



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Three Organizations Honored with Governor's Sterling Award and Georgia Oglethorpe Award**

*~ Florida Sterling Council Honors Three Diverse Role Model Organizations ~*

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. –The Florida Sterling Council today announced the Pinellas County Tax Collector and the USF Federal Credit Union in Tampa are recipients of the Governor's Sterling Award for 2020. In addition, Wellstar Kennestone Hospital in Marietta, Georgia, is the recipient of the prestigious Georgia Oglethorpe Award for 2020.

### **Governor's Sterling Award and Georgia Oglethorpe Award**

With these three recipients, the Florida Sterling Council has now recognized 89 organization since 1992. Combined, the two state award processes have recognized excellence for over 50 years, honoring organizations and businesses that have successfully achieved performance excellence within their management and operations. The Florida Sterling Council partnered with the Georgia Oglethorpe Award in 2018 to administer its processes.

#### **Pinellas County Tax Collector**

The Pinellas County Tax Collector, headquartered in Clearwater, Florida, has 281 employees who provide services to residents from seven locations throughout Pinellas County. Total collections are approximately \$2 billion annually in taxes and fees, which are distributed among 67 taxing authorities. The Tax Collector also provides services for Motor Vehicle titles and registrations, Driver Licenses, Concealed Weapons licenses, and Birth Certificates.

The Pinellas County Tax Collector demonstrates excellent performance levels in the areas of customer service, process effectiveness and efficiency, workforce engagement, and governance and financial management. Customer satisfaction for walk-in customers was rated at 98.6% in Fiscal Year 2019. Overall workforce satisfaction achieved 90% in Fiscal Year 2019. Annual expenditures have remained below budget for Fiscal Years 2016 through 2019. Finally, the annual external audit resulted in zero findings from Fiscal Years 2016 through 2019, including zero recommendations from external auditors.

*The Pinellas County Tax Collector is the first Tax Collector in Florida to be recognized three times as a Sterling role-model organization, including being a recipient of the Governor's Sterling Award in 2013 and recipient of the Governor's Sterling Sustained Excellence Award in 2016.*

#### **USF Federal Credit Union**

USF Federal Credit Union (USF FCU) is a full-service financial institution headquartered in Tampa, FL, with more than 60,000 members. The credit union is a member-owned, not-for-profit financial cooperative established in 1959. It serves the financial needs of faculty, staff and thousands of students at the University of South Florida. Since 1990, it expanded to include additional employee groups in health care

and education. It currently serves over 40 employee groups including Tampa General Hospital. In 2015, the credit union created two more unique divisions, Darden Credit Union and Red Lobster Credit Union. USF FCU participates in shared branching across the country, with more than 5,000 shared branches.

USF Federal Credit Union consistently demonstrates sustained high levels of performance that exceed relevant comparisons in measures of its core competencies, including financial stability and expense control, workforce engagement, and competing in a rapidly changing technological environment.

The credit union sustained a net worth ratio of over 10% for 2015 to 2019, exceeding the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) Well Capitalized benchmark of 7%. It increased its return on average assets from 0.59% in 2015 to 1.22% in 2019, surpassing the NCUA peer group average of 0.82% and all Florida average of 0.84% in 2019. Overall employee engagement increased from 54% in 2014 to 85% in 2019, exceeding the Mercer global top quartile benchmark of 83% in 2019. Competing in a rapidly changing technological environment, the credit union's active online banking users increased from 44% in 2017 to 84.9% in 2019, surpassing the Raddon Financial Group peer average of 73.6% in 2019. Additionally, active mobile banking users increased from 28% in 2017 to 52% in 2019, exceeding the Cornerstone Credit Union League industry average of 49% in 2019.

The credit union's leadership and employees actively support, identify, and strengthen its key communities and determine areas of focus for involvement. Notable achievements include contributing over \$35,000 in hurricane assistance to victims of Hurricane Michael, second only to a much larger similar institution.

*The USF Federal Credit Union is a first-time recipient of the Governor's Sterling and Georgia Oglethorpe Award.*

### **Wellstar Kennestone Hospital**

Wellstar Kennestone Hospital is a non-profit, academic tertiary care center located in Marietta, Georgia, and part of the nationally recognized non-profit WellStar Health System. The system includes 11 hospitals, 15 urgent care centers, 28 imaging centers, five health parks and more than 2,600 physicians throughout Georgia.

In 2006, the facility became the first in Georgia to introduce the advanced treatment of cancer through leading technology using Cyberknife robotic radiosurgery. Multiple expansions added services and capabilities with completion of the last Tower in 2013, currently operating 633 beds. Emergency services include a Level II Trauma Center and a Pediatric Emergency Department. Inpatient services include cardiovascular, cardiopulmonary, intensive care, neuroscience, oncology and orthopedics. Outpatient services include cardiovascular, cardiopulmonary, women's services, and imaging services.

The organization has established a core competency of "Culture of Compassionate Caring," which is demonstrated through its sustained world-class performance for patient rounding. For example, the hospital improved the process of discussing the patient plan of care by moving it inside the patient's room so that the patient and family could participate in the plan of care conversations.

The hospital has consistently demonstrated sustained high levels of performance that exceed relevant comparisons in measures of its core competencies: patient safety and financial and market performance. Mortality rate, a measure of patient safety, demonstrates high performance of observed to expected (O/E) mortalities compared to the top 25% O/E hospitals across the nation with the 2019

performance of 0.60. Central Line Associated Blood Stream Infections demonstrate a positive observed to expected (O/E) trend with FY 2017 at 0.863, FY 2018 at 0.67 and FY 2019 at 0.46, all well below the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) benchmark comparison of 1.0 O/E rate.

The percent of “Operating Margin (%)” has favorably increased from 10.5% in FY 2017 to 14.4% in FY 2019 (annualized), exceeding the S&P benchmark of 8%, sustaining the system’s bond ratings at an A2 rating from Moody’s and an A rating from S&P for FY 2016 through FY 2019.

For the last 70 years, the hospital has been a pinnacle in the Marietta community. From 2017-2019, their community outreach efforts resulted in 11,032 events and 661,595 participants. In 2019, the hospital held 3,804 events with more than 226,000 participants.

*Wellstar Kennestone Hospital is a first-time recipient of the Governor’s Sterling and Georgia Oglethorpe Award.*

**About the Governor’s Sterling Award**

*Established in 1992, the Florida Sterling Council is a public/private not-for-profit corporation supported by the Executive Office of the Governor. The Council oversees the Governor’s Sterling Award for Performance Excellence and administers the Georgia Oglethorpe Award. The Awards are presented annually by the Governor to high performing, role-model organizations, both private and public, who demonstrate superior management approaches and role model results. The Awards are presented at the culmination of the annual Sterling Conference that teaches participants how to elevate performance and increase productivity. Due to COVID-19, the Awards will be formally presented at the next year’s Annual Conference, June 4, 2021. Nearly 700 executives and professionals gather at this event each year for a one-stop source for education, information and inspiration. The conference concludes with the recognition of best practices and the Team Showcase Champion. For more information, contact Dione Geiger at (850) 922-5316 or visit [www.floridasterling.com](http://www.floridasterling.com).*