

**NAWB SELECTS 2018 NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS*****Awards Honor Excellence in Workforce Development Board Leadership, Business Leadership, and Workforce Board-Chamber of Commerce Partnership***

Washington, D.C.– The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), the membership organization and advocate for more than 550 workforce development boards (WDBs) nationwide and their network of American Job Centers, has announced the 2018 winners of its annual leadership awards: the **WIOA Trailblazer Award**; the **W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award**; and the **Laurie Moran Partnership Award**.

The **WIOA Trailblazer Award** recognizes a workforce development board that has been a leader in adopting the changes envisioned in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and in expanding its ability to develop comprehensive workforce solutions for its community. This year's winner is [San Diego Workforce Partnership](#) (SWDP) in San Diego County, CA.

SDWP serves more than 3 million residents in a county whose economy is driven by innovation and expansion in the life sciences, technology, manufacturing, defense, and tourism industries. SWDP is recognized for its unsurpassed leadership in bringing together key government, economic development, education, business and industry, and non-profit leaders, as well as a neighboring workforce board, in broad-based regional planning. Together, these groups agreed on core tenets that will drive the strategic plans of each of the participating organizations. Recognizing that not all residents have had equal opportunities to benefit from San Diego's dynamic economy, SDWP targets its efforts in the growing space between economic development and workforce equity.

"Time and again, the San Diego Workforce Partnership sought new approaches to solving regional challenges and never stopped its efforts to align with other stakeholders," said NAWB President and CEO Ron Painter. "Their holistic focus and collaborative approach is an example of how a board with a large population and geographical area to cover can still be flexible, attuned, and ready to fuel change based on regional needs."

The **W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award** honors businesses or business organizations that commit time, money, and leadership to make their community's workforce and economy more vibrant and go above and beyond to be a full partner in their local Workforce Development Board's endeavors. This year, NAWB selected two winners: one small business and one large business.

[Samuel Garcia State Farm Insurance](#) in Abilene, TX, is the 2018 winner of the **W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award** for small business. As a member of the board of Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas, Samuel Garcia led the creation and launch of the Workforce Investment Fund, designed to help small businesses train current workers. In addition, Garcia was instrumental in launching the Board's career pathways initiative by connecting business leaders with the local school district. His commitment to his community, to workforce development, and to helping fellow business owner succeed demonstrates a spirit of partnership that resonates in his community of Abilene, TX.

[Build My Future Collaborative](#) in Springfield, MO, is the 2018 winner of the **W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award** for a large business. The Collaborative, comprised of the Local Laborers Council, the Home Builders Association, the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, and various employers, supports the Ozark Workforce Development Board through financial and in-kind contributions which fund Pre-Apprenticeship Academies – a valuable pre-apprenticeship model – to prepare individuals for jobs in the trades. The Collaborative also led the establishment of the [Build My Future expo](#), which hosted over 1,000 students, 200 business volunteers, area school districts, and universities to highlight good jobs in the construction trades and create strong ties with businesses in the region.

“The time and money invested by these organizations has had a direct impact on the well-being of the residents in their regions, as well as an positive impact on the ability of business to compete and grow,” said Painter. “Each is an example of how a company can reach beyond its own self-interest to advance an entire community's economic vitality.”

The **Laurie Moran Partnership Award** is given jointly to a workforce development board and chamber of commerce that have formed a significant partnership to advance the workforce and economic development of their local region. The 2018 inaugural winners are [South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance](#) and [Maury County Chamber & Economic Alliance](#). These two organizations have been strong partners since they were established in the early 2000's. Through a common mission and goals, the partnership has made tremendous strides in aligning education with workforce needs through streamlining the pathway to post-secondary training in fields such as engineering systems technology, industrial maintenance, and machining/PLC technology.

“We are pleased to honor the memory of Laurie Moran, former NAWB Board Chair, member of her local workforce board, as well as President of the Danville Pittsylvania County (VA) Chamber, with this award that recognizes the important ways that chambers of commerce and workforce boards can make a lasting impact on their communities,” said Painter. “Laurie was a strong leader who understood that we could make more of an impact by bringing others on board to achieve a common vision.”

Winners will be recognized at the [The Forum 2018](#), presented by NAWB in Washington, D.C. March 24 – 27, 2018. The Forum 2018 convenes leaders, advocates, and changemakers in business, government, labor, and education to network and share insights; address key issues affecting U.S. workforce development; and consider the goals and policy framework affecting the future of human capital and economic growth. For information or to register, visit [www.NAWB.org/Forum](http://www.NAWB.org/Forum). To learn more about the winners and others who were nominated, visit our [Awards page](#).

**About the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB)**

The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) supports its members through a comprehensive program of advocacy, training and technical assistance, communication, and the promotion of strategic partnerships for the advancement of our nation’s workforce. For more information on NAWB, visit [www.nawb.org](http://www.nawb.org), and to see how investments in workforce development keep Americans working, go to <http://www.WorkforceInvestmentWorks.com>.

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