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**News Release**

For Immediate Release

## **GrowFL Announces 2018 Florida Companies to Watch Finalists**

*Custom Manufacturing & Engineering, Inc. Among Second-Stage Businesses  
Competing to Earn Prestigious Honor*

(Pinellas Park, Florida) Custom Manufacturing & Engineering, Inc. was among the first round of 2018 *Florida Companies to Watch* finalists recently announced by GrowFL. The awards event - now in its eighth year - honors 50 select second-stage companies from throughout the state for developing valuable products and services, creating quality jobs, enriching communities, and broadening new industries throughout Florida. Chosen from a candidate pool of 134 growing second-stage businesses, the finalists collectively represented \$518 million in annual revenue and employed 2,743 full-time equivalent employees in 2017.

“We are honored to be a finalist in this prestigious competition.” said Dr. Crews, CEO & President of Custom Manufacturing & Engineering, Inc. She continued “This selection is a credit to our employees for their hard work and dedication to growing the company and giving back to the community.”

The *Florida Companies To Watch* program consists of two rounds of selections. Finalists now advance to the second round, where they will be further evaluated based on their performance in the marketplace, innovative products, services or processes, philanthropy and empowered employees.

“We applaud these first round finalists who have shown how they stand out in their regions as innovative business leaders, going to the next level to grow their companies. They are true rock stars,” says Dr. Tom O’Neal, GrowFL Executive Director.

The Finalists represent a unique group of scalable, high-growth enterprises that are already located within Florida. These high growth enterprises are an important segment of our economy and their numbers have been steadily increasing, which contributed to Florida’s ranking of 24 on the 2018



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## **2018 FLCTW First Round Finalists – Add TWO**

Kauffman Index of Growth Entrepreneurship. According to this report, “entrepreneurship is not a monolithic phenomenon, and it includes many moving parts. Creating new businesses is a different economic activity from running small businesses, which in turn is different from growing businesses.” Florida Companies to Watch recognizes the different approach needed to successfully grow and scale a business and celebrates those that are working to achieve this goal.

Developed by the Edward Lowe Foundation, *Florida Companies To Watch* is a distinguished awards program specifically designed to seek out second-stage businesses from a wide range of industries representing all areas of the state, not just those in major metropolitan areas. In addition to evaluating past growth and projected success, applicant companies are judged according to their special strengths and impact in their markets, communities and within the state – thus deeming them “worth watching.”

The winners will be announced in MID-September. The 2018 honorees will be celebrated at the awards ceremony February 9<sup>th</sup> at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts in Tampa, FL.

For more information visit <https://www.growfl.com/flctw18/>.

### **About CME**

Founded in 1997 and located in Pinellas Park, Florida, CME employs a diverse group of engineering and manufacturing personnel. Customers use our company to provide design, development, and manufacturing solutions for Electrical/Electronic products including Special Cable Assemblies, Custom Power Distribution products, as well as Special Test Equipment, Illuminated Control/Display Panels, and other Electronic Assemblies. CME also produces SiteLites™ brand Portable Work Lights and solar4® solar generation equipment and solar energy STEM training devices. CME has won local and national technology awards and is a developer of innovative products for government, commercial and industrial applications. For more information, see [www.custom-mfg-eng.com](http://www.custom-mfg-eng.com), or contact [sales@custom-mfg-eng.com](mailto:sales@custom-mfg-eng.com), 727-547-9799 Ext. 1202.

### **About GrowFL**

*GrowFL was created in 2009 as an economic development program focused on assisting second-stage growth companies prosper in the state of Florida. By providing strategies, resources and support to second-stage companies for next level growth through Strategic Research, Peer Learning and Leadership Development, GrowFL helps companies overcome obstacles to growth and leads them towards prosperity. Based on the philosophy of Economic Gardening® — to grow existing businesses in a community, region or state — GrowFL, the Florida Economic Gardening Institute, is a critical component to the state’s*

*economic development strategy and Florida's entrepreneurial ecosystem. GrowFL is a statewide economic development organization certified by the National Center for Economic Gardening through the Edward Lowe Foundation. Learn more at [www.GrowFL.com](http://www.GrowFL.com).*

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