



MID AMERICA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 3, 2026

MID-AMERICA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL PRESENTS 2026 ANNUAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

GRAND RAPIDS, MI, SEPTEMBER 1, 2026: The Mid-America Economic Development Council presented its annual Economic Development awards at the 2026 Mid-America EDC Annual Conference, held August 31 – September 2 at the JW Marriot Grand Rapids.

Award entries were accepted in up to three markets per category – large division (community population over 25,000), medium division (community population between 10,001-25,000), and small division (community population less than 10,000).

Recognition was presented to:

Economic Development Impact Award

The Economic Development Impact Award recognizes an individual who has been an economic development professional in the Mid-America region for at least the past year who has been impactful through their efforts as an economic developer. The award celebrates an individual who has met the challenges of providing economic development and who demonstrates the ability and commitment to positively impact their community, organization, or region's economic growth.

➤ Rick Dickinson, 30 Years of Leadership in the Greater Dubuque Region

Entrepreneurial Award

Recognizes a program that offers a unique approach to enhancing the entrepreneurial culture in your city or region. This may be a unique approach for assisting young companies through the early stages of a business life cycle, a program to inspire and promote small business, or other efforts in their area.

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- **Okoboji Entrepreneurial Institute – Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation (Large Division)**
Spencer, IA
<https://www.lakescorridor.com/opportunities/startups/okoboji-entrepreneurial-institute>
- **Business Plan Certified – Cornerstone Alliance (Medium Division)**
Benton Harbor, MI
<https://cstonealliance.org/>

Marketing Program

This award recognizes a marketing campaign with a significant positive outcome in raising awareness, creating interest, and/or generating leads for economic development. This campaign must be on behalf of a geographical region (community, county, state, or region), and may take the form of an annual report/newsletter, event, or online program.

- **Greater Dubuque Development's YOU can be great here Relocation Guide (Large Division)**
Dubuque, IA
<https://www.greaterdubuque.org/>

Placemaking

This award will recognize projects or programs that make a community a better place to live, work, and play by transforming underutilized public spaces into vibrant community places. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspirations and potential that contribute to people's health, happiness, safety and well-being.

- **Citizen's Alley + Downtown Minot Activation Strategy (Large Division)**
Bismarck, ND
<https://www.localmotivesminot.org/citizens>
- **Canal Commons – Cornerstone Alliance (Medium Division)**
Benton Harbor, MI
https://cstonealliance.org/canal_commons/
- **Towns Grant – Kansas Commerce (Small Division)**
Topeka, KS
<https://www.kansascommerce.gov/towns/>

Overcoming Adversity

Recognizes a project that a community, region, or state utilized while overcoming a challenge. This challenge could be anything from a factory shut-down to a natural disaster. Entries should display a creative and impactful solution to overcoming the challenge.

- **Adjusting to the Closure of St. Joes Hospital – Chippewa Economic Development Corporation (Large Division)**
Chippewa Falls, WI
<https://chippewa-wi.com/>
- **Commercial Business Assistance Grant Program – SEDC (Medium Division)**
Spencer, IA
<https://spenceredc.com/>
- **Coal Creek Station – Rainbow Energy Center (Small Division)**
Bismarck, ND
<https://rainbowenergycenter.com/>

Workforce & Talent

Recognizes an activity or innovative program that attracts new talent, strengthens the skills of an existing workforce, and/or encourages talent retention. The activity or program should demonstrate a new, impactful, or creative way to approach talent acquisition, retention, and growth.

- **Distinctively Dubuque Newcomer Program – Greater Dubuque Development Corporation (Large Division)**
Dubuque, IA
<https://www.greaterdubuque.org/>
- **17-County Podcast as Part of a Talent Attraction Multimedia Ecosystem – YCDC (Medium Division)**
York, Nebraska
<https://www.yorkdevco.com/>

Project of the Year

This award recognizes a collaborative project having significant and measurable impact on a city, county or region. The project must have already broken ground and be in the initial phase of implementation between January 2025 and May 2026. The measurable impact can include capital investment, jobs, supplier network, economic impact or new partnership initiatives that positively improve the community.

- **The Franklin at 11th Street Station – Economic Development Corporation of Michigan City (Large Division)**
Michigan City, IN
<https://edcmc.com/the-franklin-at-11th-st-station/>
- **Applied Digital, Ellendale, North Dakota – City of Ellendale, ND and Applied Digital (Small Division)**
Ellendale, ND
<https://www.applieddigital.com/>
<https://ellendalend.gov/>

People's Choice Award

This award will be selected from all awards submissions. Attendees of the Mid-America EDC 2026 Annual Conference will receive information about all submissions and vote at the conference on which they think is the most deserving of recognition.

- **Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library – Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation**
Medora, ND
<https://www.trlibrary.com/>

Mid-America EDC members are dedicated economic development professionals who share best practices to add value in their organizations and communities. Mid-America EDC is a multi-state association dedicated to being the leading resource for making contact with site selectors, advancing regional economic development programs, and accessing thought leadership.

For many years, The Mid-America Economic Development Council has sponsored the annual Economic Development Awards competition to recognize and stimulate the creative use of quality marketing by economic development organizations throughout the 13-state Mid-America region in promoting their respective communities. Select award winners will also host a webinar through Mid-America EDC to highlight the project.

To view more information about this year's winning award entries, visit <https://www.midamericaedc.org/events-and-programs/annual-awards>.

For more information about The Mid-America Economic Development Council, visit www.midamericaedc.org.

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