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Press Release

For Immediate Release

Lake County Chambers Introduce a New Alliance

(October 6, 2005) After nine months of discussions and meetings, six Chambers of Commerce in Lake County, representing 2,530 businesses and organizations, have agreed to form a new partnership. Over the last month, the Boards of Directors of the Leesburg, Tavares, Lake Eustis, Mt. Dora, Lady Lake, and South Lake Chambers approved participation in what is to be called the Chamber Alliance of Lake County.

The purpose of the Chamber Alliance is to assist individual Lake County chambers in communicating with elected officials, and to encourage the participation of individual chamber members in the legislative process. The Alliance will focus on addressing local issues that are of common concern to businesses throughout Lake County. Each Chamber that participates in the Alliance will be independent and will continue to provide traditional member programs and services.

With over 90% of Lake County businesses having less than 50 employees, the area's small businesses generally rely on trade associations or chambers of commerce to represent their interests to the various levels of government. While large trade associations at the State and National level have full-time staff and lobbyists, local chambers rarely have full-time staff to focus on legislative affairs addressing local issues. The Alliance will allow local volunteer chamber members and staff to work cooperatively to address common issues.

"Our chamber members, both from the public and private sectors, are impacted everyday by local, state and federal laws. The Chamber Alliance will help us better

represent our members interests with the various levels of government,” stated Ray San Fratello, Executive Director of the South Lake Chamber of Commerce.

The first major project of the Alliance will be working to get more businesses to participate in Lake County Legislative Days in Tallahassee, scheduled this year for February 13-14, 2006. The Alliance plans on hosting a breakfast during the event that will serve to educate chamber members on the legislative issues that will impact Lake County, and training business leaders on how to communicate with legislative leaders during the event.

“I am pleased that the Chambers are working together through this new group. Elected officials in Lake County and Tallahassee need to hear from the business community on issues that directly impact their businesses and our communities,” noted Debbie Stivender, Lake County Commissioner.

Organization details, committees, meeting schedules, etc. will be determined after key volunteer leaders and Chamber Executives get together to flesh out the Alliance agenda.

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