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Governor's Innovation Task Force presents its final report to Governor Greitens

St. Louis, MO

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Today, Missouri Governor Eric Greitens received the final summary report of the Governor's Innovation Task Force (GITF), an effort conducted under the auspices of the Hawthorn Foundation. Members of the GITF steering committee presented the report and discussed its findings with the Governor today at Center for Emerging Technologies (CET) in St. Louis, before the Governor met with Blake Marggraff, the founder CEO of Epharmix, and toured the startup.

On June 19, the Governor launched the Task Force. He charged a group of leaders from businesses, innovation organizations, academia, and the public and private sectors to take a fresh look at how the state of Missouri supports entrepreneurship today and into the future.

In launching the Task Force, Governor Greitens said: "Accelerating the growth of good paying jobs is critical to Missouri's future. Missouri must find smart, efficient ways to support innovation, entrepreneurs, and new technology start-ups. While Missouri has emerged as a hub for innovation in the Midwest, more must be done if we are to remain competitive and reach Missouri's full potential as a national leader. The work of the Governor's Innovation Task Force will ensure that Missouri's strategy is informed by the best minds from business, nonprofits, and government."

The Governor asked the Task Force to take stock of where Missouri stands and then offer options of what the State of Missouri could do to help business builders and innovators succeed. He asked it to complete its work by the end of August.

Responding to the Governor's charge, the Hawthorn Foundation supported a 33-member steering committee with representatives from academia, business, entrepreneurs,

government, civic organizations, and entrepreneur ecosystem partners across Missouri. All volunteered their time.

In less than 80 days, the Task Force completed its work. During that time, the Task Force engaged in an unprecedented effort to get input from Missourians, including:

- Conducting five roundtables involving ~250 expert and entrepreneurs in St. Louis, Kansas City, Columbia, Springfield, and Cape Girardeau.
- Engaging more than 2,000 participants in four surveys supported pro bono by Waggl, that generated more than 30,000 unique responses.
- Holding 30+ in depth conversations with subject matter experts and additional conversations with corporate chief innovation officers.
- Problem-solving with entrepreneurship experts from the Kauffman Foundation.

The Task Force's final summary report was completed on August 31, 2017 to meet the Governor's deadline. It provides a detailed, fact-based assessment of where Missouri innovation stands relative to other states, and presents a series of options for government leaders to consider to help the entrepreneurs and startups with access to an improved business environment, talent, ideas, capital and credit, and, finally, a better brand for the state.

By delivering its report, the Governor's Innovation Task Force has now completed its work and will disband. The expectation is that the dialogue started by this effort will continue and help inform the state government's innovation priorities.

Al Purcell, chairman of the Hawthorn Foundation's Executive Committee, said: "We are delighted that the Hawthorn Foundation could help convene leaders from across the state for this important initiative. We look forward to helping with other task forces to help improve the effectiveness of our government for the citizens of Missouri."

The Task Force's report and additional information on the Foundation can be found by visiting www.hawthornfoundation.org. The work of the Task Force can also be followed with the hashtag #MOInnovationTF on Twitter and LinkedIn.

Ex-Officio Members:

Senator Kit Bond (1973-1977, 1981-1985)

General John Ashcroft (1985-1993) (93)

Governor Roger Wilson (2000-2001) (01)

Governor Bob Holden (2001-2005)

Governor Matt Blunt (2005-2009)

Governor Jay Nixon (2009-2017)

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Here is what Task Force Steering Committee members from across Missouri have to say as the Governor’s Innovation Task Force concluded its work:

Dr. Dedric Carter, Vice Chancellor for Operations and Technology Transfer, Washington University in St. Louis (St. Louis, MO) said: “Advancing Missouri to a position of greater prominence on the national and international innovation landscape is an ambitious goal. The process of engagement launched by the Governor’s Innovation Task Force has created a foundation of interaction, dialogue, idea generation, and introspection that is essential to success. Towards that end we pulled together research and translation leaders in the first phase of an ongoing dialogue that will help bridge the gap between discovery and commercial application in Missouri. We are poised for many more steps in this direction.”

Ms. Heather Fischer, Executive Director, Ozarks Small Business Incubator (West Plains, MO) said: “Serving on the Steering Committee for the Governor’s Innovation Task Force) has allowed me to be a voice for rural entrepreneurs. At the Ozarks Small Business Incubator we have witnessed first-hand the challenges facing rural businesses. One area often overlooked is the provision of basic infrastructure, i.e. broadband, to attract rural technology. I believe the GITF provides a good starting point in the recognition of rural technology issues and provides tangible recommendations to bridge the gaps and create a whole state initiative to advance technology innovation.”

Ms. Wendy Guilles, President & CEO, Kauffman Foundation (Kansas City, MO) said: “The task force listened to many voices around the state and rigorously identified the challenges facing entrepreneurs in Missouri. We know that the entrepreneurship drives most net new jobs in our state. Last year, the Kauffman Foundation encouraged policy makers to identify small and large barriers to new business creation and reverse the long-term decline in entrepreneurship. The State of Missouri has a chance to lead the nation by implementing this Zero Barriers approach. It’s time to focus our economic development on solutions that break down barriers so that every person – regardless of their background – can take risks, achieve success, and contribute to the growth of our communities.”

Mr. Chris Motley, Founder and CEO of Better Workdays (St. Louis, MO) said: “I think that a focus on the entrepreneurial experience is a fantastic way to frame the

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initiative and approach. This way, it does not limit innovation to only one aspect of the experience and provides others with a quick way to contribute to it.”

Mr. Tim Noonan, Founder at NICE Glass (St. Louis, MO) said: “Having had the privilege to serve at one of America’s globally-elite companies and now as an investor and entrepreneur, the most important discussion we can have for our state’s economy is how to create jobs through innovation and starting-up. We are planting the seeds for a new generation of globally elite companies that will come of age in Missouri for years to come.”

State Senator Caleb Rowden (Columbia, MO) said: “Missouri is primed and ready to grow in innovation and entrepreneurship. It is time for us to take a serious look at what the state’s role is in supporting this sector of our economy.”

Mr. Bill Turpin, President and CEO, Missouri Innovation Center (Columbia, MO) said: “I was very happy to be involved with the task force. The process produced several “out of the box” options to meet the Governor’s criteria of being bold, actionable, and affordable. I believe these options could significantly improve the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Missouri.”

Mr. Andrew Smith, Vice President, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, St. Louis Regional Chamber of Commerce (St. Louis, MO) said: “There is no single solution or silver bullet when it comes to promoting entrepreneurship in Missouri. A thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem depends on the availability of capital and credit, access to talent, and a favorable regulatory environment. The Task Force’s report is comprehensive in its scope and bold in its vision, and the process over the summer was both rigorous and highly collaborative.”

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