

NAWB SELECTS 2017 NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNERS
Awards Honor Excellence in Workforce Development Board Leadership, Business Leadership

Washington, D.C.– The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), the membership organization and advocate for more than 550 workforce development boards (WDBs) nationwide and their network of American Job Centers, has announced the 2017 winners of its annual leadership awards, the [WIOA Trailblazer Award](#) and the [W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award](#).

The **WIOA Trailblazer Award** recognizes a workforce development board that has been a leader in adopting the changes envisioned in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and in expanding its ability to develop comprehensive workforce solutions for its community. This year's winner is **Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County** in Fort Worth, TX.

Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County oversees more than \$65 million in investments to create economic vitality for businesses and citizens in Tarrant County, Texas, and is responsible for five full-service Workforce Centers providing targeted services to more than 53,000 youth and adults in fiscal year 2016.

“In every category of WIOA’s operational and strategic requirements, Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County has led the way, engaging partners and stakeholders to create a coordinated strategy that integrates training, education, and support services. Their participation in the Regional Workforce Leadership Council, which supports five of the region’s industry clusters, demonstrates their commitment to business and industry while creating opportunities for youth, re-entry populations, and workers in need of skills upgrades,” said NAWB President and CEO Ron Painter. Among the many milestones achieved during WIOA implementation, Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County developed extensive career exploration options for youth and adults, implemented structured strategic planning processes for their board, and redefined their relationship with large corporations in the region, resulting in \$400 million in capital investments, and 4,500 new jobs representing \$300 million in wages.

The **W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award** honors businesses or business organizations that commit time, money, and leadership to make their community’s workforce and economy more vibrant and go above and beyond to be a full partner in their local Workforce Development Board’s endeavors. This year, NAWB selected two winners: one small business and one large business.

Wyoming Machine, Inc., in Stacy, MN, is the 2017 winner of the W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award for a small business. Wyoming Machine, Inc., makes metal components for the defense, computer and electrical equipment, and aerospace industries. As a woman-owned business, the company has partnered with community organizations to raise awareness of opportunities in manufacturing for youth and women, and has worked to bring global insight into the challenges of women in non-traditional jobs.

Wyoming Machine, Inc., has been an essential partner to the Washington County Workforce Development Board in building a pipeline of skilled workers for manufacturing jobs throughout the region. From building partnerships with local colleges and technical schools, to securing Department of Labor education grants to fund customized training on specialized equipment, to serving on foundation boards and hosting career day events, Wyoming Machine co-presidents Lori and Traci Tapani have given generously of their time and provided strong regional leadership to build manufacturing skills in Minnesota.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics in Fort Worth, Texas, is the 2017 winner of the W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award for a large business. As the largest aerospace company in the region, Lockheed Martin led the development of the Regional Aerospace Consortium with goals of strengthening the current workforce, growing the future workforce through educational participation, and supporting a career pathways project for Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County. Lockheed Martin co-produced the consortium's *Gotta Jet?* aerospace career awareness campaign, invested one million dollars in Project Lead the Way and STEM programs, and contributed \$15,000 to develop *FLYBY DFW*, a gaming app to encourage young adults to explore aerospace career paths.

Lockheed's leadership within the community was instrumental in Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County receiving a \$5 million Department of Labor H1-B grant to identify and place American engineers in six engineering industries. This endeavor placed 406 unemployed and under-employed degreed engineers within 37 companies, and allowed the Tarrant County Board to identify companies that had never accessed workforce system services.

"These two businesses have made impacts that go far beyond being good employers. Their investments of time and money, as well as their willingness to be true partners to their respective workforce boards, have improved career opportunities and ultimately increased the economic potential of citizens and other businesses in their regions," said NAWB President and CEO Ron Painter. "Each is an example of how a company can reach beyond its own self-interest to advance an entire community's economic vitality."

Winners will be recognized at the [The Forum 2017](#), presented by NAWB in Washington, D.C. March 25 – 28, 2017. The Forum 2017 assembles business leaders, workforce development, economic development, education leaders, and national organizational partners to define the challenges and shape opportunities that

impact the growth of their organizations, their regions, and our collective economic and community health. For information or to register, visit www.NAWB.org/Forum.

About the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB)

The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) supports its members through a comprehensive program of advocacy, training and technical assistance, communication, and the promotion of strategic partnerships for the advancement of our nation's workforce. For more information on NAWB, visit www.nawb.org, and to see how investments in workforce development keep Americans working, go to <http://www.WorkforceInvestmentWorks.com>.

###