



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber partners with the Space Coast Florida Association of Veteran-Owned Businesses (SCFAVOB) in the *Do Business with America's Best Initiative* – Identifying and advocating for Space Coast Veteran-Owned Businesses

Cocoa Beach, Florida April 26, 2019 – The Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber and the Space Coast Florida Association of Veteran-Owned Businesses (SCFAVOB) have partnered to identify Space Coast Veteran-Owned Businesses (VOB's) who are also Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber Partners. This is part of SCFAVOB's initiative to identify all VOBs on the Space Coast.

“As Veteran-Owned Businesses we are stronger doing business with each other and people want to do business with veteran-owned businesses.” Mack Sasser, SCFAVOB Chair goes on to say, “the public realizes the service and sacrifice of Veterans and understand that these businesses operate on the values of Duty, Honor and Integrity. Instilled in members on active duty, Guard and Reserve service, these values live on in the way they operate their businesses as Veterans.”

However, Mack points out a problem “there is no single source or comprehensive listing of Veteran-Owned Businesses.” There are many organizations, like the chamber, who represent VOBs. In addition, the SBA maintains a list of Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (SDVOSB) for federal contracting and there are other agencies, politicians' offices and organizations that maintain various “lists” of VOBs. “The problem is that we really don't know exactly how many and who runs VOB's on the Space Coast.”

Mack believes there is strength in numbers and knowing how many VOBs reside on the Space Coast is powerful and impactful information. “Think of the opportunity we could create for VOBs if they knew of each other and did more business with each other. Think about consumers and other businesses that would prefer to do business with VOBs. And think of the power of knowing the economic impact of

VOBs in our community – the revenue they generate, the people they employ and what they do to give back to Brevard County in the form of community service.”

In addition, FAVOB (Orlando and Space Coast chapters) advocates for business to be set-aside for VOBs at the local, county, and state-level. Veterans own more than 2.4 million U.S. businesses, about nine percent of American firms. 5500 Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) are registered in the State of Florida. In 2015, the census counted 180,074 Veteran-Owned Businesses in the State of Florida. However, very few state, local municipalities, and county government agencies are utilizing VOBs. Mack Sasser, SCFAVOB Chair, talks about the importance of this data. “We believe if we can identify all Space Coast VOBs, we can better advocate for them and seek to create a level-playing field with other small business programs.” He adds, “SunBiz, the Florida’s Division of Corporations, identifies 2.3 million business entities in Florida. So, we can estimate that VOBs make up about 9% of all Florida businesses or about the national average. If we extrapolate that to Brevard County, of which has approximately 44,000 businesses as of 2012, that’s approximately 3,960 VOBs in Brevard. I would estimate the number to be a little higher based on the percentage of Veterans, retirees and active service members in this county.”

Jennifer Sugarman agrees, “The Chamber is supportive of SCFAVOB efforts. SCFAVOB and many of its members belong to the chamber and work within our clubs, councils and committees.” The chamber supports active duty personnel through its Military Affairs Council (MAC), and is working alongside SCFAVOB to identify all veteran owned businesses. “It’s important for us to let our partners know who has served. We get several calls from the public inquiring about doing business with Veteran-owned businesses.”

“In the Partner Directory on our website we will identify VOBs with a symbol that identifies the chamber partner as a VOB. In addition, if we know all the VOB chamber partners we can communicate the economic impact of VOBs and can advocate for their best interest.”

Eventually SCFAVOB envisions a single listing of VOBs on their website – both members and non-members of SCFAVOB. Mack adds, “the list will serve to communicate the type of business, the number of employees and the community service VOBs provide.”

SCFAVOB supports Space Coast Veteran-Owned Businesses (VOBs) by advocating for Veteran-Owned Businesses, providing education and training opportunities, programs and creating a network of VOBs who support and do business with each other. Learn more about SCFAVOB at:

<https://spacecoastfavob.org>

The Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber of Commerce serves as the voice of business, enhances quality of life in the community and acts as a catalyst for business success. Learn more about the Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber at: [CocoaBeachChamber.com](http://CocoaBeachChamber.com)