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PRESS RELEASE

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Boulder Chamber Announces 2015 Esprit Entrepreneur Award Honorees

The Boulder Chamber today announced the winners of the 2015 Esprit Entrepreneur awards. Each year, the Chamber recognizes exceptional local businesses and individuals, celebrating the success of their entrepreneurial endeavors and their contributions to the community's economic vitality. The awards will be presented on November 18 during the Esprit Entrepreneur event in the new Touchdown Club at the University of Colorado's Folsom Field.

"The Boulder Chamber takes pride in presenting the Esprit Entrepreneur awards to these outstanding entrepreneurial Boulder businesses and leaders," stated John Tayer, President and CEO of the Boulder Chamber. "All the award winners represent the diversity of innovation and the spirit of entrepreneurship that is the foundation of Boulder's economy."

This year's honorees are:

Entrepreneur of the Year - To **Sphero**, for demonstrating innovative spirit, determination and values that exemplify the Boulder community's brand of entrepreneurship. Having graduated from Techstars in 2010 as Orbotix, Sphero has virtually created a new category of app-enabled connected play toys, including the "BB-8" Droid from the latest *Star Wars* movie. Sphero is now the industry leader in connected play, redefining the consumer-toy relationship as toys become smarter to create ever-evolving experiences. Furthermore, Sphero also demonstrates its strong corporate values in its long-time recognition as one of Colorado's top places to work.

Entrepreneur Legacy Award – To **Dave Query**, founder of the **Big Red F Restaurant Group**, for building a lasting tradition of success, bold vision and values that is a model for other entrepreneurs and businesses to follow. Each of Dave's celebrated restaurants is driven by passionate chefs, sourcing ingredients with integrity and practicing culinary technique to its best measure for over 20 years. Moreover, they're dedicated to the best Boulder traditions of hospitality and grace, helping make the city a Mecca for great dining. In addition, Dave's restaurants are renowned for contributing back to the community through their support of numerous non-profit events and their environmentally responsible practices.

Entrepreneurial Community Builder Award – To **Peter Grant Johnson**, for his work and volunteer service as he helped shape Boulder's entrepreneurial culture that drives our innovative spirit. Before his untimely passing and still today, Peter was and is lovingly renowned as a "Champion for Good," bringing people together to build a better community. World-class Olympian, business trailblazer and "networking czar" of the Van Heyst Group, Peter embodied Boulder's spirit of optimism, innovation and collaborative creativity. To those many who knew Peter, he exemplified the notion that together we can create a better world.

For the second year, the Boulder Chamber will crown the winner of the Esprit Venture Challenge to be selected at the event. This year, visionary startup social entrepreneurs will compete for big cash prizes by demonstrating how they will do good while doing well: using their business skills to help solve big problems. You can help your favorite startup get to the final round in the Esprit Venture Challenge at <https://www.publicprize.com/esprit-venture-challenge#/contestants>, with the winner being selected by audience vote at the Esprit Entrepreneur celebration on November 18.

Esprit Entrepreneur, Boulder's premier event supporting business entrepreneurship, is teaming up with NewCo Boulder this year to present a truly unique two-day experience. The event will start with the Esprit Entrepreneur program on November 18 that includes a networking reception and Jeffersonian dinner in the New Touchdown Club at CU-Boulder's Folsom Field along with the final round completion for the Esprit Venture Challenge. Then, on November 19, NewCo Boulder will feature onsite presentations at local businesses that embody this area's innovation and entrepreneurial leadership.

For more information about the Esprit Entrepreneur event and to register, please visit <http://cm.boulderchamber.com/events/details/esprit-entrepreneur-6125>

This year's sponsors for Esprit Entrepreneur include Elevations Credit Union, the University of Colorado Boulder, EKS&H business advisors, Colorado PERA, Terrapin Care Station, Google, Anthem BlueCross Blue Shield, BizWest, the Daily Camera, Metzger Albee Public Relations, bivio and Hazel's Beverage World.

About the New Esprit Entrepreneur

Esprit Entrepreneur is the Boulder community's annual celebration of its innovation economy and entrepreneurial business culture. This year the Boulder Chamber has re-envisioned Esprit, joining forces with NewCo Boulder, the innovative festival platform that features "businesses on a mission": identifying, celebrating and connecting companies that create positive changes in our society. This new partnership will create an exciting mashup of awards, networking and storytelling along with great food and drink for a truly memorable experience.

About the Boulder Chamber

The nonprofit Boulder Chamber is the region's flagship business support and advocacy organization. With more than 100 years of experience, its innovative programs include business services, advocacy, and promotion of economic vitality. Together with its member organizations, the Boulder Chamber is building a smarter, more vibrant economy – establishing the region as a global capital of innovation and an economic powerhouse. For more information, visit the Chamber's Website at <http://boulderchamber.com/> .

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