



## **U.S. Department of Commerce Recognizes EDA for its International Trade Efforts**

*Awarded the Certification of Appreciation for Achievement in Trade*

PANAMA CITY, FL-On September 22, 2004, the United States Department of Commerce-U.S. Commercial Service officially recognized the Bay County Economic Development Alliance (EDA) with a Certificate of Appreciation for Achievement in Trade at the Industry Appreciation Week Awards Ceremony and Luncheon.

“The EDA is a very worthy recipient of the U.S. Commercial Service Export Achievement Award due to their lasting commitment to furthering export opportunities for the Bay County area firms through educational seminars, public outreach and the very successful trade mission to Mexico in 2003,” said Mike Higgins, Trade Specialist for the U.S. Commercial Service.

Higgins along with Manny Mencia, Sr. Vice President of International Trade for Enterprise Florida, was on hand at the luncheon to present the certificate to Richard Dodd, 2004 Chairman of the EDA, and Dr. Jeff Stevenson, Chairman of the International Trade Alliance.

“We are truly honored to receive this recognition,” said Dodd. “The committee under Jeff’s leadership is doing a phenomenal job. The EDA believes that international trade is an important factor in economic development for our local economy.”

Under the leadership of Dr. Stevenson, the International Trade Alliance, a committee of the EDA, has been working to educate local companies on international trade. The committee has conducted two seminars on export financing and has participated in several public speaking events around the community. In addition to increasing the community's awareness of international trade, the committee also works closely with Port Panama City to develop trade opportunities. Last year, the committee conducted a successful outbound trade mission to Mexico City and Merida, Mexico. As a result of the mission, participants estimated at least \$1.15 million in total business. Furthermore, the committee established a Sister City relationship between the City of Merida, Mexico and Bay County, Florida.



*(Left to Right) Mike Higgins, Trade Specialist U.S. Department of Commerce; Dr. Jeff Stevenson, 2003-2004 Chairman of the International Trade Alliance; Manny Mencia, Sr. Vice President of International Trade and Business Development for Enterprise Florida, Inc.*

**About the International Trade Alliance**

The International Trade Alliance is a committee of the EDA. The EDA is a public/private partnership whose mission is to establish Bay County as a globally competitive environment to conduct business, encourage economic growth that enhances our standard of living and quality of life, and facilitate the creation of an environment that encourages the expansion of existing business and the location of new business. Since 2000, the EDA has spearheaded the creation of over 2,300 jobs for Bay County.