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**News Release**

For Immediate Release

**GrowFL Announces 2017 Florida Companies to Watch Finalists**

*Lightspeed Voice Among Second-Stage Businesses*

*Competing to Earn Prestigious Honor*

Venice, FL. *Lightspeed Voice* was among the first round of 2017 *Florida Companies to Watch* finalists recently announced by GrowFL. The awards event - now in its seventh year - honors 50 select second-stage companies from throughout the state of Florida for developing valuable products and services, creating quality jobs, enriching communities, and broadening new industries throughout Florida. Chosen from a candidate pool of more than 800 nominations, the finalists collectively represent \$598 million in annual revenue and employ 3,200 full-time equivalent employees.

“We are thrilled and honored to receive this recognition and proud to be a contributing part of Florida’s economic development”, said Brad Fuller, CEO of *Lightspeed Voice*. “Our company would be nothing without our amazing team of professionals, who work tirelessly to provide impeccable service to our national client base. It is because of their dedication that we continue to grow and thrive.”

The *Florida Companies To Watch* program consists of two rounds of selections. Finalists now advance to the second round, where they will be further evaluated based on their performance in the marketplace, innovative products, services or processes, philanthropy and empowered employees.

“We applaud these first round finalists who have shown how they stand out in their regions as innovative business leaders, going to the next level to grow their companies. They are true rock stars,” says Dr. Tom O’Neal, GrowFL Executive Director.

The Finalists represent a unique group of scalable, high-growth enterprises that are already located within Florida. These high growth enterprises are an important segment of our economy and their numbers have been steadily increasing, which contributed to Florida’s ranking of 24 on the Kauffman Index of Growth Entrepreneurship. According to this report, “entrepreneurship is not a monolithic phenomenon, and it includes many moving parts. Creating new businesses is a different economic activity from running small businesses, which in turn is different from growing businesses.” Florida *Companies to Watch* recognizes the different approach needed to successfully grow and scale a business, and celebrates those that are working to achieve this goal.

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Presented by GrowFL and developed by the Edward Lowe Foundation, *Florida Companies To Watch* is a distinguished awards program specifically designed to seek out second-stage businesses from a wide range of industries representing all areas of the state, not just those in major metropolitan areas. In addition to evaluating past growth and projected success, applicant companies are judged according to their special strengths and impact in their markets, communities and within the state – thus deeming them “worth watching.”

The winners will be announced in MID July. The 2017 honorees will be celebrated at the awards ceremony October 14<sup>th</sup> at The Straz Center for the Performing Arts in Tampa, FL.

For more information visit [www.GrowFL.com/flctw17](http://www.GrowFL.com/flctw17).

### **About Lightspeed Voice**

*Lightspeed Voice, founded in 2009, provides a subscription-based Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) cloud-hosted Voice-over-IP PBX telephone system for small to medium businesses, replacing both the customer’s telephone system hardware and telephone service provider. Their flagship product, the PrismPBX, reduces the upfront cost of communications and infrastructure deployment by as much as 90%. It includes a suite over 50 cutting-edge business management tools into a flat-rate, all-inclusive package. The system is then managed by Lightspeed Voice’s Florida-based team who are laser-focused on the customer experience and provide “over-the-top customer service” with an average satisfaction rating in excess of 98%. Learn more at [www.lightspeedvoice.com](http://www.lightspeedvoice.com).*

### **About GrowFL**

*GrowFL was created in 2009 as an economic development program focused on assisting second-stage growth companies prosper in the state of Florida. By providing strategies, resources and support to second-stage companies for next level growth through Strategic Research, Peer Learning and Leadership Development, GrowFL helps companies overcome obstacles to growth and leads them towards prosperity. Based on the philosophy of Economic Gardening® — to grow existing businesses in a community, region or state — GrowFL, the Florida Economic Gardening Institute, is a critical component to the state’s economic development strategy and Florida’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. GrowFL is a statewide economic development organization certified by the National Center for Economic Gardening through the Edward Lowe Foundation. GrowFL has assisted more than 1000 companies through the Strategic Research and CEO Roundtable programs and recognized 300 successful entrepreneurs through the annual awards program, Florida Companies to Watch. Learn more at [www.GrowFL.com](http://www.GrowFL.com).*

### **About Edward Lowe Foundation**

Established in 1985, the Edward Lowe Foundation is a national, nonprofit organization that supports entrepreneurship through research, recognition and educational programs, which are delivered through entrepreneur support organizations (ESOs). The foundation focuses on second-stage companies — those that have moved beyond the startup phase and seek significant, steady growth. In addition, the foundation has a mission of land stewardship and is committed to preserving the natural resources and historically significant structures at Big Rock Valley, its 2,000-acre home in southwest Michigan. Learn more at [www.edwardlowe.org](http://www.edwardlowe.org).