

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Illinois Chamber of Commerce announces 2019 Edie award winners for exceptional economic development projects in Illinois**

CHICAGO— The Illinois Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the Illinois Economic Development Association (IEDA), today announced the manufacturer of men’s suits, **Hart Schaffner Marx (HSM)**, and the creator of gluten free pizzas, **Urban Farmer**, as the **recipients of the 11th Annual Economic Development in Illinois Awards**. Known as the 'Edies', the awards recognize outstanding economic development projects completed in the calendar year 2018 that bring jobs, growth and prosperity to Illinois communities.

“We are proud that HSM and Urban Farmer were selected as this year’s winners,” said Illinois Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Todd Maisch. “Effective projects come in all shapes and sizes and the Edies are designed to recognize initiatives that make the most significant impacts in their communities. These two companies show what meaningful impacts our businesses can have on the economic success, growth and lives of people living in Illinois.”

The Edies are divided into two geographical categories with HSM receiving the award from the Chicago Metropolitan area (Cook, DuPage, Dekalb, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties) and Urban Farmer being honored with the award for the outside the metropolitan area category.

Both of this year's winners showed a commitment to expanding in Illinois. Despite being forced to relocate their facility, HSM fought to keep their business and 400 manufacturing jobs in the state by moving to a new Des Plaines location in 2018. Urban Farmer completed their investment in a new \$4 million expansion last year, enabling the company to increase output and grow its workforce from 50 to 250. They now employ more than 300 at their Manteno campus.

“It’s evident by the project submissions and this year’s winners that Illinois truly is an economic powerhouse,” said Chairman of the Illinois Economic Development Association Bryan Gay. “Thanks to their investment in our communities, we can continue to provide jobs and economic growth across Illinois.”

The awards were made possible by this year’s sponsor Nicor Gas and projects were judged based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative criteria.

“Nicor Gas is a proud sponsor of the Edie Awards and celebrates efforts to showcase economic accomplishments that have a real benefit to Illinois,” said Director of Customer Development at Nicor Gas Marie LaPorte. “Working with partners like the Illinois Chamber and IEDA, Nicor Gas continues to support tangible investments that bring jobs and economic prosperity to our communities. It is a joy to support these awards and we congratulate the 2019 winners!”

### About the Winners:

**Hart Schaffner Marx (Cook County)** – Hart Schaffner Marx (HSM) is a 100-year-old manufacturer of men’s suits located in Cook County. The company was recently forced to relocate as its building was being demolished and the site repurposed for different use. The search for a new facility site included relocation options throughout the Midwest. With its long history in Illinois, HSM preferred to remain in state and sought the assistance of the City of Des Plaines and Cook County to make it financially feasible to remain in Illinois. Through innovative collaboration between the City of Des Plaines and Cook County, HSM remained in Des Plaines, relocated to a new, local facility, and retained the 400 manufacturing positions that could have been lost to a Midwest neighbor. HSM was nominated by the City of Des Plaines.

**Urban Farmer (Kankakee County)** – Urban Farmer was an established Kankakee County business specializing in gluten-free pizza manufacturing when it purchased a former food production facility in Manteno, IL. The 111,000 SF facility, built in 1990, required a significant amount of renovation to bring it up to current food-grade standard. The Economic Alliance of Kankakee County worked closely with Urban Farmer in its real estate search and helped the company navigate the economic development incentives available through Kankakee County. Urban Farmer’s investment in the new facility, including purchase cost, exceeded \$4 million. The expansion, completed in 2018, enabled the company to increase its output and grow its workforce from 50 to 250, and they currently employ more than 300 at its Manteno campus. Urban Farmer was nominated by the Economic Alliance of Kankakee County.

### About the Edies:

For more than a decade, the Edies have honored those who imagine, design, invest, build and bring jobs, growth and prosperity to Illinois communities. The awards showcase business accomplishments that often translate into more jobs and greater economic vitality in Illinois. You can find out more about the awards, including categories, criteria and past winners: [here](#).

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