

Highlights of Economic and Business Growth in the Tampa Bay Region (News Briefs)

TAMPA BAY, Fla., July 8, 2004/PRNewswire/ -- Here are some news briefs concerning the economic and business growth in the Tampa Bay Region from the Tampa Bay Partnership:

Tampa Bay Leads Florida in Job Growth

The Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater area created over 22,000 jobs in May 2004, ranking the area #1 in Florida and among the best in the nation for job growth. Job gains in the region were largely in professional and business services. Florida is creating jobs faster than any other state in the nation, adding 171,800 jobs from May 2003 to May 2004. For more information about business growth opportunities in Tampa Bay, contact Jennifer Taylor at the Tampa Bay Partnership at 813-878-2208 or visit www.TampaBay.org.

Moffitt Biomarker Study a Potential Breakthrough in Screening for Ovarian Cancer

Scientists may be a step closer to finding an accurate blood test for early ovarian cancer, according to a new study released by the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute. The study of hundreds of women showing that lysophospholipids are present in high levels in women with ovarian cancer but low in healthy women – a major finding – could lead to a simple blood test for ovarian cancer. Moffitt researcher and principal study author Rebecca Sutphen, M.D. said the findings could be important in using early detection to fight ovarian cancer which fatally strikes about 14,300 American women each year. For more information, call (813) 632-1478 or E-mail mediarelations@moffitt.usf.edu.

Pinnacle Financial Corporation Opens New Mortgage Origination Center in Tampa

Pinnacle Financial Corporation has opened a new mortgage origination center in Tampa creating 160 jobs that will pay an average of \$64,000 a year. The company invested \$3.5 million in its new facility which occupies 25,000 square feet of leased space near Tampa International Airport. Pinnacle Financial, headquartered in Orlando and one of the East Coast's largest independently-owned mortgage lenders, funded over \$3 billion in residential mortgages last year and plans to close \$4.4 billion in 2004. Contact Jim Gallant at 888-268-0327 or E-mail at jgallant@pinnaclefinancial.com.

Sarasota, Polk Are Top-10 Digital Counties

A recent survey named Sarasota and Polk counties among the top-10 most technologically advanced, cutting-edge county governments in the United States. The survey, which was conducted by the Center for Digital Government and the National Association of Counties, examined how county governments are evolving in their use of information technology (IT) to deliver services to their citizens, and grouped counties by population categories. Sarasota and Polk ranked in the 250,000 – 499,999 category. For more information about Sarasota County, visit www.co.sarasota.fl.us or Polk County at www.polk-county.net.

Tampa Bay Partners with Governor's Team Florida Mission to Canada

A recent Foreign Direct Investment Study by the Tampa Bay Partnership revealed that 25 percent of foreign owned firms with a presence in Tampa Bay were Canadian. To foster the growing economic and investment ties between Canada and Tampa Bay, the Tampa Bay Partnership is participating in the Governor's Team Florida-Canada Trade Mission, July 26 – 28, 2004. The three-day mission will visit Ottawa and Montreal. For more information on the Foreign Direct Investment Research or investment opportunities in the Tampa Bay region, contact Chris Steinocher at 813-878-2208 or E-mail at info@tampabay.org.

WestJet Announces Non-Stop Service between Toronto and Tampa Bay

In response to growing consumer demand, WestJet announced the addition of international service between Toronto and Tampa Bay beginning in fall 2004 with four flights weekly between Toronto International Airport and Tampa International Airport. WestJet is the most successful low-cost carrier in Canadian history, and in 2000 was the second most profitable airline in North America, just after Southwest Airlines. WestJet is publicly traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange under the symbol WJA. For more information, contact Siobhan Vinish at 403-444-2615 or online at www.westjet.com.

Doyen Merger with J-Pac to Form Medipharm Manufacturing Group

Doyen Medipharm, a U.S. and U.K. based manufacturer of medical manufacturing and packaging machinery with operations in Lakeland, Florida, and J-Pac, a New Hampshire based medical contract manufacturer, announce the merger of the two companies under a new parent known as the Medipharm Manufacturing Group. The combined group will now offer a "continuum of service" starting with package design and product prototyping, leading to full device contract manufacturing and packaging for clinical trials through full scale production. Doyen's Lakeland facility houses both packaging machine building operations and the Florida contract packaging services divisions. The two firms will continue as autonomous divisions and will trade as separate entities within the new group structure. For further information, contact Ray Johnson, Doyen Division, at 863-683-6335 or visit www.DoyenMedipharm.com.

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