



For Immediate Release

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TREO's BJ Smith Named Workforce Practitioner of the Year

– *Smith Awarded by the Arizona Association for Economic Development at Annual Event* –

Tucson, AZ (May 4, 2007) – BJ Smith was named the 2007 Workforce Practitioner of the Year by the Arizona Association for Economic Development (AAED) during an annual awards ceremony held May 3 in Lake Havasu City, AZ.

Smith currently works as TREO's Vice President of Investor Relations. She has a long history in economic development with a focus on workforce development, and continues to support workforce issues through board memberships and mentoring of local businesses.

"BJ Smith is a one of a kind visionary who has the rare gift of flawless implementation, which unerringly benefits the entire community. She has creatively and effectively combined economic and workforce development to help reduce poverty while providing businesses with a skilled workforce," said Suzanne Lawder, President and CEO of Goodwill Industries. "Through her leadership and innovative job training/business collaborations, she has set a new standard for creative ways communities can support positive economic development." Smith played a critical role in launching Goodwill's "Ready to Earn" workforce training program.

In her career as an economic development specialist, BJ has assisted more than 136 businesses to access \$23 million worth of training grants/programs. Those dollars provided the funds for 15,200 incumbent workers/employees and 4,900 net new hires to receive training to update and/or expand their skill, increase their earning potential, and become more valuable employees. Since TREO's formation, BJ's efforts in workforce development have helped more than 50 local companies upgrade employee skills with more than \$4 million in job training grant awards.

"Because of BJ's efforts in workforce development, many Arizona employees are providing a better quality of life for their families through higher wages and career advancement opportunities provided by the technology industry," said Joe Snell, President & CEO for TREO.

"It is truly an honor to be recognized by my peers for my efforts in workforce development. At the same time, it is important that recognition be directed to the businesses in the community that have chosen to invest in employee training and development," said Smith.

About TREO (Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities, Inc.)

TREO's mission is to provide insight, infrastructure, resources and development efforts to accelerate economic prosperity throughout the Southern Arizona region. Combining programs and services into one organization, TREO supports the creation of new business, the growth and expansion of existing businesses, and the attraction of companies that offer high-impact jobs and share the community's values. For more information, visit www.treoaz.org.