



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 13, 2018

### **WILMINGTON CHAMBER WINS NATIONAL AWARD FOR COMMUNICATIONS**

Wilmington, NC — The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce has been named one of 13 Communications Excellence Grand Award winners by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE), an Alexandria, Va.-based association that represents more than 8,000 chamber of commerce professionals and 1,300 chambers of commerce around the world. The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce was named a “Grand Award” winner in the Campaigns category for the “Choose Cape Fear” regional economic development marketing campaign.

Recognizing the opportunity the Wells Fargo Golf Championship would bring to the Cape Fear Region in May 2017, the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, through its flagship initiative Cape Fear Future, devised a marketing initiative designed to showcase the region as a great place to start or relocate a business. To achieve its regional marketing goal, the Chamber coalesced the region’s economic development organizations to participate in the marketing effort that would become known as Choose Cape Fear. Public relations/marketing firm Eckel & Vaughan was hired to create the campaign, including creative elements (logo, tagline, ads, etc.), messaging, and campaign implementation.

“Many individuals and organizations participated in the work that led to the creation of the Choose Cape Fear campaign. Eckel & Vaughan did a superb job capturing the essence of our region and the opportunities it presents to prospective businesses through their clever messaging and approach to the campaign,” said Chamber President & CEO Natalie English. “We are proud that our Cape Fear Future board, our local governments, Eckel & Vaughan and the economic development organizations that have participated with us in the campaign can share in the honor.”

After an initial funding commitment from Cape Fear Future, local governments supported the campaign as well, including the City of Wilmington, New Hanover County, Town of Leland, and the Columbus County Jobs Foundation.

The Wilmington Chamber now qualifies to compete for the Best in Show award, which will be announced July 18 at the ACCE Annual Convention in Des Moines, Iowa.

ACCE’s Awards for Communications Excellence program, sponsored by Golden Openings, Inc., is designed to showcase top communications and marketing work of chambers of commerce

and similar organizations. Several thousand award entries have been submitted since the launch of the organization's Awards for Communications Excellence, which is now in its thirty-fourth year.

A panel of communications and marketing professionals from five U.S.-based chambers of commerce evaluated entries, which were organized by category — based on the chamber's annual budget — and entry type: advertising and marketing, campaigns, digital and publications. Judges awarded 13 Grand Awards out of more than 150 submitted entries in 2018. Winners of the Grand Award go on to compete for the Best in Show, which recognizes the best piece across all categories.

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***About the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce***

The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce is the largest membership-based business association in Southeastern North Carolina. The Chamber's mission is to ensure economic prosperity by cultivating business growth throughout our region. This is accomplished by: creating a diverse, inclusive organization that serves as a strong voice for businesses in the Greater Wilmington area; offering unique membership benefits, services and education; and challenging government officials to address long term community and business interests.

***About the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives***

The Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, founded in 1914, serves more than 8,000 chamber of commerce professionals, and 1,300 chambers of commerce or similar organizations, around the world. ACCE's members come from nearly each of the largest 100 metropolitan regions in the United States. Based in Alexandria, Virginia, the mission of ACCE is to support chamber professionals so they can lead their communities. Learn more about us by visiting [www.ACCE.org](http://www.ACCE.org).

***About the award sponsor, Golden Openings, Inc.***

Golden Openings, Inc., sponsor of the Awards for Communications Excellence, is a one-of-a-kind business that offers a wide variety of products and services for grand opening, ribbon cutting, ground breaking and key to the city needs. The company has been in business over 17 years and has coordinated over 10,000 events and worked with over 8,000 chambers. Golden Openings' many awards include the 2017 U.S. Chamber of Commerce 'Dream Big' Small Business of the Year and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce 2017 'Community Champion' award. For more information, visit [www.goldenopenings.com](http://www.goldenopenings.com).