

by Bob Luder, photos by Jeff Burkhead

Much has been lost in the last three years because of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic – time, productivity, money, and, most tragic, of course, thousands of lives. But an event held on a spring evening in mid-April in downtown Lawrence proved unequivocally that one thing remains, in fact, stands as strong as ever...the community's support for successful, growing, local businesses.

More than 220 people packed into the lobby and ballroom at The Eldridge Hotel on April 19 to celebrate burgeoning Lawrence businesses through the bestowing of the 10th Annual Foundation Awards, hosted by the Lawrence Business Magazine with presenting sponsor INTRUST Bank. After a two-year hiatus because of the pandemic, the Foundation Awards picked back up not where it left off but rather at a whole new level, welcoming its largest attendance ever.

"We were thrilled to have so much support and enthusiasm from our local business community after a hiatus of two years," said Ann Frame Hertzog, Lawrence Business Magazine's editorin-chief and co-publisher with husband, Steven Hertzog. "The turnout was fantastic; we sold out. It was amazing to see such a wonderful, diverse group of business owners and community leaders support and cheer on one another."

A total of 19 businesses were honored with Foundation Awards adding a combined 499 new jobs to the Lawrence area from 1/1/2020 to 12/31/2023.

Footprint Impact Award

As always, the big award of the evening was the Footprint Impact Award, which not only honors a company's growth but also its work with other businesses and work throughout and within the community. On this special 10th anniversary of the awards, that honor was awarded to Standard Beverage Corporation for its forming of partnerships with customers that go far beyond distribution and sales. Partnerships that work toward common goals to benefit the entire community, such as the \$25,000 donated to EDC Douglas County Rising Together.

"We were thrilled that Standard Beverage was selected to receive the Lawrence Business Magazine Footprint Impact



Award," said Trent Glass, senior vice president – operations. "We believe in giving back to the community as well as being a strong corporate citizen. It was very special for us to win the award because it highlights our long-standing commitment to creating a positive impact in the Lawrence community and demonstrates to our employees that what we do is more than just about selling alcohol."

"As a community banker," Beth Easter, INTRUST Bank reflected, "I realize how important it is to patronize and use the resources in our own markets. The FOOTPRINT IMPACT award reflects how many businesses rely on those around them and the amazing power of B2B support. And, this award honors those people behind the businesses who recognize that success comes from uplifting others."

The evening celebration included the addition of two new Impact Awards for women-owned and minority-owned businesses.



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New Awards

"The two new Impact Awards for women-owned and minority-owned businesses was an exciting addition, elevating and expanding the awards," Steven Hertzog said. "Intentionally including specific awards for minorities and women helps bring all our business owners to the same table. And, when we all are sitting at the same table, there is nothing we can't accomplish."

Ann Frame Hertzog added, "We (Lawrence Business Magazine) are so proud of creating an event celebrating local businesses and encouraging community leadership. We also want to encourage diverse businesses to work together, creating an inclusive business community benefiting all of Lawrence."

Woman-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award

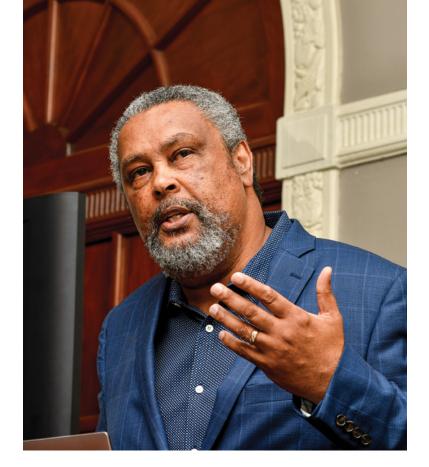
The first Woman-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award went to Express Employment Professionals, a two-time Foundation Award winner and a contingent, contract, and professional recruiting agency dedicated to solving staffing needs of local businesses.

"Winning this award is an honor," CEO Kate Chinn said. "And I will reflect on it daily to remind myself that everything is worth it, owning a small business is worth it, standing up for who you are is worth it, and overcoming every obstacle placed in your path is worth it."

Minority-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award

The Minority-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award went to Life Restoration Ministries, a non-profit program established in 2007 that provides volunteer support and resources to everything from the theatre/arts program at Lied Center to sustaining and growing the volunteer base in the LRM Theatre program, which has a direct impact on increasing black, indigenous, people of color in local theatre.

"The Foundation Awards ceremony provides a space to acknowledge the tremendous work of so many people, and it felt good to be a part of it," said K. Nicole Rials, LSCSW, founder and executive director of the LRM Foundation. "This award is especially meaningful as it is an inaugural award recognizing minority-owned businesses making a lasting impact in our community. Advancing equity takes intention, and Lawrence Business Magazine honoring women and minority-owned businesses is a demonstration of how to be inclusive and diverse. LRM has been making an impact in our community since 2007, and we are greatly appreciative of this recognition."



Words from Kevin Willmott

Ironically, the star of the night very probably was one of the few in attendance who didn't win an award. Academy Award-winning writer Kevin Willmott was the featured speaker and talked about his upbringing in Junction City, Kansas. After attending graduate school at New York University, he said he was drawn back to this area, specifically to Lawrence, because he knew the rich Civil War history of the town would be inspirational for much of the great storytelling that has highlighted his career.

There was a time he might have felt the pull to Los Angeles or New York City, the film-making meccas in the country, but these days, in the era of Zoom meetings, he preaches to his Kansas University students, "It doesn't matter where you live; it only matters what you're doing."

"Lawrence is a great place to live and a great place to raise my kids," Willmott said. "It's a real community, and I feel very much a part of the business community, even though I don't technically have a business. I mean, I don't have a storefront, but I've done business here for forever.

"I came here to do business really."

Business is what brought this huge group of people together, and being successful and growing those businesses is what was fully celebrated on this night.

"The Lawrence Business Magazine Foundation Awards celebrates and honors local businesses growing and adding jobs, as well as highlighting minority-owned and women-owned businesses," Ann Frame Hertzog said. "This is such a special evening with the inspiring words of Kevin Willmott and all of the honorees, but it could not be done without our generous sponsors. Their support and investment is how we make this wonderful event happen and continue to grow.

"Notably, our presenting sponsor, INTRUST Bank, has been with us since we started 10 years ago. Our sponsors are truly examples of local businesses supporting local businesses."

BUSINESS BUS







2023 FOUNDATION AWARD RECIPIENTS

1900 Barker

1900 Barker is a neighborhood bakery and café in East Lawrence serving handmade artisan bread and French-style pastries. What began in 2015 as two brothers, Taylor and Reagan Petrehn has since grown to a team of 10-plus individuals doing its part to make Lawrence and the world a better place to live. Recently adding a second location at 816 Mass Street.

From 2020 to 2023, 1900 Barker added five jobs.

Atteberry Eye Center

Atteberry Eye Center of Lawrence, KS is an optometrist practice specializing in comprehensive family vision care. Its philosophy is to provide quality eye care to each and every patient. Atteberry combines today's modern technology with personal attention directed specifically to the needs of patients.

From 2020 to 2023, Atteberry added five employees, bringing its workforce to seven.

The job creation from locally owned businesses is truly the FOUNDATION for a strong, vibrant community. Showing support and honoring the recipients is a way we can reciprocate what they are doing to make Douglas County thrive.

Beth Easter, Market President Lawrence & Topeka, INTRUST Bank

Berry Global

In business 54 years, Berry Global creates innovative packaging and engineered products to make life better for people and the planet. The company leverages unmatched global capabilities, sustainability leadership, and deep innovation expertise to serve customers of all sizes around the world.

From Jan. 1, 2020, when the company had 787 employees, to Dec. 31, 2022, when it had 1,125, Berry Global added an incredible 338 employees.

Bridge Haven Memory Care Homes

Bridge Haven Memory Care, LLC and parent company Beckmeisters, LLC, are companies headquartered in Lawrence specializing in small long-term care homes for individuals with



Alzheimer's, other dementia, Parkinson's and strokes who need care for memory and/or physical needs. Started in 2007, Bridge Haven has taken care of more than 1,000 individuals in home style settings.

In 2022, Bridge Haven added a fourth memory care home and 20 new employees.

Caramelo is a minority-owned artisanal tortilla company located in East Lawrence which ships tortillas nationwide. Owner Ruben Leal and his team have shipped to all 50 states, the Virgin Islands and Canada and has wholesale accounts in 15 states, including, of course, Kansas and Missouri. They have also been given a shout out by Al Roker on the Today Show as his favorite tortillas.

In 2020. Caramelo more than doubled its staff of two employees by adding three new employees. The next year, the company added two more to that, and last year, it added two more, bringing the total to nine. That's more than a three-fold growth during this challenging period.

Construction Specialties

TIME RECIPIENT

Construction Specialties is a residential remodeling company providing the best full-service home improvement to Lawrence-area residents. The company

specializes in honest, holistic, carefully planned, well executed and clean remodeling of kitchens, bathrooms, additions and exteriors. It employs primarily Lawrence residents and takes pride in its connection to the community.

During the three-year period from 2020 to 2023, Construction Specialties doubled its workforce, adding six positions to bring its total to 12.

Feldmeyer Financial

Feldmeyer Financial is a minority-owned financial planning firm that over the last three years doubled its workforce. Feldmeyer provides financial services to individuals and small business owners, in everything from retirement planning to investment strategies and more. It is a community involved business that helps people make smart financial decisions to reach their goals and dreams.

In 2021, Feldmeyer added one employee to bring its total of employees to two.

Good Energy Solutions

Good Energy Solutions is a full-service energy partner that is able to provide RECIPIENT comprehensive consulting and services in electrical, renewable energy and en-

ergy management in the central U.S., including Missouri and Kansas. The company is dedicated to customer satisfaction through quality design and installations and backs its promises with long warranties. The company also works with non-profit organizations helping them to lower their utility costs to enable them to use their resources to help others.

Good Energy Solutions added 10 jobs to its workforce between 2020 and 2023, bringing its total to 41.











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JEO Consulting Group

With origins in Wahoo, Nebraska, JEO Consulting Group excels in engineering, architecture, surveying, planning, community engagement, environmental sciences and funding. Over decades, the company has opened 13 offices and hired more than 300 people, enabling it to solve almost any problem in any place. With roots across the Midwest, JEO Consulting cares about sustaining the places that people call home.

During the three-year period from 2020 to 2023, JEO Consulting Group added eight employees, bringing its total to 10.

Kessler Contractors

Kessler Contractors provides residential and commercial facilities maintenance to include but not limited to plumbing, electrical, HVAC, remodel and general construction.

Kessler Contractors added two employees, from 2020 to 2022.

La Estrella Latina

For 22 years, La Estrella Latina a minority-owned business has been a one-stop shop for foods and supplies for Lawrence's Hispanic community. Owners Raul and Adany Perez offer everything from tortillas to marinelas to summertime snow cones in traditional Mexican flavors, La Estrella is the place to shop for those seeking authentic Hispanic products.

Over the last three years, LaEstrella Latina has added eight employees, growing its workforce from four to 12.

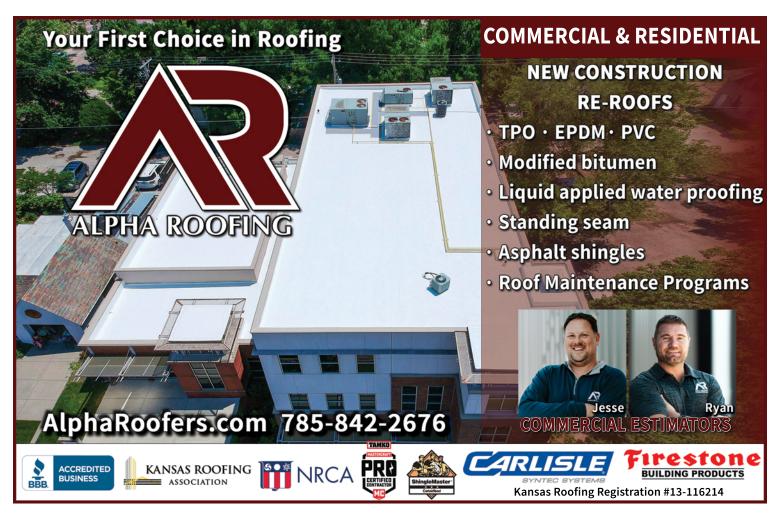
As locally owned and operated restaurants (Johnny's Tavern and J. Wilson's), we believe in supporting our community, as should all local businesses. We know we need sustainable growth to make this the kind of town we all want to participate and live in. What better way to acknowledge this than the awards given tonight by the Lawrence Business Magazine. Congratulations to all award winners and to the LBM for helping to sew the fabric together.

Rick Renfro Johnny's Tavern

Lawrence Pet Friends

In business since 2005, Lawrence Pet Friends, one of Lawrence's women-owned businesses, was one of the many companies hit hard by the pandemic. It shut down for two months in 2020 and when it re-opened, did so with only three employees. Since then, it has grown its workforce back to 18, bringing in more than 100 new customers last year.

From 2020 to 2022, Lawrence Pet Friends added 15 employees, raising its workforce from three to 18.





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Maceli's Banquet Hall & Arterra Event Gallery

Maceli's is a hospitality and event services company that provides catering at offsite locations as well as in-house at its two Lawrence venues, the original Maceli's Banquet Hall and it's new Arterra Event Gallery. During the pandemic, Maceli's found innovative ways to stay in business — one was creating a curbside — heat and eat option that fed many of us.

On Jan. 1, 2020, Maceli's had 28 employees, full and part time. On Jan. 1, 2023, it had grown to 47 employees.

Prairie Land Insurance

2 TIME RECIPIENT

Prairie Land Insurance was founded in 1975 in Winona, lowa and moved to Lawrence in 2011 and is a full-service in-

surance agency dealing in home, auto, life, crop, farm and business insurance. It is fully licensed in 12 states. And is dedicated to giving back to the community.

From Jan. 1, 2020 to Dec. 31, 2022, Prairie Land Insurance doubled its workforce, from two to four.

SERC Physical Therapy

SERC Physical Therapy's mission is to serve patients treat them promptly with integrity, honesty and compassion. SERC is part of the Upstream Rehabilitation family of clinical care, a network of industry-leading brands providing world-class physical and occupational therapy across the U.S. In addition to in-clinic treatment, SERC offers telehealth PT services by video conferencing with a licensed therapist from the comfort of your home.

In 2022, SERC added three employees to bring its total workforce to four.

Sound Speech Therapy

Sound Speech Therapy is a women-owned, pediatric speech-language, occupational and feeding clinic committed to providing quality service to patients and families using a collaborative approach. In addition, SST offers myofunctional therapy to both children and adults. This company's dedication and commitment to core fundamental values truly sets the company apart – the commitment to collaboration and building strong relationships built on trust, not only with patients but with their families.

From 2020 to 2022, SST grew from a one-person operation to a staff of nine.

Standard Beverage

2 TIME RECIPIENT

Family-owned Standard Beverage has grown to become the largest distributor of spirits, wine and beer in the state of Kansas.

With multiple dedicated selling divisions, its commitment is to deliver executional excellence for suppliers and exceptional customer service. Standard Beverage has done business in Douglas County for more than 60 years, including having a facility and employees in Lawrence since 1989.

In the three-year span from 2020 to 2023, Standard Beverage added 27 new employees, bringing its total to 164.

Uplift Coffee Shop

Uplift Coffee Shop, a women-owned business, had the good fortune to open in January of 2020, two months before the world shut down. But instead of being slowed or defeated by the circumstances of the day, they leaned in. In 2021, it added a coffee/food truck to bring the business into the community. What began as six employees quickly grew to 10, then 15 and, after adding a second brick-and-mortar building, 25 employees with plans to grow to 30 by summer.

During the three years from 2020 to 2023, Uplift Coffee Shop added 19 employees, increasing its workforce from six to 25.

UPS Store #2582

The UPS Store located at Kasold and Clinton Parkway is a subsidiary of UPS. It provides shipping, packaging, printing, shredding, mailboxes, notary, fax, etc. to the local community and beyond.

In the three years from 2020 to 2023, the UPS Store added two new employees.

For the 10th year of the Foundation Awards, the Laird Noller Companies wanted to participate in a meaningful fashion. We recognized that the Impact Awards shine a spotlight on the extraordinary achievements of women-owned

and minority-owned businesses in our community. By honoring these trailblazers, we felt it was important to emphasize the pivotal role that these entrepreneurs play in driving economic growth, creating employment opportunities, and inspiring future generations. By celebrating the achievements of these entrepreneurs, we hope it creates a ripple effect of inspiring others, building networks, and driving positive change. As a community, let us continue to champion their endeavors and work towards a future where entrepreneurial success knows no boundaries.







Zak Bolick, MBA Commercial Account Manager, The Laird Noller Companies



Woman-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award

In the inaugural year, there were 12 woman-owned businesses to recognize. This award honors a business that is at least 51% woman-owned and has created a business culture of giving back in the workplace and in the community.

NOMINEES:

- Ashley McCaskill Creative, owner Ashley McCaskill
- Body Specific, owners Leah Henderson & Lisa Lahm
- Crystal Clear Realty, owner Crystal Sweringen
- Express Employment Professionals, owner Kate Chinn
- Hidden Jewel Hair Salon, owner Janine Colter
- Lawrence Pet Friends, owner Sheree Miller
- Life Restoration Ministries, owner Nicole Rials
- Minuteman Press Lawrence, owner Kristi Burgess
- Pawsh Wash and Pet Health Market, owners Amber & Nicki Nickel
- Pine Landscape Center, owner Kathy Pine
- Sound Speech Therapy, owner Kimberly Williams
- Uplift Coffee Shop, owner Kelli Huslig

Woman-Owned Foundation Impact Award Winner 2023:

Express Employment Professionals, owner Kate Chinn

Express Employment Professionals recruits for anything from accounting and advertising businesses to cleaning, grocers, painting, plumbing, roofing, and security companies. It has experienced stable growth during the pandemic years, but like most businesses during this challenging period, has felt the strain to keep and retain valuable staff. However, owner Kate Chinn says she feels a sense of pride to know that many of her recruiters are being recruited by other companies in the community. In addition to providing highly-capable employees for dozens of companies throughout the Lawrence community, Express Employment Professionals gives back in terms of personal time given to local charities and organizations. Kate Chinn serves as treasurer for the Lawrence Chamber, is a board member for Heartland Works and is on the steering committee for Community Children's Center. The company also donates to the Chamber, Lawrence Schools Foundation, Leadership Lawrence and the Economic Development Council and donates time to O'Connell Youth Ranch and LINK.



Footprint Impact Award, the Minority-Owned Business Impact Award, the Woman-Owned Business Impact Award, and all of the 2023 LAWRENCE BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOUNDATION AWARD HONOREES.

And a BIG THANK YOU to all of the Sponsors that made it all possible.











































Minority-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award

In the inaugural year, there are 7 minority-owned businesses to recognize. This award honors a business that is at least 51% minority-owned and has created a business culture of giving back in the workplace and in the community.

NOMINEES:

- Caramelo, owner Ruben Leal
- Crystal Clear Realty, owner Crystal Sweringen
- Feldmeyer Financial, owner Ehren Feldmeyer
- Hidden Jewel Hair Salon, owner Janine Colter
- La Estrella, owners Raul and Adany Perez
- Leeway Franks & Butcher, owners Lee & K Meisel
- Life Restoration Ministries, owner Nicole Rials

We are so happy to be here and support all the Foundation award honorees. Whether it is earning the award for our own business growth or celebrating other local growing businesses in our county, it is our honor to be a part of this community and a sponsor of this wonderful event.

Yvonne Ruder, Chief Operating Officer, Alpha Roofing

Minority-Owned Foundation Impact Award Winner 2023: Life Restoration Ministries, owner Nicole Rials

Established in 2007, Life Restoration Ministries is a non-profit program that relies on volunteer support. The organization is led by founder/executive director Nicole Rials and board members, all of whom volunteer their time. LRM is built on collaboration and partnerships and has shown significant growth in volunteer resources since 2020, expanding the theatre/arts program to a Lied Center partnership, sustaining and growing the volunteer base in the LRM Theatre program, which has a direct impact on increasing black, indigenous, people of color representation in local theatre. Over the years, the number of volunteers and collaborators has increased 50 percent, and the program is looking forward

to continued growth in the future. LRM has a civic-minded multifaceted program that promotes social justice, equity, and belonging through a combined approach of STEM programming, behavioral health, and theatre/arts. Its specific mission and purpose is to provide more theatre/arts opportunities for underrepresented community members by increasing culturally-centered programming.

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FOOTPRINT IMPACT AWARD 2023 Standard Beverage Corporation

On the surface, it might look as though Standard Beverage is simply a distributor of wine, beer and spirits to local businesses like bars, restaurants, liquor stores and grocery stores. But the company has always prided itself in forming partnerships with customers, both on and off premises, that go far beyond distribution and sales and focus on working toward common business goals that benefit the community as a whole. Standard has a five-year commitment to the EDC Douglas County Rising Together campaign, having donated \$25,000 total to the cause. In August of last year, the company held its first inperson employee engagement event and as part of the celebration gave \$100 gift cards to nearly 300 employees to use at local Lawrence establishments. Standard coordinated with six downtown establishments to be featured as designated stops on a "Summer Stroll," helping bring more business downtown. In December 2021, it hosted an all-company donation drive to collect items for the Douglas County United Way and in the fall of 2022, it hosted an on-site blood drive. Standard Beverage donates financial support to – Cottonwood, Inc., Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, Family Promise, Jefferson's Foundation, Lawrence Humane Society, Lawrence Old Fashioned Christmas Parade, Lawrence Public Library, Lawrence Police Dept., Blue Santa and the University of Kansas. As a founding sponsor of the annual Salute Festival, Carrie Grove, Standard's

director of charitable events and marketing, serves on the Salute Committee for Cottonwood. These are just a few of the ways Standard Beverage works and contributes throughout the community and shows why it is a worthy recipient of the Footprint Impact Award.

Additional Foundation Award photos are located in the LOCAL SCENE section and online at: LawrenceBusinessMagazine.com/foundation Pine Landscape Center is so grateful for the time, effort and energy Ann and Steven give to the small businesses in our community with The Lawrence Business Magazine Foundation Awards. It has been amazing to see the growth of businesses and the participation in these awards each year.

Kathy Pine, Pine Landscape Center



This award reinforced, not only for me, but even more so, for my staff, all that we have accomplished over the past 3 years. We were one of the first industries to be affected by COVID, and one of the first to retool and reimagine how we operate as a company. This award is a public recognition of my staff for their resiliency and hard work.

Steve Maceli, Maceli's Banquet Hall and Catering





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