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Newly Designed Site Helps Entrepreneurs Find Information to Start, Grow or Relocate Business

FHTCC's Virtual Entrepreneur Center, www.flvec.com, Provides Free Resources for 23-County Corridor

Heathrow, Fla. (June 10, 2009) – One of the most vexing challenges facing entrepreneurs starting, growing or relocating a business is identifying all the resources they'll need to be successful, from local and state permits to product and service providers that can help their business grow. For entrepreneurs in the 23-county Florida High Tech Corridor, that search has become a lot easier thanks to the Florida High Tech Corridor Council's (FHTCC) Virtual Entrepreneur Center (www.flvec.com), which provides the latest information on services available to owners of small businesses categorized locally, regionally and globally. Already receiving nearly 1,000 hits a month, the beta *flvec.com* site has been upgraded to include more user-friendly features such as advanced searches and message boards to help start-up companies locate topics of interest.

"*flvec.com* provides one comprehensive location where entrepreneurs can easily find all the information they need to start or grow their company," said Randy Berridge, president of FHTCC. "Now through the work of our partner economic development organizations and chambers of commerce, entrepreneurs across the 23-county Corridor can have free access to local and regional resources specific to their needs. *flvec.com* also gives established companies that provide business to business products and services the opportunity to gain free exposure by listing their services among the site's catalog of regional business resources."

The FHTCC-funded Web portal evolved from a concept developed by the Volusia/Flagler Higher Education Consortium, whose membership includes representatives from the University of Central Florida, Daytona State College, Bethune Cookman University, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and Stetson University. Shepherded by the economic development team from Daytona State College, the Disney Entrepreneur Center, the Tampa Bay Technology Forum and other regional EDO and academic partners, the *flvec.com* site provides links within Corridor counties for local businesses specializing in everything ranging from law, accounting and IT, to communications, printing and anything else needed to start or grow a company. It also catalogs all the latest business resources – such as local permitting codes and forms, statewide corporate registration information and federal trademark law.

The *flvec.com* site is currently operational in 22 of the 23 Corridor counties: Alachua, Brevard, Citrus, De Soto, Flagler, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lake, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole and Volusia. The site is nearing completion for Sumter County.

About FHTCC

The Florida High Tech Corridor Council (FHTCC) is a regional economic development initiative of the University of Central Florida (UCF), the University of South Florida (USF) and the University of Florida (UF) whose mission is to attract, retain and grow high tech industry and to help develop the workforce to support those industries in the 23-county Corridor.

A partnership involving more than 20 local and regional economic development organizations (EDOs) and 14 community colleges, the Council is co-chaired by the presidents of UCF, USF and UF. The Council includes the presidents of two of the community colleges, the president of Florida Institute of Technology and representatives of high tech industry.

The unique partnership has resulted in a strategic approach to high tech economic development that involves matching funds research, workforce development and a marketing program leveraging governmental, EDO and corporate budgets on a regional rather than local basis.

For more information, visit www.floridahightech.com.

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