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News Contact:

Ashley Billings

Axia Public Relations for SMART Financial

530-521-8396 mobile



Ernst & Young Selects John Thedford as Entrepreneur Of The Year[®] 2019 Award Finalist in Florida

ORLANDO, Fla. – Ernst & Young announced that John Thedford of SMART Financial is a finalist for the Entrepreneur Of The Year[®] 2019 Award in Florida. Widely considered one of the most prestigious business awards programs in the U.S., the program recognizes entrepreneurs and leaders of high-growth companies who are excelling in areas such as innovation, financial performance and personal commitment to their businesses and communities while also transforming our world.

Thedford was also a finalist for this award in 2008. A panel of independent judges selected him for this honor. Ernst & Young will announce award winners at a special gala event on Thursday, June 13, 2019, at the Hilton Orlando.

“I am honored to be a finalist alongside so many other high-achieving entrepreneurs throughout the state of Florida,” Thedford says. “I have dedicated my career and personal life to creating a better team member work experience by engaging our people in meaningful work, providing comprehensive training to increase productivity and rewarding them with higher wages.”

Thedford is the founder of SMART Financial, a speciality financial retail company that operates 66 pawn stores in eight states and three Canadian provinces employing 525 team members. The company is based in Orlando. Thedford is the founder of several other successful corporations, including Value Pawn & Jewelry. He is the author of the book *Smart Moves Management*, which focuses on cultivating world-class people and building winning team cultures.

About SMART Financial

SMART Financial is a fast-growing consumer financial services and retail store company. It currently operates 66 retail pawn stores across North America with plans to actively acquire and open new stores. The company has grown from zero to 66 stores in 27 months and last year’s annual revenue exceeded \$75M. SMART Financial’s philosophy and practice of focusing on recruiting, training and incenting first-class sales and lending associate talent is one of its key differentiators within the industry. Visit smartfinancialent.com to learn more.

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