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Indiana Chamber Names Jean Wojtowicz Business Leader of the Year

November 17, 2011 (INDIANAPOLIS) — Positively contributing to the state's economy and workforce by connecting small businesses with funding options and vital entrepreneurial advice has earned Jean Wojtowicz the Indiana Chamber of Commerce's 2011 Business Leader of the Year recognition. Wojtowicz, president of Indianapolis-based Cambridge Capital Management Corp., received the honor tonight at the Chamber's 22nd Annual Awards Dinner in downtown Indianapolis.

The event took place at the JW Marriott before a crowd of nearly 1,500 business, civic and political leaders. Governor Mitch Daniels provided the welcoming remarks while Pittsburgh Steelers legend and Fox commentator Terry Bradshaw delivered the keynote speech. The awards dinner was presented in partnership with Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield.

Wojtowicz grew up in a family where building and running businesses was part of everyday life. Childhood memories include helping fill orders for fishing lures patented by her grandfather and working at a local movie theater her parents owned. Although she considered following in her father's footsteps with a real estate career, Wojtowicz ultimately carved her own entrepreneurial path. She founded Cambridge, a manager of non-traditional sources of capital for small businesses, in 1983.

Since then, Cambridge has assisted approximately 1,200 Hoosier businesses by investing more than \$800 million. But the value clients receive is far more than monetary, says Indiana Chamber President Kevin Brinegar.

"In helping businesses start up and grow, she's not just assisting with financing but also with leadership. In some cases, it's helping place the right people in these companies and then mentoring, leading and developing the management of these companies as well.

"Through her company, there's so much that she's done to grow and develop small businesses in our state," Brinegar concludes.

It's this process – watching clients' ideas turn into reality – which Wojtowicz finds most gratifying.

"It's really rewarding when you can drive down the street and you can point to companies that you know you've had some small role in helping those companies grow

and expand. It's even more important when we hear from some of those businesses about the number of jobs they've created and the number of families that are now relying on those businesses for their livelihood," she shares.

The number of jobs positively impacted by Cambridge resources is 33,000 and counting.

Wojtowicz also devotes a sizeable portion of her time to volunteer activities on numerous non-profit and company boards.

"Jean is one of the most optimistic, talented and hard-working people I know. Those qualities are a powerful combination not only for serving her clients, but also the Indiana Chamber and the many other organizations for which she gives of her time," Brinegar offers.

Also honored at the Chamber's Annual Dinner were Speaker of the House Brian Bosma (Indianapolis) and Senate President Pro Tem David Long (Fort Wayne) as Government Leaders of the Year and Kokomo as Community of the Year.

The dinner followed the Chamber's fall board of directors and annual membership meetings. Recognized during a luncheon ceremony as Chamber Volunteers of the Year were Chris LaMothe (Sherry Laboratories) of Daleville, Brian McDermott (Ogletree Deakins) of Indianapolis and Jim McKinney (Regency Properties) of Evansville. In addition, Unified Group Services of Anderson was named 2011 Small Business of the Year.

Mike Wells, president of REI Real Estate Services in Carmel, was elected the Indiana Chamber's 2012 chair of the board of directors.

RECENT INDIANA CHAMBER WINNERS:

Business Leader of the Year

Mike Wells – 2010

John Swisher – 2009

Tony George – 2008

Niel Ellerbrook – 2007

Clarence J. "Mac" McCormick III – 2006

Community of the Year

Terre Haute – 2010

Valparaiso – 2009

Noblesville – 2008

Anderson – 2007

Evansville – 2006

Government Leader of the Year

Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Bennett – 2010
Stan Jones, former state commissioner for higher ed. – 2009
Former Gov. Joe Kernan and Chief Justice of the Indiana Supreme Court Randall
Shepard – 2008
Mayor Graham Richard – 2007
Gov. Mitch Daniels – 2006

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The Indiana Chamber of Commerce is the state's largest broad-based business advocacy and information organization, representing nearly 5,000 member companies that employ 800,000 Hoosier workers.