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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CED wins Award of Excellence from UEDA

Local organization recognized as national leader in connecting innovation to place

ANCHORAGE, AK—The University of Alaska Center for Economic Development (CED) won a Place + Innovation Award of Excellence from the University Economic Development Association (UEDA) earlier this month for its work co-founding Launch Alaska, the state's first business accelerator. The award recognizes outstanding, leading-edge higher education projects and initiatives promoting economic development and engagement, and the Place + Innovation category highlights projects and initiatives that create physical places that attract and build concentrations of talent and innovators—knowledge communities.

“Launch Alaska is an excellent example of the University playing a key role in an effort to move the state's economy forward. When universities partner with entrepreneurs, investors, and community leaders, amazing things can happen, and we're delighted that our work has been recognized by a national group,” said Nolan Klouda, CED Executive Director. “Our state's economy is undergoing a rapid transition, and we have a responsibility to look beyond the horizon and help build a secure and prosperous future for Alaska - programs like Launch Alaska are a foundational part of transforming our economy.” As a program of the University of Alaska Anchorage Business Enterprise Institute, CED leverages University resources to increase prosperity and economic diversity in Alaska by strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems, understanding economic opportunities for Alaskan communities, and providing leadership and expertise to clients.

Modeled after highly regarded accelerators in the Lower 48 such as Techstars in Boulder, Colorado, which has been instrumental in launching high-profile companies like Uber, the ride-sharing service, Launch Alaska provides an intense training program, mentorship, and financing to help early-stage entrepreneurs create scalable ventures. In its first year of operation, the accelerator was awarded a SBA Accelerator Grant, funded four startups, ran a three-month educational program, built a mentor network with more than 40 mentors, helped three of its companies acquire investment, and funded operations for the next three years through a variety of Department of Defense grants. CED provided grant writing, financial management, and staff continue to serve on the board of Launch Alaska.





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About the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development (CED)

CED is a university-based partnership promoting economic diversity through entrepreneurship, community building, and action oriented strategy. CED is one of 52 University Centers designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

About Launch Alaska

Launch Alaska is powering the founders of our energy future. The non-profit accelerator is bringing together entrepreneurs, members of the military, utility operators, researchers and thought leaders to work toward a shared vision of Alaska as a thriving innovation and entrepreneurial hub. From drones to climate change mitigation, and from electrical grids to cyber security, Alaska holds value and experience that a growing entrepreneurial ecosystem is beginning to capture. Launch Alaska seeks companies that are innovating solutions to make communities and organizations more resilient while tackling real world problems in food, water, transportation, and energy.

About University Economic Development Association (UEDA)

Established in 1976, UEDA is the cornerstone membership organization representing higher education, the private sector, and community economic development stakeholders. UEDA works to expand economic opportunity in our communities by leveraging research, community resources, campus planning, talent development, and technology commercialization. UEDA's mission is to serve its members by enhancing members' abilities to deliver economic development benefits through engagement with higher education.

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