



EDA Shines at FEDC Annual Conference
Watley Named Volunteer of the Year and EDA Receives Marketing Award

The Bay County EDA was honored twice at the recent Florida Economic Development Council (FEDC) Annual Conference in Tampa. Sharon Watley, Chairman of the EDA's Board of Directors, was named a Richard L. McLaughlin Volunteer of the Year and the EDA was recognized for its marketing efforts.

"We are extremely pleased that our district chose Sharon as its Volunteer of the Year," said Ted Clem, Executive Director of the EDA. "Her long-standing involvement with the EDA and the Bay County Chamber of Commerce is a testament to her commitment to economic development through serving the needs of existing industry."

The McLaughlin Awards recognize outstanding volunteers who demonstrate leadership in furthering economic development in their community, region, or the state. The program is named in honor of Richard L. McLaughlin, the second FEDC President (1965) who firmly believed in the role that volunteers play in assisting economic developers. Watley was named the winner for FEDC District 1, which consists of Bay County and 11 other Northwest Florida counties.

Watley is the current Chairman of the EDA Board of Directors. A strong advocate for existing industry, she has served on the EDA's Existing Industry Committee for several years and helped to establish the Chamber's annual Industry Appreciation Celebration. She is also very involved with workforce development at the local and state levels and was appointed by former Governor Jeb Bush to the Workforce Florida, Inc. Board of Directors in 2003.

The EDA also received a Stellar Award for its marketing efforts in the e-Media category. The EDA's website www.baycountyeda.org, designed by EDA Marketing Coordinator Michaela Dollar, won for its unique and innovative use of technology for the promotion of the EDA's marketing initiatives.

"We are thrilled that our website, which Michaela designed and maintains in-house, was recognized as the best in the state," said Clem. "This is a nice affirmation that our marketing efforts are competitive versus our peer economic development organizations that generally have more resources than we do."

About the Florida Economic Development Council

The mission of FEDC is to advance economic development in Florida and to enhance the professionalism of its members through education, interaction, and the exchange of information with business, government, and other organizations as appropriate.