star Accreditation for its sound policies, effective organizational procedures, and positive impact on the community.

Of the 6,936 chambers in the United States, 283 are Accredited and only 55 are 5-Star. This places the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce in the top 1% of all chambers in the U.S.

“It is an honor to be recognized as one of the elite chambers in the country,” said Brent Christensen, president and CEO of the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce. “This 5-Star designation would not be possible without the support of our membership, volunteers, and community.”

A representative from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce was in attendance to present the award to the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, and membership.

“The Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce has earned this award based on leadership, dedication, and an outstanding contribution to the local community,” said Debbie Carrothers, southeastern regional manager for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Accreditation is the only national program that recognizes chambers for their effective organizational procedures and community involvement. In order to receive Accreditation, a chamber must meet minimum standards in their operations and programs, including areas of governance, government affairs, and technology. This extensive self-review can take upwards of six months to complete.

“While the application process itself took six to eight months to complete, it has taken more than five years to build this Chamber to a 5-Star level,” said Sonia Douglas, vice president and COO of the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce. “A sharp focus on the needs of businesses, the flexibility to meet those needs, and a drive to help our members excel – that is the Chamber’s ultimate mission and the reason we can say with pride that we are now in the top 1% of chambers in the nation!”

Local chambers are rated Accredited, 3-Stars, 4-Stars, or 5-Stars. State chambers are recognized as either Accredited State Chamber or Accredited State Chamber with Distinction. The final determination is made by the Accrediting Board, a committee of U.S. Chamber board members.

“Accreditation recognizes chambers for their high standards of practice, full accountability to members, and steadfast commitment to community,” said Thomas J. Donohue, president and

CEO, U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “We applaud these organizations for advancing these principles of free enterprise.”

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world’s largest business federation, representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region.

The Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization of more than 1,400 members, representing 75,000 employees — more than 50 percent of the workforce of Alachua County. It has served as the area’s premier business organization and the voice of business in Gainesville/Alachua County since 1924.

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