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CHAMBER AWARDS SIX OUTSTANDING SMALL BUSINESSES

Annual Small Business Awards reception celebrates importance of region's small businesses

SAN DIEGO (August 23, 2016) – Six San Diego businesses received top honors this evening at the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce's 2016 Small Business Awards reception. Presented annually, the awards honor local small businesses with fewer than 50 employees for their significant contributions as drivers of economic growth throughout the region.

"Small businesses are really a driving force of our region's economy and the role they play is truly anything but small," said Jerry Sanders, President and CEO of the San Diego Regional Chamber. "In fact - here in San Diego – half of our region's workforce is employed by companies with fewer than 50 employees.

"It's an honor to have the opportunity to celebrate San Diego's small businesses and recognize all the hard work they do to create opportunity locally," Sanders said.

The 2016 Small Business Awards winners are:

- **Outstanding Nonprofit: Reality Changers** for their incredible success in helping low-income students – many of whom joined the program with less than a 2.0 high school GPA – graduate college at an 86 percent success rate. Since its founding, Reality Changers has recorded a total of over \$100M in earned scholarships.

- **Tech Savvy: GroundMetrics, Inc.** because their proprietary electromagnetic sensor has become a world leader in the oil & gas technology market, helping its customers to use less fracking and drill fewer bad wells.
- **Only in San Diego: Moniker Group** for the owner's ability to think beyond the "beaches and sunshine" and harness San Diego's cooperative entrepreneurial spirit to provide a community where designers, makers, artists and tech professionals can thrive.
- **Cinderella Story: The San Diego Sports Entertainment Center** for the owner's ability to revitalize the business into a thriving company – with plans to expand nationwide – after losing everything during the 2008 financial crisis.
- **Customer Service Star: Innovative Employee Solutions** for delivering on their motto that "excellent service isn't something you should do, but something you want to do."
- **Best For Vets: Miramar Federal Credit Union** because their team has demonstrated that – to best serve the military community and fulfill their motto, "Where Military Matters!" – they need veterans on staff who will connect with their customers on a level most civilians cannot.

All award nominations were evaluated by a panel of four judges who reviewed applications based on criteria for each award category. After rating each submission, the small business with the highest score in each category was selected as the winner.

Judges for the awards competition were:

- Jim Berdeguez, Owner of James Gang Company and a 2015 Small Business Awards Winner
- Dale Ganzow, Sales Manager at the *San Diego Business Journal*
- Felena Hanson, Founder of Hera Hub: Collaborative Workspace for Women
- Greg Kassardjian, Senior Marketing Manager at Confirm BioSciences and a 2015 Small Business Awards Winner

For nearly 20 years, the Chamber has recognized small businesses that are leaders in the San Diego regional business community through this awards program. This year's award winners were announced live at the Small Business Awards Mixer at the Westin San Diego Gaslamp Quarter in downtown San Diego. The event also provides small and large businesses an opportunity to connect and learn how the regional business community can better work together.

About the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce

The San Diego Regional Chamber is the hub for connections and collaboration among the regional business community, and uses that clout to advocate for public policies and candidates that support economic growth and the creation of jobs for all businesses. As the largest local Chamber on the West Coast, representing approximately 2,500 businesses and an estimated 300,000 jobs, the San Diego Regional Chamber is fighting to make San Diego the most business-friendly region in California. For more information, please visit SDChamber.org or call 619-544-1300.

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