

For Immediate Release

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2019 Innovation Celebration Finalists Announced

CHAMPAIGN, IL, February 26, 2019 – The Champaign County Economic Development Corporation is pleased to announce finalists for the 14th Annual Innovation Celebration in recognition of those individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions, taken risks, and provided leadership to ensure the continuing economic success of Champaign County, the ongoing success of the University's economic development mission, and the growth of entrepreneurial talent and energy in our community.

Innovation Celebration is not merely an award for accomplishment, but a benchmark of success for those outstanding individuals, organizations and corporations who are nominated and selected to receive this prestigious award. Additionally, Innovation Celebration serves as a tangible collaboration between the Champaign County EDC, University of Illinois, Parkland College, and the community.

The winner of each award category will be announced at Innovation Celebration 2019, held at Parkland College on Friday, March 29 from 5:30 – 8:30 PM. To RSVP and learn more about the event, visit www.innovationcelebration.com.

Award finalists – winners to be announced at the event:

Entrepreneurial Excellence: Social Venture Award

Serve as change agents by creating and implementing sustainable solutions to reshape society, benefit humanity, and address social concerns.

- The Land Connection
- New American Welcome Center at the University YMCA
- Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center

Entrepreneurial Excellence: Student Startup Award

Formed by students in the last three years and demonstrates a commitment to continuing success through entrepreneurial talent, creativity and energy.

- RingWing, LLC

- HexNest
- DeepWalk

Entrepreneurial Excellence: New Venture Award

Formed in the last three years, and demonstrates a commitment to continuing success through entrepreneurial talent, creativity and energy.

- AirScout, Inc.
- EarthSense, Inc.
- SimBioSys, Inc.

Entrepreneurial Excellence: Paul Magelli Advocacy Award

Actively engage, encourage, coach and mentor entrepreneurs in the community, and provide extensive support to help them achieve success.

- Mark Aardsma
- Edwin Moore
- Roland Garton

Entrepreneurial Excellence: Management Award

Demonstrates expertise in assembling resources, creating an organization, and working to build and implement effective action plans.

- Landon Frye, Jake Kreider, and Sophie Roney - Granular, Inc.
- Shira Epstein and Dan Epstein - Champaign Outdoors / RuggedOutdoors.com
- James Langer - Serionix

Innovation: Economic Development Impact Award

Has made a significant economic development impact in the community and continues to demonstrate their commitment to Champaign County.

- Small Business Incentive Program (City of Champaign)
- Lodgic Everyday Community
- Matt Cho (Cake Design Development)

Award winners – announced ahead of the event:

2019 Innovation Transfer Award—University of Illinois

Recognizes an individual or group from the University of Illinois whose research has resulted in either a discovery or a work with the potential for significant societal impact.

- Dr. Andrew Alleyne – Thermosys™ / POETS Engineering Research Center

2019 Alexis Wernsing Innovation Award—University of Illinois

Recognizes an individual or team from the University of Illinois that has channeled their experience living with a disability into positive change through the creation of new products, environments, or protocols that enhance quality of life.

- Adam Bleakney - Illinois Wheelchair Athletics

2019 Innovation in Engagement Award—Parkland College

Recognizes an individual or group at Parkland College who has shown support of the college's community engagement mission.

- Peg Boyce - Dental Hygiene Program

The EDC is pleased to work with the following sponsors of our 14th Annual Innovation Celebration: the University of Illinois' Technology Entrepreneur Center, Research Park, Office of Corporate Relations, and Office of Technology Management, along with Parkland College, Lodgic Everyday Community, Carle, Serra Ventures, Surface 51, Singleton Law Firm, City of Champaign, Ramshaw Real Estate, Litania Sports Group, Pixo, Hatch Ag Group, Huawei R&D USA Champaign, Hanson Financial, Community Solutions Incubator at the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois, Illinois Small Business Development Center at Champaign County EDC, Prominic.NET, IllinoisVENTURES, and Busey.

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