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AED Announces 505 Award Honorees

Inaugural Awards Program Recognizes Leadership in Economic Development in the Albuquerque Metro Area

Albuquerque, NM – Today, Albuquerque Economic Development, Inc., and the Albuquerque Forward Fund announced the honorees for the inaugural 505 Awards, which recognize organizations and individuals that are making exceptional contributions to economic growth and prosperity in the Albuquerque metro area, resulting in improvements to the region’s overall economic strength.

“The economic success of a community doesn’t happen without its champions leading the way, investing in meaningful projects and programs,” said Leean Kravitz, Chair of the Albuquerque Forward Fund and AED Board member. “We want to recognize the impact that both individuals and organizations can have on our city, and we are excited to celebrate these contributions.”

Gary Tonjes, President of AED, said, “The quality of the award submissions further solidified what we already know to be true: the Albuquerque metro area has a wealth of talent, and our community is comprised of so many people who devote their time and money to make our city a better place to live and work. We want to thank all of the nominees for their hard work and commitment to this special place.”

In this first year, AED received more than 110 submissions. A call for nominations was released earlier this summer, and nominations were accepted from any source. To be considered,

nominees were required to accept their nominations and provide follow-up documentation of their work.

The 505 Awards include two categories that honor the work of organizations:

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

This award recognizes an organization that has made significant contributions toward strengthening the community's economy. The organization may be public or private; must have an established operation with employees in the Albuquerque metro area; and must describe and quantify how the organization has contributed to economic development in the region through leadership, financial support, local investments, hiring, training, or related activities.

2019 Honoree: WESST

EXCELLENCE IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AWARD

This award recognizes an organization that has played a leading role in workforce readiness, including the implementation of training and educational programs, the sponsorship of scholarship or grant programs, the creation of internship or mentorship programs, or other efforts to develop long-term job skills and career pathways for the region's workforce.

2019 Honoree: CNM Ingenuity Deep Dive Coding

In addition to the two organizations being honored, the 505 Awards also recognize the work of individuals making a difference in economic development in the local community. This year's winners include:

LIFETIME LEADERSHIP AWARD

This award recognizes an individual whose ongoing commitment to economic development has made a significant and lasting impact on the Albuquerque metro area. This individual must have a demonstrated history of supporting and implementing economic development initiatives in the Albuquerque metro area over a minimum period of 15 years; must be a positive role model in the community; and must have a track record of executing projects that create jobs, diversify the region's economy and spur investment in the state.

2019 Honoree: Bob Murphy, Executive Director, Economic Forum

ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award recognizes a business leader who has made a measurable difference in the economic development arena during the past year by investing in projects that have created or will create jobs in the Albuquerque metro area. Individuals nominated for this award were required to work in the private sector.

2019 Honoree: Ed Garcia, Executive Chairman, Garcia Automotive Group

PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERSHIP AWARD

This award recognizes a current or former public official or public employee who has served as a committed supporter of economic development efforts over a period of at least three years.

2019 Honoree: Deirdre Firth, Deputy Director, Office of Economic Development, City of Albuquerque

RISING STAR AWARD

This award recognizes an emerging leader who is contributing to economic development programs, projects and activities in a significant manner that leads to increasing investment in the community and job creation.

2019 Honoree: Charles Ashley, President, Cultivating Coders

A selection committee organized by the Albuquerque Forward Fund reviewed all nominations and made final award selections. AED and the Forward Fund thank the following judges for their participation in the awards program:

- Leean Kravitz, Fidelity Investments
- Paul Mondragon, Bank of America
- Jeremy Oswald, Bank of Albuquerque
- Roberta Cooper Ramo, Modrall Sperling
- Helen Wertheim, Retired

Award winners will be recognized at a special luncheon on Tuesday, Nov. 5, at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Albuquerque. The luncheon will take place from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. To purchase tickets, [visit this link](#). Special thanks to [True Health New Mexico](#), the Premier Sponsor, for making this event possible.

Sponsorship opportunities for specific award categories are still available for the event. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Beth Waldrip at beth@abq.org or 505-705-3778.

For more information about the awards categories, eligibility requirements and judging criteria, [please visit the Albuquerque Forward Fund website](#).

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