



For Immediate Release

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**Southern Growth Policies Board Names
Tennessee Three Star Program and
the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence
2010 Innovator Award Winner from Tennessee**

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC – Southern Growth Policies Board is pleased to announce a partnership between the **Tennessee Three Star Program** and the **Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence** as the recipient of its *2010 Innovator Award from Tennessee*. The partners are using the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence—a proven tool used by international corporations like FedEx and Caterpillar Financial Services—to engage communities in an in-depth process that identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement that are then applied to strategic plans and economic development initiatives.

Administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development, the **Three Star Program** assists local communities in their efforts to achieve excellence in community and economic development. Participating communities are guided through a strategic planning process that is designed to help them build stronger communities with more diverse economies and greater job opportunities.

In 2007, the **Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE)**, an economic development non-profit, entered into a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD) to provide services to Tennessee communities that participate in the **Three-Star Program**. **TNCPE** uses the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to assess the strategic plans developed by participating communities. In addition, **TNCPE** provides coaching and feedback to help the communities implement and improve their plans.

In the 40 months that the partnership has been in effect, 16 counties have completed the Level 1 assessment cycle, earning **TNCPE's** Interest Recognition Award. Two of those communities moved on to a Level 2 assessment, earning **TNCPE's** Commitment Award. So far, communities have benefited from nearly 500 hours of performance improvement coaching and examiner teams have contributed almost 1000 hours to community assessments and feedback—all free of charge.

Innovator Awards are presented annually to one organization in each of Southern Growth's 13 member states in recognition of initiatives that are improving economic opportunities and quality of life in the region. The *2010 Innovator Awards* were chosen from creative initiatives in the region that aim to help communities recover from the recession. One award winner per week will be announced in Southern Growth's e-newsletter, Southern Compass, leading up to an official recognition of all awardees at

[Southern Growth's Chairman's Conference, June 7-8, 2010 in Lexington, Kentucky](#). For more information on Southern Growth's Innovator Awards program or Chairman's Conference, contact Ted Abernathy, Executive Director, Southern Growth Policies Board, at (919) 941-5145 or tabernathy@southern.org.

About Southern Growth Policies Board

Southern Growth Policies Board is a regional public policy think tank based in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Formed by the region's governors in 1971, Southern Growth Policies Board develops and advances visionary economic development policies by providing a forum for collaboration among a diverse cross-section of the region's governors, legislators, business and academic leaders and the economic and community development sectors. Southern Growth provides its members, and the region, with authoritative research, discussion forums and pilot projects in the areas of technology and innovation, globalization, workforce development, community development, civic engagement and leadership. To learn more about Southern Growth Policies Board, visit www.southern.org.