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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 4, 2014

Jefferson Chamber Recognizes Local Business Champions

METAIRIE, LA – The Jefferson Chamber of Commerce hosted its Business Leadership Awards Luncheon on Thursday, May 29, 2014. A total of 11 awards were presented, recognizing the best in entrepreneurship, achievement, perseverance and community service. Two hundred professionals gathered at the Metairie Country Club for the luncheon. The keynote speaker of the event was Lauren LeBlanc, “the woman behind the much loved New Orleans brand, Fleurty Girl.”

A special highlight from the luncheon was the recognition of the inaugural Joseph Rault Community Leader of the Year Award, which honors a business person whose civic and community service goes beyond normal responsibilities, creating a lasting and beneficial impact for all residents. The Community Leader award was renamed this year to help keep the spirit of Mr. Rault’s dedication to the community alive within the Jefferson Chamber. The award was presented to Leon L. Giorgio by Nick Karl, Assistant Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Peoples Health. Mr. Giorgio is the co-founder and President of Select Properties, Ltd., specializing in real estate acquisitions, investments, development, and management.

The complete list of award recipients includes:

- **Entrepreneurial Spirit Award** – Jeris Freesmeier, with State Farm Insurance
- **Family-Owned Business of the Year** – Daul Insurance Agency
- **Innovator of the Year** – Nola Motorsports Park
- **Large Business of the Year** – The Laitram Corporation
- **Small Business of the Year** – Universal Data Inc.
- **Women-Owned Business of the Year** – Starr Textile Services
- **Joseph Rault Community Leader of the Year, Presented by Peoples Health** – Leon L. Giorgio
- **U.S. Chamber Blue Ribbon Award Winner** – BooKoo Bounce
- **U.S. Chamber Blue Ribbon Award Winner** – FSC Interactive
- **U.S. Chamber Blue Ribbon Award Winner** – PosiGen
- **JEDCO Challenge Winner** - Terry Ancar, with PortaVision Medical

The Jefferson Chamber was delighted to host an event to highlight the accomplishments of both small and large businesses and the impact they have made on the Jefferson Parish business community. In partnership with Presenting Sponsor, First NBC, and Gold Corporate Sponsors, Daul Insurance Agency, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, Laitram, Metairie Bank, Rault Resources Group, Select Properties, Ltd., Universal Data Inc., and University of Phoenix Louisiana Campus, the chamber created an event that is sure to grow and will continue to honor the Jefferson Parish business community.

Note to editors: Photos available upon request.

About Lauren LeBlanc:

Lauren LeBlanc is the woman behind the much loved New Orleans brand, Fleurty Girl. Her personal story and "you-can-do-it spirit" has continued to motivate and inspire people. In May 2009, this single mother of three

took her income tax refund check and invested all of it into her own idea, Fleurty Girl, a unique New Orleans collection of tees and apparel. Within a month, Lauren sold out of her initial inventory and continued to do so every time she came out with more items. Locals fell in love with the brand and tourists sought it out as well. Lauren opened her first shop six months later and today has five retail locations around New Orleans and turned her \$2,000 tax refund check into a multi-million dollar company with over 30 employees.

About the Jefferson Chamber:

The [Jefferson Chamber](#) is a leading voice for Jefferson Parish's business community. As a non-profit, membership-driven organization, the Chamber is an effective advocate for small and large businesses at the local, state and federal levels. The Chamber's mission is to work for the advancement of the business community; to enhance the economic, civic and cultural environment; and to improve the quality of life in Jefferson Parish. The Jefferson Chamber is Four-Star Accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and was awarded the 2013 Chamber of the Year Award by the Louisiana Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives in the Large Chamber Category.

For more information about the Jefferson Chamber, visit www.jeffersonchamber.org, follow on Facebook (facebook.com/jeffersonchamber) and on Twitter [@jeffersoncoc](https://twitter.com/jeffersoncoc).

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