

**For Immediate Release**

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## **2016 Alabama Innovation Awards Finalists Announced**

### ***Winners to be celebrated at the annual Alabama Innovation and Entrepreneurship Conference***

Birmingham, Ala., April 25 -- The Economic Development Partnership of Alabama announces the 11 finalists for the 2016 Alabama Innovation Awards, the winners of which will be celebrated at the Sixth Annual Alabama Innovation and Entrepreneurship Conference in Birmingham.

Aiming to recognize Alabama's top innovation achievements, a panel of judges, under the chairmanship of ADTRAN CEO Tom Stanton of Huntsville, will next choose the five category winners.

"We are impressed with the caliber of nominations we received," said Angela Wier, EDPA vice president. "We thank everyone who took the time to submit nominations."

The awards, which started in 2014, are a way to recognize and celebrate the companies and individuals leading innovation across the state, said EDPA Research & Grants Analyst Mary Hope Garmon, who organizes the annual awards.

"The Alabama Innovation Awards show that there is innovation going on all around the state," Garmon said. "The awards are a wonderful way for Alabama to come together and celebrate innovation-based economic development achievements."

The 11 finalists for 2016 are:

#### **Corporate Innovator of the Year (small company, 1-50 employees)**

- 3-GIS, Decatur
- IllumiCare, Birmingham
- Open Frame LLC, Mobile
- PublicVine, Florence

#### **Corporate Innovator of the Year (large company, 50+ employees)**

- CFD Research Corporation (CFDRC), Huntsville
- Command Alkon, Inc., Birmingham
- Daxko, Birmingham

#### **Outstanding Achievement in Innovative Manufacturing**

- Advanced Aerospace Tooling, Inc., Huntsville
- Horizon Shipbuilding, Bayou La Batre

#### Outstanding Public-Private Partnership for Innovation

- HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology and iCubate, Inc., Huntsville
- University of Alabama in Huntsville, U.S. Space and Rocket Center, NASA, and Teledyne Brown Engineering, Huntsville

Last year, winners were celebrated in five category winners.

“We believe that innovation is a powerful engine that can drive a region’s economy,” Wier said. “The awards have helped us find stories that validate our belief that innovation can occur anywhere.”

In addition to Stanton, the 2016 judges are: Billy Harbert, CEO of BL Harbert International; Ralph Hargrove, president and CEO of Hargrove Engineers + Constructors; Harris Morrisette, president of China Doll Rice & Dixie Lily; Peggy Sutton, founder and president of To Your Health Sprouted Flour Co.; and Neill Wright, executive vice President of Liberty Bank.

Those serving on the 2016 Validation Committee are:

- Cecil Bostany, Warren Averett
- Tina Graham, Greenway Health
- Bob Hergenrother, SouthernResearch
- Dennis Hinton, Bonaventure Capital
- Kathryn Kendrick, YWCA Central Alabama

***About the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama:*** Now in its 26th year, the non-profit Partnership represents the private sector’s contribution to economic development in Alabama. Fully funded by more than 70 leading companies invested in the state’s long-term economic success, EDPA provides leadership and services that recruit new businesses to the state, retain existing businesses and renew Alabama’s economy by encouraging innovation both within existing industries and through the commercialization of new technologies.

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***About Alabama Launchpad:*** Celebrating its 10-year anniversary, Alabama Launchpad, a program of EDPA, has helped high growth companies start, stay and grow in Alabama while supporting, advocating and recognizing entrepreneurship statewide.

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