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NEWS RELEASE

Patterson: Oakland County has “sizzling year”

Feb. 7, 2018, Pontiac, Mich. – Oakland County’s economic strength was front and center in L. Brooks Patterson’s 2018 State of the County speech Wednesday night at the Flagstar Strand Theatre for the Performing Arts in downtown Pontiac. Patterson began the speech announcing record investment in the county this past year: Sixty-two companies invested a best of \$1.2 billion creating 9,500 jobs and retaining 8,400.

“That means more than one company per week locating or expanding in Oakland County,” Patterson said.

Twenty-seven of those companies were international firms from 13 countries investing \$305 million in new operations or expanded facilities. Those countries include Brazil, China, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, and South Korea, among others.

“That’s a big exclamation point since these countries represent some of the largest economies in the world,” Patterson said.

The county executive highlighted three of the companies whose investment boosted Oakland County in “one sizzling year”:

- DENSO International’s \$75 million expansion of its North American regional headquarters in Southfield
- Autoliv’s \$22 million to consolidate operations in Southfield
- LG Electronics \$25 million for a 250,000-square-foot assembly plant in Hazel Park

Augmented reality has burst onto the scene while the tech sectors soar in Oakland County’s Emerging Sectors program. Emerging Sectors is an initiative Patterson launched in 2004 to attract 21st Century jobs in the knowledge-based economy. Augmented reality combines the real and virtual world to enhance training and experiences. One augmented reality company Patterson featured is Mackevision in Troy, a global leader in computer generated imagery or CGI. Mackevision has created the visual effects for the popular HBO series, Game of Thrones, since season four.

Robotics is also booming in Oakland County. Southeast Michigan has the highest number of robots in commercial use in the world. Such a market creates demand for robot manufacturing companies to locate here. More than two-thirds of Michigan’s robotics companies are in Oakland County, over 85 companies employing 4,400 individuals.

There are other indicators of Oakland County's economic prowess.

- India-based Mahindra invested \$22 million to build the first new auto manufacturing plant in Southeast Michigan in more than a quarter century.
- Speculative building is reemerging. Speculative building is when developers construct commercial buildings anticipating ease in finding commercial tenants.
- Royal Air continues to invest millions of dollars at Oakland County International Airport, building private aircraft suites.
- Finally, engineering staffing firms are thriving, filling technology positions by the project.

Patterson also highlighted a successful year in filling the skilled trades gap. The Oakland County Workforce Development Division administered \$2.1 million in grants to 86 Oakland County companies providing skilled trades training to 1,500 existing employees and 1,600 new hires. As part of the continued effort to fill the skilled trades training gap, Patterson featured Oakland Schools Technical Campuses which train high school students in the skilled trades.

"These four campuses – one in each quadrant of the county – are where students can receive real-life training from instructors who actually work in their respective fields with state-of-the-art equipment that is currently used in their industries," Patterson said. "Today's campuses teach hands-on innovation approaches to talented students. I encourage both parents and universities to take a closer look at our professional career campuses here in Oakland County."

Patterson introduced Southeast Michigan's first off-road vehicle (ORV) in Oakland County. The Oakland County Parks & Recreation Commission is collaborating with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to open the 235-acre park in Groveland Township this fall. Patterson also showed off the Oakland County Animal Shelter and Pet Adoption Center which opened in October on the county government campus in Pontiac.

Oakland County is continuing to enhance its efforts to prevent opioid abuse. Patterson announced that the Oakland County Health Division and its Prescription Drug Abuse Partnership will begin to educate patients this year about making better pain-management decisions, choosing opioids only as an extreme last resort. This builds on training offered to the local medical community over the past few years to prescribe opioids only to manage pain immediately following surgery or for a catastrophic accident.

Patterson paid tribute to Deputy Eric Overall who died in the line of duty early Thanksgiving morning when a fleeing felon ran him down. About two dozen of Overall's loved ones who were in attendance stood to be recognized as the audience applauded them. The county executive also acknowledged Deputy David Hack who was catastrophically injured the morning of Jan. 4 after a vehicle struck him while he worked the scene of an accident in Rochester Hills.

For media inquiries only, please contact Bill Mullan, Oakland County media and communications officer, at 248-858-1048.

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