Workiva CTO Jeff Trom named Montana High Tech Business Alliance Board chair; Oracle VP Kelly Schwager and ATG SVP Tom Stergios join Board of Directors

Missoula, Montana -- The Montana High Tech Business Alliance is pleased to announce that Jeff Trom, Executive Vice President and Chief Technology Officer of Workiva in Bozeman, has been elected to serve as the new Board Chair.

Trom is a Co-founder of Workiva, a publicly-traded software-as-a-service firm, as well as a previous tech company, Engineering Animation, Inc. (EAI), that was acquired in 2000. Trom has served as EVP and CTO of Workiva since December 2014. Prior to that, Trom was a Managing Director and Chief Technology Officer of Workiva LLC from 2008 to December 2014. He has over 20 years of experience working with information technology and development. Workiva is a founding member of the Montana High Tech Business Alliance.

Prior to founding Workiva, Trom founded EAI and served as EAI's Vice President from 1990 and as Chief Technology Officer in charge of software architecture, development and deployment from 1999 until EAI was acquired by Unigraphics Solutions in 2000. Thereafter, Jeff served as a technical consultant for various technology companies, including Electronic Data Systems from 2000 to 2002. He serves on the board of Middle Creek Montessori, a non-profit school in Bozeman, Montana. Trom earned a B.S. and M.S. in Mechanical Engineering from University of Iowa and a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from Iowa State University.

"I'm honored to be named the Chair of the Montana High Tech Business Alliance Board of Directors," Trom said. "The Alliance has been a vital resource for growing and established tech and manufacturing companies for the last four years ago and will continue to be that resource as tech in Montana grows at unprecedented rates."

The Board of Directors also welcomed two new members in July.

Kelly Schwager, Vice President, Global Communications for Oracle, joins the Board from Columbia Falls. Born and raised in Silicon Valley, Schwager previously served as Executive Vice President at global PR firm Edelman and Senior Vice President, Chief Marketing Officer for the Internet of Things transportation company Streetline, Inc. Schwager has also held leadership roles with various global tech players including SAP, Symantec, and VERITAS. Oracle is a founding member of the Alliance.

"Montana's high tech ecosystem is growing quickly, thanks in large part to the work of the Montana High Tech Business Alliance," Schwager said. "I'm excited to take on this role with a diverse and talented board."

Tom Stergios, SVP Strategy and Corporate Development for Advanced Technology Group (ATG), Missoula, is also a founding member of the Alliance. A native Missoulian, Stergios returned home after working as a consultant internationally on six continents for Accenture, Axiom, IBM, Cygent, and Convergys. He started at ATG working remotely in his basement and then launched the Missoula Solutions Center in 2011, growing his team to more than 135 employees.

"I am thrilled to join the Board for the Montana High Tech Alliance," Stergios said. "This organization has been the tip of the spear for Montana's acceleration as a hotbed for technology. I look forward to working with the Board and Alliance members to take this momentum to the next level, and ensure Montana is globally recognized in the technology ecosystem. The benefit for Montana, and Montanans, are vast. We have the opportunity, perhaps the obligation, to fundamentally alter the economics of our State, providing high paying jobs in communities large and small, across Montana."

"We are pleased to welcome Kelly and Tom to the board and look forward to their contributions," Trom said. "There's a lot to learn from each of them, both as professionals in their own fields and as leaders in the Montana technology landscape. The Alliance is excited to enter the next phase of growth with new leadership and voices on the board."

Trom, Schwager, and Stergios join three other continuing board members:

- Jason Mittelstaedt, founding board member, Partner at Yellowstone Growth Partners, Bozeman and former Chief Marketing Officer, RightNow Technologies
- Paige Williams, Founder and CEO, Audience Awards, Missoula
- Liz Marchi, Founder of Frontier Angels and Liz Marchi Consulting, Polson

"Four years ago, the Montana High Tech Business Alliance was launched by seven founding board members in Bozeman – Greg Gianforte, Jeff Trom, Lance Tinseth, Rob Irizarry, Rob Gilmore, David Hayden, and Jason Mittelstaedt – who had a vision to ultimately create a nonpartisan organization that would be statewide and diverse," said Christina Henderson, Executive Director. "Today, 50 percent of the Alliance's six Board of Directors members are female. Two are in Bozeman, two in Missoula, and two in the Flathead Valley – representing the Alliance's three largest hubs of membership. This current board is uniquely positioned to both carry forward the original mission of the founders, and to help support our members in high-tech and manufacturing as they grow to the next level."

About the Alliance

Launched in 2014, the Montana High Tech Business Alliance is an association of 350 high tech and manufacturing companies and affiliates creating high-paying jobs in Montana. For more information, visit MTHighTech.org.