

For Immediate Release

Contact: Val Walton

205.943.4715 | vwalton@edpa.org

EDPA Announces the 2017 Innovation Awards Winners

Winners to be celebrated on Aug. 23 at the “imerge” EDPA 2017 Innovation Awards program

Birmingham, AL, July 24, 2017 - The Economic Development Partnership of Alabama announces today the winners of the “imerge” EDPA 2017 Innovation Awards. The winners will be honored during an Oscars-style celebration on Aug. 23 at the Alabama Theatre.

“The EDPA Innovation Awards showcases the most innovative companies in our state,” said EDPA President Steve Spencer. “The winners, and for that matter all of the nominees, are leaders in their spaces, driving forward Alabama’s innovation economy.”

The 2017 EDPA Innovation Award winners are:

- **Quality Filters**, Outstanding Achievement in Innovative Manufacturing (Robertsdale) in recognition for its advanced manufacturing methods and lean business processes in cutting the lead time for filter deliveries from three to four weeks to averaging five days or less.
- **ZeroRPM**, Corporate Innovator of the Year (small company, 1-50 employees) (Cullman) in recognition for its battery-powered ZeroRPM Idle Mitigation System that allows a vehicle to idle without running the engine.
- **Diatherix**, Corporate Innovator of the Year (large company, 50+ employees) (Huntsville) in recognition for its groundbreaking pathogen detection technology, which enables healthcare providers to more accurately determine the cause of an infection and determine multiple infection sources.

Also, to be honored at the event is the **Lifetime Achievement in Innovation recipient, Jim Hudson**, co-founder of the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology in Huntsville.

A panel of judges, under the chairmanship of ADTRAN CEO Tom Stanton, chose the winners from a pool of **88** nominations submitted by the public from across the state.

The awards, which were started in 2014, annually puts a spotlight on thought leadership, innovation and creativity in Alabama. The EDPA 2017 Innovation Awards is part of “imerge,” an event which represents the next generation of the Alabama Innovation and Entrepreneurship Conference held for the past six years.

[Thomas L. Friedman](#) is the keynote speaker before the innovation awards. Friedman is a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist and author of six bestselling books, including “Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist’s Guide to Thriving in the Age of Acceleration.”

Friedman will speak at 4 p.m. and a networking reception follows at 5 p.m. The “imerge” EDPA 2017 Innovation Awards celebration is at 6 p.m. The annual awards highlight companies of all sizes and innovators who strengthen Alabama’s economy, generate jobs and develop new ideas. The “imerge” event will continue into the evening with “Celebrate Imagination,” beginning at 7 p.m., which offers a taste of Alabama, with delicious food, and live music and entertainment “after parties.”

For a complete agenda and to buy tickets, visit alabamalaunchpad.com/imerge.

“This will be a wonderful night celebrating the incredible ideas, imagination and ingenuity in the state,” said EDPA Vice President Angela Wier. “Congratulations to all the 2017 winners.”

In addition to Stanton, the 2017 judges are: Ralph Hargrove, president and CEO of Hargrove Engineers + Constructors; Tharon Honeycutt, founder and president, MSB Analytics; Gene Moorhead, professional EOS Implementer; Peggy Sutton, founder and president of To Your Health Sprouted Flour Co.; and Neill Wright, executive vice President of Liberty Bank.

About the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama (EDPA): Now in its 26th year, the non-profit Partnership represents the private sector’s contribution to economic development in Alabama. EDPA is supported by more than 60 partners from across the state and works to attract, retain and grow jobs in Alabama, while also encouraging innovation through its Alabama Launchpad program.

###