



BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU®

PRESS RELEASE

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## **BBB Announces Torch Award Winners for Marketplace Ethics**

CHICAGO, IL, October 29, 2010 - The Better Business Bureau of Chicago & Northern Illinois (BBB) announces the 2010 winners of the fourteenth annual **Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics**, which spotlights companies that exemplify ethical business practices. This awards luncheon ceremony will be hosted at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza in Chicago on Thursday, December 2nd. Winning awards will be presented to: Sears Holding Corporation; Wilton Brands Inc.; Itasca Bank & Trust Co.; Imagetec L.P.; Cray Kaiser LTD; Music by Design, LTD and John Baethke & Son Plumbing, Inc. Honorable Mentions will be awarded to: Bridgestone Retail Operations, LLC; Empire Today, LLC; Access One, Inc. and Mega Home Improvement.

"As the headlines have reflected, ethical business practices have taken a beating on Wall Street, the banking industry, housing and other marketplaces," says Steve J. Bernas, president & CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving Chicago and Northern Illinois. "The **Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics** honors companies that make a demonstrable effort to promote ethical business practices, and we are pleased to see the number of businesses who, in the eyes of their customers and other associates, meet that threshold."

The award recipients are selected by an independent panel of judges each year. Bernas continued, "This year's participants and winners have reaped many rewards as a result of their commitment to achieving and maintaining high ethical standards including stronger customer loyalty, enhanced reputation, and greater employee commitment."

The 2010 competition had the largest number of nominations and entries with nearly 2,000 nominations from a wide variety of businesses, explained Bernas.

"This variety in entries and the subsequent winners and honorable mentions reflect an increasing interest by more and more companies in using ethical business practices in their operations as their primary method of self-regulation," Bernas said. "This belief is the cornerstone of the BBB system."

Companies are judged in five categories based on their number of employees. Bernas noted that the presentation of awards is just the tip of the iceberg for companies that do it right by working with their customers, suppliers and other organizations in an ethical manner. It remains important for people to inform the BBB when they have done business with a company that did an exemplary job. Many of the nearly 2,000 nominees for this award were the result of consumers alerting the BBB to companies who 'do it right'.

This year's event has been made possible through the generosity of the following sponsors:

AAA Chicago; ABC7 Chicago; Abt Electronics & Appliances; Access One, Inc.; ADP; Alberto-Culver Company; Assurance Agency, Ltd.; Bridgestone Retail Operations, LLC; CDW Corporation; Champion Window of Chicago; Charter One; Combined Insurance Co. of America; DeVry Inc.; Dex One Corporation; Discover Financial Services; Empire Today, LLC; Grants Appliances Electronics & More; Hallberg Commercial Insuror's Inc.; Hilton Chicago; The Inland Real Estate Group, Inc.; Integrated Project Management Co. Inc.; Hanson Material Services; Lifecare Innovations, Inc.; Luna Carpet & Blinds, Inc.; Midas Auto Centers; The Pampered Chef, Ltd.; Perma-Seal Basement Systems, Inc.; Sears Holding Corporation; Tiffany & Company; Total Merchant Systems; Tribune Media Group; Urban Imaging Group, Inc and Walgreens.

Consumers can nominate an ethical business on our Web site at <http://chicago.bbb.org/torchnomination>

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