

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 5, 2021

Coffee Regional Medical Center Recognized by the Douglas-Coffee County Chamber of Commerce

As has become the norm for in-person gatherings, the Douglas-Coffee County Chamber of Commerce held its 94th Annual Event & Awards Program, "For the Love of Coffee," virtually on Thursday evening, February 4th. This annual celebration of our community recognizes deserving individuals and businesses who consistently give their time and talent, *For the Love of Coffee*.

Each year, at the annual event, the Douglas-coffee County Chamber of Commerce recognizes leaders and businesses dedicated to improving and advancing our community. This year, recognition focused on those who rose to face the challenges of providing safety, security, and healthcare availability within our community during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Coffee County's first responders, healthcare providers, educators, and business owners faced uncharted territory together. While many were battling to keep our community safe and healthy, others were creating innovative methods to educate, provide essential services, and keep their businesses' doors open to meet the needs of our community....all *For the Love of Coffee*.

We are honored to announce that Coffee Regional Medical Center (CRMC) was selected as the recipient of the **2021 Industry Partner of the Year**. The Industry Partner of the Year Award celebrates the contributions of an industry that demonstrates excellence, creativity, or initiatives to support business retention and expansion. Additionally, the industry partner creates an atmosphere for job growth, supports initiative(s) to enhance the economic well-being of Coffee County, and/or demonstrates unique or innovative approaches to business. Introducing and presenting the award to Coffee Regional Medical Center was Marlene Baldree, CRMC Board Member and Past Chair and CRMC Executive Leadership Staff. Marlene so poignantly shared her perspective of the triumphs and tribulations our healthcare system has faced over the

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past year. "There is probably no other business in any community that is more vital than its healthcare facilities. Without local healthcare, business would not come to our town. Additionally, our hospital is one of our community's largest employers. It has been and continues to be responsive to the particular needs of our citizens." She continued, "There are many services that are critical to the health and well-being of our community (offered at CRMC), but none have been more critical to our community than the life-saving efforts of our COVID-19 caregivers. Most of these individuals are truly heroes and give their all to save as many lives as humanly possible from a disease we have yet defeated. I can think of no other business that is more deserving of this award than Coffee Regional." Vicki Lewis, President and CEO of Coffee Regional, was then welcomed to accept the award and shared her thoughts on this recognition. "The resilience of the human spirit has been tested over the past year. And the test has been a fierce one, fought on long days and even longer nights by every one of our caregivers and our physicians. It has felt like a battle; it has zapped our energy and far too many times separated families and brought tears to our eyes. But the past months have also done something else. Working through the Pandemic has brought us together as an even stronger team, strengthened our faith in God and each other, and allowed us to witness miracles." Lewis continued, "Being recognized as the Industry Partner of the Year is truly an honor and means so much to all of us at Coffee Regional Medical Center. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for honoring us with this recognition and for trusting us with your care. We will always keep each of you at the center of all that we do. Please stay well."

Additionally, Vicki Lewis, President and CEO of Coffee Regional, was recognized as the **2021 Jackie Wilson Women in Leadership Award** recipient. The Jackie Wilson Women in Leadership Award celebrates women as valued members and leaders of the community. It honors an individual who strives toward the highest level of personal and professional accomplishments that ultimately benefit the well-being of Coffee County. This individual demonstrates excellence, creativity and initiative in their profession or community service, and provides valuable services by devoting time and energy to improving the quality of life for others. The Douglas-Coffee County Chamber of

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Commerce Board of Directors agreed that our very own, Vicki Lewis, embodies all of these things as she has proven herself invaluable to our healthcare system during these challenging times. As part of her acceptance speech, Vicki shared, "What I do is certainly not a solo flight; it is a journey with many great people who are always ready to take on new challenges; balance our scorecard and keep fighting the good fight. While I proudly accept this recognition, I do so on behalf of our entire team. To the Coffee Regional Medical Center team, thanks to each of you for making my job easier and assuring that **our** team continues to elevate the quality and safety of our patient care. Like Jackie Wilson, you each are each and every one, truly inspiring."

Coffee Regional Medical Center would like to offer a special thanks to the Douglas-Coffee County Chamber of Commerce and their board of directors for the nomination and recognition of both awards.