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## **WASHINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (WEDA)**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 16, 2021

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*Contact Information for Award Winners and Photos Available Upon Request*

### **Washington Economic Development Association**

#### **Celebrates Excellence in Economic Development with 2021 WEDA Economic Development Awards**

Washington – The leaders of Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA), Washington’s only trade association laser-focused on economic development, awarded their 2021 Economic Development Awards today at their 2021 Winter Conference which was held virtually, “broadcast LIVE” from Olympia, WA.

“WEDA’s Economic Development Awards celebrate outstanding achievement in economic development at the highest level,” said WEDA Board Chair Mike Bomar, who also serves as Director of Economic Development for the Port of Vancouver USA, “There are leaders across our entire state working tirelessly to recover jobs and rebuild their communities. These awards honor leaders and projects that are excelling in this important work.”

Bruce Kendall, WEDA Awards Committee Chair who also serves as President & CEO of the Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County added, “We received impressive nominations from communities across Washington. The nominations reflect a unique array of the breadth and diversity of strong work taking place to by economic developers in Washington. These projects are often complex and require extensive collaboration and creative partnerships. We were also felt it was important to add two new award categories this year, for the Economic Development Award for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and the Economic Development Award for Response & Recovery.”

2021 WEDA award winners recognized for outstanding achievement in Economic Development include:

## **EMERGING PROFESSIONAL IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Tamsin Bell**

*The Emerging Professional Award is given to a person who has made a significant contribution to his/her community, is a promising future leader in the industry, or who has become an integral member of his or her community, creating significant support for economic development.*

“Tamsin managed 10 different CARES Act grant programs awarding \$2 million to 260 small businesses in 2020, all while performing her regular duties as EDASC’s Economic Development Manager and completing her coursework for her CEC.D!,” said John B. Sternlicht, JD, CEC.D, CEO, Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR**

### **Washington Small Business Development Center**

*This award recognizes a person or group of people outside the field of economic development who made a significant and/or innovative contribution to an economic development project or program during the past year. This award recognizes that economic development professionals must rely on a whole host of others in order to be successful. These are sometimes the “silent heroes” of economic development who have contributed significantly to advancement of the economic development profession or were involved in a significant project in a creative way.*

“Washington state was the first state impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and local businesses have felt the impact longer than any in the nation. As an SBA-funded resource partner, the business advisers from the Washington Small Business Development Center have stepped up when our small businesses needed them most,” Small Business Administration Seattle District Director Kerrie Hurd said. “From setting up a business resiliency center, to an increase in technical assistance webinars, to countless hours walking business owners through the application process to access relief financing, the Washington SBDC team is the reason many businesses are still open today. They are the platinum standard for SBA Resource Partners nationwide. I am grateful for their service to the Washington small business community.”

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OF THE YEAR – BUSINESS RETENTION/EXPANSION**

### **City of Olympia, Crown Beverage Packaging**

*This award celebrates the successful creation or completion of a creative, economically significant, and/or model project in a community or region. The project could be one that has retained jobs, was particularly difficult to achieve, was extraordinarily competitive, had multiple partners or contributed to community well-being.*

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OF THE YEAR – BUSINESS RECRUITMENT**

### **City of Arlington, Eviation**

*This award celebrates the successful creation or completion of a creative, economically significant, and/or model project in a community or region. Factors that may influence the selection include the extent of the economic impact this project has on the community, the development of partnerships, innovation, originality, whether the project or program can be duplicated as a “best practice,” and whether the project or program appears to be cost-effective.*

“Mayor Tolbert and her team in the City of Arlington have done a fantastic job of recruiting cutting-edge companies, and we look forward to seeing Eviation develop into an even more significant component of our aerospace cluster,” said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. “I want to thank the Washington Economic Development Association for their support of aerospace innovation in Snohomish County and for recognizing our successful focus on recruiting companies.”

## **INNOVATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD**

### **South Landing Project**

*This award recognizes that not all economic development projects are alike. In fact, there are frequently projects that happen or programs that are developed that do not include the “deal” that economic developers typically consider as a success. WEDA will recognize innovative programs, projects and partnerships that are pioneering, novel and groundbreaking. WEDA recognizes that communities and individuals are doing state-of-the-art work to further the field of economic development. It may be the attraction of a world-class event that made a significant economic impact on a community, an atypical alliance of groups who may have never worked together before or the creation of a program that significantly improves a community’s ability to attract investment.*

“The South Landing Project is transforming a former utility yard into a hub for energy innovation and sustainable building. The positive impacts of these investments in an underutilized commercial neighborhood will continue to propel this community forward as a leader in education, clean technology, and life sciences. Our thanks go out to the partners for their investments,” said Gary Ballew, Vice President, Economic Development, Greater Spokane Inc.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION**

### **Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County**

*This award recognizes economic development organizations/entities/individuals that have made strides in improving the diversity, equity and inclusion within their work, communities or organizations. WEDA will recognize innovative programs, projects and partnerships that are pioneering, groundbreaking and/or novel.*

“EDASC has spoken out against injustices perpetrated on people and communities of color, incorporated equity into its mission statement, and views all activities through the lens of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI). In addition to its Latino Business Retention and Expansion and Leadership Skagit programs begun in 2004, EDASC in 2020 created an Equity and Education Committee that is sponsoring a learning series of equity issues and ensures all programs including Leadership Skagit, CARES Act grants and others seek to improve JEDI,” said John B. Sternlicht, JD, CEc.D, CEO, Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County. CEO John Sternlicht has conducted his “Unconscious Bias” workshop for WEDA, IEDC and others, and he and EDASC thank WEDA for this recognition and for incorporating social and economic justice in its work.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD FOR ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY**

### **Pierce County Economic Development Department: 2020 CARES Act Economic Stabilization & Recovery Programs**

*This award recognizes economic development organizations/entities/individuals that have made innovative efforts to address the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. WEDA recognizes innovative programs, projects and partnerships that are pioneering, groundbreaking and/or novel.*

“It is an honor to be recognized by WEDA for the work we did to help sustain Pierce County businesses in 2020,” said Pierce County Economic Development Department Director, Betty Capestany. “During very challenging economic times, Pierce County CARES programs provided vital supplies and funding to businesses allowing them to continue to operate or re-open. We know the need is still great, and we, along with our economic development partners, will continue to offer our assistance to businesses throughout the recovery phase and beyond.”

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### **About the Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA)**

As Washington State’s *only* trade association laser-focused on economic development, WEDA is committed to recovering, retaining, recruiting and expanding jobs and re-investment in Washington State. WEDA members include economic development organizations, cities, counties, ports, tribes, businesses, education and community-based organizations that prioritize economic development.