FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Steve Tirey 239-275-2102 February 3, 2011

Southwest Florida College & The Chamber of Southwest Florida Move Forward Together

FORT MYERS (February 03, 2011) Today, one individual along with two of the region's institutions serving both education and business announced a change designed to benefit each organization and the community.

Stephen Tirey, President and CEO of The Chamber of Southwest Florida has announced his retirement as an employee of the regional chamber of commerce. He has served as the CEO since 1989. He began his Chamber career in the region in 1981 with a predecessor to the regional chamber of commerce. Tirey will continue his service to The Chamber as a volunteer member of the Board of Directors where he will continue to aid in the transition to a new CEO. Tirey's community service of 29 years is not ending. He is in transition.

In the next several weeks, Tirey will begin a new professional position as "Director of Industry Partnerships and Graduate Placement" for Southwest Florida College. In his new role he will have regional responsibility for brand building, governmental affairs and placement assistance for graduates from the institution. His new responsibilities include campuses currently in Lee, Charlotte & Hillsborough counties. According to Stephen Calabro, President of Southwest Florida College, "Southwest Florida College is seeking to expand the concept of partnering with Industry and is tailoring it's curriculum to meet the skills employers demand. The college is educating a talented regional workforce in high demand occupations that we believe will attract new Employers to the market. Steve Tirey has the experience and vision to make such a partnership happen."

Tirey's acceptance of the new position means a "broader outreach" for the institution. "As a private post-secondary school we are investing in our regional relationships with the community. We produce some very well qualified and highly motivated graduates that are ready to help us re-tool our regional economy. We are actively demonstrating our interest and willingness to be a participant and a leader in the economic development of our region. We are thrilled at the opportunity to attract the steady consistent leadership and vision that Steve Tirey brings to our senior management team."

Richard Lewis, HSA Scientists and Engineers is the current Chairman for the regional Chamber of Commerce. He will head up the transition team made up of past Chamber Chairpersons and search for a new President and CEO for the Chamber. Today Lewis offered, "This is a unique win-win-win for The Chamber, The College and Steve Tirey. Our working Board and volunteer-driven Program of Action will continue to work with Steve and his successor to build our

Continued…….

regional Chamber of Commerce. Service to our members and the community will be seamless. We will have the benefit of Steve's time and industry experience as a volunteer. While we are open to a national search to fill the open position, we hope to hear from those in our regional community who may have the qualifications and interest to fill this position as Chief Executive for The Chamber."

When asked about all of this 'new opportunity', Tirey states, "I found the Chamber of Commerce profession by service to the community as a volunteer early in my professional life. To return to being one of the volunteers from service in a professional staff role is a wonderful full circle. I am looking forward to this re-invention of my daily responsibilities and the opportunity to be of service in building our regional community. I want to thank all those individuals and companies who have worked with me over the years to make Southwest Florida a better place to work, live and conduct business."

The Chamber of Southwest Florida is a regional business membership organization with members in Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades Counties. Chamber members are regional employers and many provide products and services across the region. For more information visit: http://www.chamber-swflorida.com

Southwest Florida College is a private Senior College accredited and licensed to award bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, and diplomas. The college has campus locations serving students in Bonita Springs, Fort Myers, Port Charlotte and Tampa, Florida. For more information visit: http://www.swfc.edu

###