Florida Companies to Watch 2011: Company Profiles

It’s About their Day in the Sun.
It’s About the Power of Growing Your Own.

2011 Inaugural Class

Florida Companies To Watch is a unique awards program presented by GrowFL, the Florida Economic Gardening Institute at the University of Central Florida and ACG Florida, in association with the Edward Lowe Foundation.

The Florida Companies to Watch Awards Celebrate Dynamic, High-Growth Entrepreneurs Across the State of Florida Who Own and Operate Growing Second-Stage Companies. They are Making a Difference in Their Communities, Their Industries and Their Economy.

www.floridacompaniestowatch.org

2011 Sponsors

Nominate Next Year’s Class!

Governor’s Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

Founding/Title Sponsor:

Official Publication of Florida Companies to Watch
Celebrating Second-Stage Entrepreneurs

TABLE OF CONTENTS
Chris Hart Director, Governor’s Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development.....2
FEDC Congratulates Florida Companies to Watch Winners!..............................................4
Big Rock Valley, a unique environment for entrepreneurs...................................................6
Darlene Lowe Chairman, Edward Lowe Foundation.........................................................8
Event Sponsors..................................................................................................................8
2011 Companies to Watch: Economic Impact...............................................................10
Building Florida’s Growth Industries..............................................................................11
Final Round Selection Judges..................................................................................13

Florida Companies to Watch 16-41

A.E. Findings & Mfg. Corporation, Inc.................................................................17
Aerostar Environmental Services, Inc.................................................................17
Airon Corporation.........................................................................................18
Aimee, Inc.........................................................................................................18
Amede Partners.........................................................................................19
Aqua Naturals............................................................................................19
atLarg, Inc....................................................................................................20
Avalon Technologies Corporation.................................................................20
B3 Solutions, LLC....................................................................................21
Baili Poonian..............................................................................................21
Bil Wizards.................................................................................................22
Blue Stream Couriers ............................................................................23
Carte Health..............................................................................................23
Compass Solar Energy.............................................................................23
Cocoa Trace and Tactical Supply, Inc..........................................................24
E3 Spark Plug ..........................................................................................24
eBridge Solutions...................................................................................25
Engineered Living Systems ........................................................................25
Engineering & Computer Simulations (ECS)..........................................26
Exponent......................................................................................................26
Fugatt Center...............................................................................................27
GIRLFRIEND..............................................................................................27
H2 Performance Consulting Corporation..................................................28
Hanes Corporation..................................................................................28
Hasell Technologies, Inc. ........................................................................28
Impact Lighting, Inc....................................................................................29
IMS Export Services..................................................................................30
Industrial Lighting Products, Inc..............................................................30
Innovative Data Solutions, Inc..................................................................31
J&A Apraisal Division, LLC........................................................................31
Keystone Water Company..........................................................................32
Lakeland Medical Centers............................................................................32
Media Vista Corporation............................................................................33
Millennium Luxury Coaches ....................................................................33
MRI..............................................................................................................34
OmiPoint....................................................................................................34
Optimize Corporation................................................................................35
Pharmrivers..............................................................................................35
Phoenix Ink Corporation...............................................................................36
PlusOne Solutions, Inc...............................................................................36
Power Grid Engineering, LLC.................................................................37
Pro Poly of America, Inc...........................................................................37
RedRock.com...........................................................................................38
SCB Marketing...........................................................................................38
Seaborne, Inc............................................................................................39
THAI Company........................................................................................39
The Distillery Corporation........................................................................40
The Kimmel Companies.............................................................................40
The Launch Pad........................................................................................41
VanDesign Corporation.............................................................................41

TABLE OF CONTENTS
Chris Hart Director, Governor’s Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development.....2
FEDC Congratulates Florida Companies to Watch Winners!..............................................4
Big Rock Valley, a unique environment for entrepreneurs...................................................6
Darlene Lowe Chairman, Edward Lowe Foundation.........................................................8
Event Sponsors..................................................................................................................8
2011 Companies to Watch: Economic Impact...............................................................10
Building Florida’s Growth Industries..............................................................................11
Final Round Selection Judges..................................................................................13

Florida Companies to Watch 16-41

A.E. Findings & Mfg. Corporation, Inc.................................................................17
Aerostar Environmental Services, Inc.................................................................17
Airon Corporation.........................................................................................18
Aimee, Inc.........................................................................................................18
Amede Partners.........................................................................................19
Aqua Naturals............................................................................................19
atLarg, Inc....................................................................................................20
Avalon Technologies Corporation.................................................................20
B3 Solutions, LLC....................................................................................21
Baili Poonian..............................................................................................21
Bil Wizards.................................................................................................22
Blue Stream Couriers ............................................................................23
Carte Health..............................................................................................23
Compass Solar Energy.............................................................................23
Cocoa Trace and Tactical Supply, Inc..........................................................24
E3 Spark Plug ..........................................................................................24
eBridge Solutions...................................................................................25
Engineered Living Systems ........................................................................25
Engineering & Computer Simulations (ECS)..........................................26
Exponent......................................................................................................26
Fugatt Center...............................................................................................27
GIRLFRIEND..............................................................................................27
H2 Performance Consulting Corporation..................................................28
Hanes Corporation..................................................................................28
Hasell Technologies, Inc. ........................................................................28
Impact Lighting, Inc....................................................................................29
IMS Export Services..................................................................................30
Industrial Lighting Products, Inc..............................................................30
Innovative Data Solutions, Inc..................................................................31
J&A Apraisal Division, LLC........................................................................31
Keystone Water Company..........................................................................32
Lakeland Medical Centers............................................................................32
Media Vista Corporation............................................................................33
Millennium Luxury Coaches ....................................................................33
MRI..............................................................................................................34
OmiPoint....................................................................................................34
Optimize Corporation................................................................................35
Pharmrivers..............................................................................................35
Phoenix Ink Corporation...............................................................................36
PlusOne Solutions, Inc...............................................................................36
Power Grid Engineering, LLC.................................................................37
Pro Poly of America, Inc...........................................................................37
RedRock.com...........................................................................................38
SCB Marketing...........................................................................................38
Seaborne, Inc............................................................................................39
THAI Company........................................................................................39
The Distillery Corporation........................................................................40
The Kimmel Companies.............................................................................40
The Launch Pad........................................................................................41
VanDesign Corporation.............................................................................41

What if you had a team behind your team?

Running a business is not a job for one ... Put the state’s economic gardening team to work for you.

If your growing company has revenues between $1 million and $25 million, you could qualify for:

✓ Free technical assistance for core business strategy review
✓ Peer-to-peer CEO roundtables for perspective into running your business
✓ Professional development and networking programs catered to growing companies

Find the Florida Economic Gardening Institute online at www.GrowFL.com or call (407) 823-6384.

GrowFL is the official Economic Gardening Technical Assistance Pilot Program for the State of Florida and a program of the Florida Economic Gardening Institute. Created in 2009 to stimulate investment in Florida’s economy by providing technical assistance for expanding businesses in the state, the Florida Economic Gardening Institute is headquartered at the University of Central Florida under contract with the State of Florida’s Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development under the Executive Office of the Governor.

On behalf of the Florida Economic Gardening Institute/GrowFL, welcome to the inaugural Florida Companies to Watch Awards program. This unique statewide event provides the opportunity to recognize and celebrate Florida’s growing second-stage businesses. These companies are creating jobs, generating revenue for our economy and making a difference in regional communities. This statewide program focuses on companies that have great potential for growth and helps them do just that.

Companies to Watch is a true statewide celebration that includes nominators, applicants, sponsors, service providers, state and local government, media, and organizational partners. It is our goal that Florida Companies to Watch will follow in the footsteps of other states and become much more than an event—a movement. The Class of 2011 Florida Companies to Watch is very promising as they represent Florida’s future.

Tom O’Neal, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Florida Economic Gardening Institute
Celebrating Second-stage entrepreneurs

enabling equivalent training faster and cheaper. object, reducing the need for physical access and thus used in maintenance and task training, DiSTI's virtual sur-
rapid development of compelling virtual surrogates. When graphics, 3D simulations and fully interactive controls into embedded applications to the rapid prototyping of cockpits industry the high-fidelity and high-performance graphical DiSTI combines advanced graphical user interface tech-
empower the latest in Human Machine Interface (HMI) provider of graphical interaction technology used to Founded in 1994, the DiSTI Corporation is a leading

AT A GLANCE:

Innovation Sponsors:

UCF is proud to sponsor the Inaugural Florida Companies to Watch Event

From Ideas
To Innovation
To Realization

UCF - A Leader in Central Florida’s Innovation Economy
Growing the Economy Through Research, Commercialization and Company Formation

- $1,054,000,000 in research funding
- 410 patents as of FY’00
- Patents third strongest in the nation (IEEE University 2010 Patent Power 2010)
- Approximately 100 client companies in the UCF Business Incubation Program and 51 graduates
- UCFBIP expanding to ninth location
- Current and graduate clients created 1,653 local region jobs as of 2009
- $200,000,000 in overall economic impact
- GrowFL has provided 160 companies economic gardening technical assistance
- As of January 2011, companies directly working with the GrowFL program have created 1,458 jobs (direct, indirect and induced)
- Approximate 24 in 2009; 28 estimated in 2010
- Patents third strongest in the nation (IEEE University 2010 Patent Power 2010)
- Approximately 100 client companies in the UCF Business Incubation Program and 51 graduates
- UCFBIP expanding to ninth location
- Current and graduate clients created 1,653 local region jobs as of 2009
- $200,000,000 in overall economic impact
- GrowFL has provided 160 companies economic gardening technical assistance
- As of January 2011, companies directly working with the GrowFL program have created 1,458 jobs (direct, indirect and induced)

* Statistics obtained from FY2000 - 2010

GrowFL, is the official Economic Gardening Technical Assistance Pilot Program for the State of Florida and a program of the Florida Economic Gardening Institute. The Florida Economic Gardening Institute is headquartered at the University of Central Florida under contract with The Governor’s Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development.

UCF Venture Lab
UCF Business Incubation Program
UCF Office of Technology Transfer
Florida Economic Gardening Institute/GrowFL program

www.ufc.edu
Combined impact of the 50 second-stage honorees in 2010
$419 million in total annual revenue
(25% increase)
1,972 full-time equivalent employees
Projected for 2011
$588 million in total annual revenue
(35% increase)
510 net new jobs created in 2010
2,533 full-time equivalent employees
562 net new jobs created in 2011
(41% increase)
Increasing Impact
From 2006 through 2010, these companies generated $1.4 billion in revenue and added 1,153 employees (both in Florida and out of state), reflecting a 162 percent increase in revenue and 141 percent increase in jobs in the five-year period. That translates into a 32 percent annual revenue growth and 28 percent annual growth in employees.

### County Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Revenues (millions of dollars)</th>
<th>Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>$162</td>
<td>819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duval</td>
<td>$211</td>
<td>1,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escambia</td>
<td>$262</td>
<td>1,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminole</td>
<td>$335</td>
<td>1,462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands</td>
<td>$423</td>
<td>1,972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Regional Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Central</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa Bay</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Building Florida’s Growth Industries**

Florida’s economy has long been supported by the tourism industry, with as many as 80 million visitors a year flocking to the state for its warm weather, sandy beaches and world-famous attractions. Thanks to the steady stream of newcomers visiting and relocating to the sunshine state, another industry became a major contributor to Florida’s economy: growth.

The booming housing and construction markets created an industry based on development. In the midst of 2009’s recession, Florida recorded a decline in population for the first time since 1946, when military personnel left the state after World War II. The state lost more than 58,000 residents as a result of the economic downturn, and the statewide job market took an even larger hit.

While the federal government sought ways to stimulate the economy, Florida’s state leaders took a new approach to growth by focusing on a sometimes overlooked economic driver: second-stage companies.

According to the Edward Lowe Foundation (www.edwardlowe.org), a nationally recognized foundation that encourages entrepreneurship as the key strategy for economic growth, second-stage companies are privately held firms that employ 10-99 workers, generate $1 million to $50 million and are past the start-up stage. While these firms make up only 6 percent of Florida-based companies, they were responsible for providing 32 percent of the total jobs available in Florida between 2006-2008.

Both state legislators and the governor’s office took notice. In 2009, the State of Florida’s Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development under the Executive Office of the Governor created the Economic Gardening Technical Assistance Pilot Program to provide targeted business support services to these companies across the state in order to stimulate Florida’s economy and create jobs.

And it’s working. Through the Florida Economic Gardening Institute and the pilot program, dubbed GrowFL (www.GrowFL.com), CEOs of second-stage businesses have had 1,309 encounters with the program.

Covering every field of industry, ranging from alternative energy development to food production and manufacturing to information technology, these companies are not only hiring, but also generating revenue.

“Companies with this capacity for growth represent Florida’s future,” said Dr. Tom O’Neal, executive director of the Florida Economic Gardening Institute and associate vice president for the University of Central Florida’s Office of Research and Commercialization. “Their success demonstrates the economic potential of the entire state.”

Recognizing the need to showcase the strengths and accomplishments of these companies on a statewide level, GrowFL collaborated with the Edward Lowe Foundation to develop the “Florida Companies to Watch” awards program. Similar programs to celebrate second-stage companies have occurred in Michigan, Indiana, Colorado,
Wisconsin and North Carolina. The combined impact of the 50 companies chosen as the inaugural winners of Florida Companies to Watch is $4.19 billion in total annual revenue, 1,972 full-time equivalent employees and 510 new net jobs created compared to 2009. From 2006 through 2010, these companies generated $1.4 billion in revenue and added 1,153 employees (both in Florida and out of state), reflecting a 162 percent increase in revenue and 141 percent increase in jobs for the five-year period. That translates into a 32 percent annual revenue growth and 28 percent annual growth in employees.

A look at one of the second-stage winners of Florida Companies to Watch shows the incredible potential for Florida’s economic rebound.

Located in Orlando, Engineering & Computer Simulations Inc. (ECS) uses computer simulations to help government and private-sector clients prepare for and respond to natural disasters, medical emergencies and combat. Founder and CEO Waymon Armstrong started the company in 1997, and grew the start-up slowly before starting to see the level of growth he had anticipated as an entrepreneur.

In 2008, ECS doubled its revenues and over the past three years, the company experienced a 640 percent growth in sales. Today ECS is one of Inc. Magazine’s 500 fastest-growing private companies in America, and in 2010, Armstrong was singled out nationally as the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Small Business Person of the Year.

“ECS is successful today because of the contributions of many. Our commitment to innovation and creativity has spawned exponential growth as we support our customers in solving technology challenges that help strengthen our national security, better secure our homeland and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of how we learn,” said Armstrong. Armstrong continued by saying he was impressed by how fast GrowFL provided help when he began moving into adjacent markets.

While much of the credit goes to Armstrong and his team’s dedication to the company, he also had help from other entrepreneurial support organizations. ECS has taken advantage of the resources from the University of Central Florida’s Business Incubation Program and GrowFL.

“This program was designed to foster an ‘entrepreneurial ecosystem’ of organizations and other companies helping fellow companies grow,” said O’Neal. “Taking a look at success of the Florida Companies to Watch, I’d say we’re getting there.”

In September 2010, Engineering & Computer Simulations (ECS) was awarded a proclamation by former Orange County Mayor Richard Crunty, that was presented to president Waymon Arm- strong during the Board of Commissioners meeting, in recognition of the company’s innovations in computer-based gaming, virtual world technology and in recognition of Armstrong’s leadership and participation in the community.

Randy Berridge
President
Florida High Tech Corridor Council, Inc.

Randy Berridge has held the position of president of the Florida High Tech Corridor Council since its formation in 1998. Previously, Berridge held several positions with AT&T Corporation including: Chair of the Central Florida AT&T Management Council; district manager of public relations for the Florida Division; manager of legal divestiture planning; and coordinating supervisor of budgets, forecasts, planning, human resources and telephone manufacturing. Berridge earned a bachelor’s degree in liberal arts and business from the University of Evansville in Indiana and he has completed graduate courses in marketing and finance at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. He recently was reappointed to the board of directors for Workforce Florida and also serves on the board of directors of the University of Central Florida Foundation, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the Tampa Bay Partnership, the Tampa Bay Technology Forum, the University of Central Florida Business Incubation Program, the University of South Florida Technology Incubator, Kids House of Seminole County, the Foundation for Florida’s Community Colleges, myregion.org, and the regional board of the American Red Cross. For his work in regional economic development through the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, Berridge was selected in November 2007, and again in November 2009, as one of TechJournal South’s “25 Most Influential People in Southeast Tech.” On behalf of the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, Berridge accepted the 2009 Partnership with Educational Institutions of the Year award from the Florida’s State Community College system as well as the State Science and Technology Institute’s (SSTI) award for Improving Competitiveness of Existing Industries as part of its 2010 Excellence in Technology-Based Economic Development Awards.

Amy Evancho
President/CEO
Florida Economic Development Council, Inc.

Amy Evancho is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Florida Economic Development Council, Inc., a 46-year-old association dedicated to professional development and economic development advocacy in Florida. Prior to joining the Florida Eco- nomic Development Council, Evancho worked in workforce and economic development in South Florida as Director of Workforce Development for The Broward Alliance and Workforce One as an Executive on Loan. This was one of the first organizations in the state to have a strong collaboration between workforce and economic development, as well as staff dedicated to simultane ously serving education, workforce and economic development. Evancho moved to Florida in 1992 where she was a small business owner of a professional recruitment and human resource consulting firm for nine years. Helping business to prosper and grow in Florida, as well as finding a solid, educated, and ready workforce has been a long standing driver for her. Evancho has been a part of an eclectic group of Boards including the Broward Workforce Development Board, The Florida Employer Advisory Council, Workforce One Employer Services Council and various other organizations throughout Florida. Currently Evancho sits on the Enterprise Florida Stakeholders Council and serves as Council Chair for Associated Industries of Florida workforce, education and economic development council. Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Evancho graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Pittsburgh and has spent the past 18 years in Florida.

Penny Lewandowski
Director of Entrepreneurship Development
Edward Lowe Foundation

Recruited to the Edward Lowe Foundation in 2005, Penny Lewandowski is responsible for developing and delivering programs that serve second-stage entrepreneurs, including Companies to Watch. She has also spearheaded the Foundation’s initiative to support cultural and other fundamental changes in entrepreneurial communities. Previously, Lewandowski was executive direc- tor of the Greater Baltimore Technology Council Inc., an organization that seeks to strengthen the Baltimore region’s technology community. Among other positions, Lewandowski served as director of entrepreneurship and education for the Moriio Institute, a nationally recognized entrepreneurship program in Reston, Va. She also directed George Mason University’s Century Club, a group formed to build alliances between the university and business community. In 2003 the Kaufmann Foundation named Le- wandowski as the recipient of its prestigious “National Supporter of Entrepreneurship” award. Other honors include being tapped as one of the region’s most influential leaders by The Baltimore Business Journal, and one of “Maryland’s Top 100 Women” by The Daily Record newspaper.
AG Findings was founded in 1993, in Ft. Lauderdale FL, and has since served the wireless communication industry by providing innovative technology and accessories. Becoming well known for engineering plastics, AGF has manufactured cases, holsters and headphones for some of the world’s most well known brands. In 2005, AG Findings began selling product under the AGF brand. AGF is synonymous with engineered, innovative carry solutions including holsters, belt clips, cases, headphones, and various other accessories. If it needs protection and style, AGF has what you need.

AGF’s sister brand Ballistic® was realized six years ago. The Ballistic engineers designed private label holsters and belt clips that simply would not break. During this time, the company made millions of ODM branded holsters and belt clips.

As smart phones became more popular, the need for drop protection became necessary. Ballistic engineers examined their competitor’s products and knew they could do better. We think everyone will drop their phone. We say, “Just Drop It!” as long as you are using a Ballistic case. Ballistic cases are Designed to Survive Life™.

AEROSTAR is a full-service environmental engineering and consulting firm established in November of 1992 to provide a broad range of services to commercial, industrial, and governmental agencies at the local, state, and federal levels.

AEROSTAR is committed to providing innovative solutions for its commercial and industrial clients’ environmental and technical service needs.

AEROSTAR believes in building strong community relationships, supporting women and minority businesses, and encouraging students to pursue careers in engineering and science. AEROSTAR uses the latest technology and innovative strategies to maintain our position as a front runner in the environmental cleanup and consulting industry. The company continuously monitors market conditions and responds quickly to market changes. AEROSTAR provides value to its clients with the efficient, diligent, and unselfish use of its abilities to understand the client’s challenges and provide cost-effective and innovative solutions. The company’s dedicated and energized staff of engineers, geologists, chemists, and biologists is the key to its success. By focusing on solutions and celebrating each milestone, AEROSTAR’s staff strives to be the best in the industry.
Celebrating Second-Stage Entrepreneurs

Phoenix Ink Corporation
Sarasota County

Phoenix Ink is pioneering the lead in the Ink Refill industry. Their computer controlled semi-automated machines are the most advanced ink cartridge refill machine on the market, filling over 140 different cartridges. The company has four patents awarded and twenty-two patent claims pending on various aspects of the machine and the related consumables.

Through a partnership with Kodak to put refill equipment through rigorous testing, they were able to engineer a Kodak branded ink to work exclusively in their machines. Unique to the Ink Refill industry, their machines are placed in retailers, such as OfficeMax, free of charge. This creates a vested incentive to have all equipment in top operating condition, continually update equipment to refill newly introduced cartridges types, and create positive experiences for the consumer. These conditions increase sales while saving the environment and the consumer’s money.

Today, only five percent of inkjet cartridges are recycled. In many instances, going green carries an extra cost. In today’s tough economy it can be a difficult decision for consumers to evaluate whether being environmentally conscientious is an unaffordable luxury or a worthwhile activity. Phoenix Ink eliminates the conflict in that decision.

PlusOne Solutions, Inc
Orange County

PlusOne Solutions, a privately held Florida C-corporation, develops, markets, and supports software and business process solutions that provide manufacturers, retailers, utilities, and service fulfillment companies with turnkey solutions to streamline, enhance, and remove risk in providing services to residential consumers.

PlusOne’s values begin with the understanding that “Win-Win-Win” situations exist, that great business seeks these out, and PlusOne’s corporate culture must be set up to reward these opportunities. In so doing PlusOne Solutions’ services turn the service cost center into an operation focused on quality control and service delivery while reducing the overall cost of service for the thousands of servicing companies performing the consumer repairs.

PlusOne’s management, with over 50 years of industry experience in managing large independent service networks, has launched a robust ASP-based software platform that optimizes the numerous labor-intensive back office processes required to manage complex independent service networks in a broad range of markets.

With the creation of a database eventually containing hundreds of thousands of independent servicing companies crisscrossing numerous industries, PlusOne improves state-of-service for existing companies looking to expand their revenue base, supplement their service network, or completely offload the numerous support functions.

Power Grid Engineering
Seminole County

Power Grid Engineering, LLC (PGE) is an electrical engineering firm located in Winter Springs, FL, that specializes in design of Protection and Control Systems for the electric utility industry. In addition, the company also includes consultation for transmission, distribution and substation design.

Since 2007, PGE has offered training seminars for three consecutive years to address the generation gap of qualified personnel the industry is currently facing. Because of the popularity the seminar has been experiencing, PGE is forecasting the double in attendance for 2011.

Training is crucial in the power industry to keep the system running. PGE is aware of the “Smart Grid” movement and has partnered up with major manufactures and Fortune 250 Power Companies to find innovative ways to make the power system run more efficiently. In addition, PGE works with local universities to perform market research on Green Technologies.

Furthermore, PGE believes that “Happy Employees are Productive Employees” and strive to meet their employees’ needs and expectations. In return, their employees strive to meet clients’ needs and expectations. This philosophy has helped the company grow every year.

Pro Poly of America, Inc.
Marion County

Pro Poly was founded in 1991 and is a family owned, ISO 9001 certified manufacturer of water and foam tanks and truck bodies for the fire service and other applications around the world. Pro Poly is headquartered in Ocala, Florida and has over 65 employees.

Pro Poly introduced the industry to high quality and innovative tanks and truck bodies built from Polypropylene, a rugged and durable special blend of welded plastics. With three patents and manufacturing and service centers in Wisconsin, the United Kingdom, Japan and coming soon in Australia, they have delivered thousands of products to hundreds of fire departments throughout the world. Pro Poly tanks and bodies are highly impact resistant, which means they resist dents, dings, and will neither rust nor corrode. Their customers have enjoyed the innovative and quality aspects of Pro Poly products, which provide and insure a long lasting, trouble free service life.

For more information about Pro Poly and PolyBilt, visit the web sites at: www.polybiltamerica.com and www.poly-bilt.com or contact an inside sales team member at 1-800-864-3817.
Celebrating second-stage entrepreneurs

Letter from Darlene Lowe

Big Rock Valley: a unique environment for entrepreneurs

I think the desire to build is part of any entrepreneur's DNA. Whether it's improving an existing product or process or devising something entirely new, entrepreneurs simply can't resist scratching their itch for innovation.

Ed Lowe and I shared that love for building. He launched an entirely new industry with the introduction of Kitty Litter, and I founded a successful interior design and antiques company. But our passion for building extended beyond operating our own businesses. We wanted to create resources to help other entrepreneurs — along with a physical environment where entrepreneurs could meet, learn from each other and pursue common causes. This ultimately resulted in the Edward Lowe Foundation and Big Rock Valley, the foundation's home in southwest Michigan.

In recent years, we've been hosting a special retreat at Big Rock Valley for Companies to Watch honorees — an event that gives new honorees a chance to learn from each other as well as from past honorees. This has become one of our most popular events, and many participants have found it life-changing, especially those who are discovering the power of peer learning for the first time.

Change is a constant theme at Big Rock Valley. We continually refine our curriculum as we learn more about our audience and their needs. We just opened a new conference center — a 10,600-square-foot building that will allow us to accommodate larger groups.

Big Rock Valley began with a 160-acre parcel that Ed bought in 1964 and today includes 2,600 acres of woodlands, prairies and wetlands. As we developed the property, we tried to develop a setting that was not only conducive to relaxation but also sparked innovative thinking. That's why we have a caboose in the middle of the woods (which was one of Ed's favorite "pondering" places) and have converted five railroad boxcars into housing for retreat participants. Guests are sometimes surprised, but quickly get it. In fact, one retreat participant sent a Twitter message during her stay: "Can you get somewhere on a stationary boxcar? I think you can."

Big Rock Valley has unique landscapes and ecosystems, and the foundation maintains this biodiversity through innovative land-management practices. Guests tell us that the isolation and natural beauty of Big Rock Valley has been instrumental in many of their breakthrough moments.

I think Ed would be proud of how Big Rock Valley has evolved. It was a special place for him — and one he wanted to share with other entrepreneurs. Although the foundation's programs are implemented nationally, Big Rock Valley remains a critical resource as we help second-stage entrepreneurs like the Florida Companies to Watch honorees continue to build upon their successes and accelerate their growth.

Warmest regards,
Darlene Lowe
Chairman
Edward Lowe Foundation

---

**2011 Florida Companies To Watch Awards Agenda**

**General Reception**
6:00pm - 7:00pm: General Reception

**Gala Dinner & Awards**
7:10pm: Opening Remarks
- MaryBeth Hoyt (event emcee)

Welcome
- Dr. John Hitt, President, University of Central Florida

7:15pm: Importance of Companies Bringing Jobs, Growth, and Economic Health to Florida
- Tom O'Neal, Ph.D., Executive Director, Florida Economic Gardening Institute

7:20pm: ACG Florida Update
- Russell Slappey, CEO & Managing Partner, Nperspective LLC

7:25pm: Dinner served

7:50pm: Introduction of Special Guest Speaker

8:15pm: History of Companies to Watch program and Overview of Economic Impact
- Penny Lewandowski, Director of Entrepreneurship Development, The Edward Lowe Foundation

8:20pm: Florida Companies to Watch Video, produced by The Edward Lowe Foundation

8:30pm: Florida Companies to Watch Awards Presentation
- Russell Slappey, ACG Florida and Nperspective LLC
- Tom O'Neal, Ph.D., Florida Economic Gardening Institute/GrowFL

9:00pm: Awards Ceremony Closing Remarks