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Charleston County Economic Development celebrates industry contributions at 21st annual luncheon

The 21st Annual Industry Appreciation Luncheon, hosted by Charleston County Economic Development (CCED), took place on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at Trident Technical College's Thornley Campus, Complex for Economic Development. More than 300 industry executives, elected officials, and economic development professionals attended the event to celebrate the contributions of Charleston County's existing industries to economic growth and community prosperity.

This year's program featured the presentation of the 2024 Charleston County Industry Impact Awards, which celebrate companies making significant contributions to the region. The winners included AGRU America (Small Business), LANXESS Charleston (Medium Business), SHL Medical (Large Business), and Allegiance Flag Supply (Community Impact). These businesses were recognized for their innovation, workforce development, and community engagement achievements. The Charleston County Economic Development Ambassador Elias Deeb, CEO of CMMC Navy Yard Industrial Campus, was also recognized for outstanding contributions to economic development within the county.

A special tribute, including the presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award, was paid to J. Steven Dykes, commemorating his 32 years of leadership as Executive Director of Charleston County Economic Development as he has recently entered retirement. This prestigious award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated exceptional and sustained contributions to their community and field throughout their career.

"For more than two decades, Charleston County Economic Development has proudly recognized the businesses that drive our community's prosperity, and this annual event is a celebration of their innovation, resilience, and impact," said CCED Executive Director Merle Johnson. "We are especially honored to recognize Steve Dykes for his remarkable leadership and lasting contributions to Charleston County's economic success. His vision has paved the way for continued growth, and we look forward to building on that strong foundation."

Charleston County Councilmember Joe Boykin added, "The annual Industry Appreciation Luncheon is a testament to the strong partnership between Charleston County and its thriving business community, and I was honored to attend to take part in that celebration. These industries play a critical role in our economic vitality, and we are committed to supporting their continued success."

A luncheon highlight was a dynamic panel discussion titled "Cultivating a Culture of Retention." Moderated by Natalie Hauff with the Charleston County Public Library, the panel featured Matthew D. Hamrick of Mercedes-Benz Vans, LLC, and David Stasiukaitis of Low Country Case & Millwork. The discussion focused on workforce retention strategies and best practices for fostering a thriving business environment.

About Charleston County Economic Development

For over three decades, Charleston County Economic Development Department has been dedicated to establishing and maintaining business relationships with new and existing industries to preserve the Charleston area's exceptional business climate and quality of life. To learn more about Charleston County Economic Development, visit www.charlestoncountydevelopment.org.

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