



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jennifer Conoley, APR  
850.215.9965 (office)  
850.527.0999 (cell)**

## **BAY COUNTY EDA HIRES VETERAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPER NEAL WADE AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**(December 8, 2011 – Bay County, FL)** The Bay County Economic Development Alliance (EDA) has selected former Alabama Economic Development Office Director Neal Wade as its new executive director. Wade, who currently serves as senior vice president of economic development for the St. Joe Co., brings 22 years' worth of public and private-sector experience to Bay County's Economic Development Alliance.

"Neal Wade has the depth of experience and track record of creating jobs that will put Bay County on the economic development map," said Glen McDonald, EDA Chairman. During his seven years at the helm of the Alabama Development Office (ADO), Wade helped create some 140,000 new jobs, bringing companies such as Hyundai Heavy Industries, EADS CASA Engineering Center, ThyssenKrupp Steel, Austal USA, Hudson-Alpha Institute for Biotechnology and CGI Group Inc. to the state. He also was involved with expansion projects from companies including Hyundai, Honda, Mercedes-Benz and Toyota. Under his leadership, the Alabama Development Office twice won the title of top state economic development agency in the United States and Alabama's economy has been named best in the Southeast for five straight years by experts in the field.

Bay County is poised for the same caliber of success, Wade said. "We have both business and government leadership united toward bringing the kind of job growth that we want," he said. "The opportunity in this region is ripe, and now it's time to take action." Wade's background will help put Bay County at the forefront of companies looking to relocate. "I've got a deep rolodex and I know most of the site consultants and many company presidents around the country," Wade said. "We've got to get the word out that Bay County is open for business, and that this is a new day in Florida." Equally important, he said, is working with local businesses to try and help them grow. "I want to do everything I can to make local companies as successful as they possibly can be," Wade said.

Gov. Rick Scott applauded the EDA's new hire. "I'm excited about all the new jobs that are going to come to Northwest Florida now that Neal Wade, a proven economic development leader, has joined the Bay County Economic Development Alliance," said Governor Scott. "I look forward to continue working with the Bay County EDA to get Florida back to work."

Wade will begin employment with the EDA on Jan. 9, 2012.

### **About the EDA**

The Bay County Economic Development Alliance (EDA) is a public/private partnership working to establish a globally competitive business environment for Bay County which encourages economic growth, enhances the community's quality of life and nurtures the creation and expansion of businesses.

###