

Daily Herald BUSINESS LEDGER

The Business Resource for Suburban Chicago



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Business Ledger honors 74 'Best Places to Work in Illinois'

By Richard R. Klicki, Director of Content Development

What makes a company a great place to work? Engaged employees who enjoy good benefits, flexible work opportunities and a chance to help the communities they live in become a better place.

A daily cup of Starbucks coffee doesn't hurt, either.

A total of 74 companies were honored Wednesday evening during the 2015 Best Places to Work in Illinois program hosted by the Daily Herald Business Ledger. About 370 people attended the 10th annual event at the Oak Brook Hills Resort & Conference Center.

The statewide survey and awards program identifies and honors businesses whose work environments benefit its workforce, business and the state economy. The companies were classified in one of three categories based on number of employees and ranked based on a written survey of the company and interviews with a sampling of its employees.

Best Places to Work in Illinois winners enjoy a high amount of employee engagement, according to Peter Burke, president of Best Companies Group, which manages the awards program. While companies in the U.S. average around 41 percent employee engagement, the 72 companies honored average 91 percent employee engagement.

"That is incredible," Burke said. "You are the cream of the crop, the best of the best."

While companies were notified that they were among the honorees, they did not know their ranking until the event

The Number 1 company in the small business category, between 15-99 employees, is Radio Flyer Inc. of Chicago, which manufactures the iconic toy red wagon. The company is known for connecting its employees, known as "Flyers," to the brand so they can feel like kids again.

They host more than 20 annual events to engender just that feeling. Radio Flyer offers 100 percent employer paid medical and dental coverage, profit-sharing, tuition reimbursement, paid volunteer time off, summer hours, an on-site health assessment program, and chair massage & wellness reimbursement among their workplace features.

"It matters if we're a good employer because it really does impact the lives of our employees and the communities that we serve" said Amy Bastuga, Radio Flyer vice president of human resources. "Everybody in this room knows it's not about the perks ... what it's really about is creating meaningful work for individuals where they can contribute in an environment where were they feel like they are a part of the contribution."

The top company in the medium-sized category, between 100-499 employees, is Assurance of Schaumburg. The non-health care insurance company is one of the largest independent brokers in the United States. Among the company's perks are free Starbucks coffee and snacks, and an on-site dry cleaner. Employees are given a paid day off to do charity work. Assurance provides a quarterly event known as Assurance Casino, and there are the company Olympics, in which employees participate in competitive hula-hooping and tricycle races. Employee Appreciation Day happens every summer at a key Chicago location.



Lisa Pinion of Assurance of Schaumburg accepts the first-place award for Medium Employers during the Daily Herald Business Ledger's 10th annual Best Places to Work in Illinois award ceremony at the Oak Brook Hill Resort & Conference Center in Oak Brook Wednesday night. photos by photos by Mark Black/mblack@dailyherald.com



2015 Best Places to Work in Illinois

SMALL COMPANIES (15-99 employees)

1. Radio Flyer Inc., Chicago
2. Weiss & Company LLP, Glenview
3. MotherG, Itasca
4. Alliance Disaster Kleenup, Wheeling
5. TransTech IT Staffing, Itasca
6. Black Diamond Plumbing & Mechanical, Crystal Lake
7. Balasa Dinverno Foltz LLC, Itasca
8. Grid Connect Inc., Naperville
9. StratEx Partners, Chicago
10. Pepper Group, Palatine
11. Synergy Builders, Inc., W. Chicago
12. Magenium Solutions, LLC, Glen Ellyn
13. BPC, Champaign
14. Adage Technologies, Chicago
15. Warady & Davis LLP, Deerfield
16. Mueller, Elgin
17. Kutchins, Robbins & Diamond, Ltd. (KRD), Schaumburg
18. Merit Solutions Inc., Wheaton
19. American Bottoms Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, Sauget
20. Chicago Fluid System Technologies, Glendale Heights
21. R.J. Augustine & Associates LTD., CPAs, Schaumburg
22. Common Sense Solutions Inc., Lombard
23. Evergreen Bank Group, Oak Brook
24. IPMG, St. Charles
25. The Salem Group, Oakbrook Terrace
26. CDH, P.C., Itasca

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August, 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

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"We believe happy employees equal happy clients, so everything that we do has employees at the heart," said Lisa Pinion, senior vice president of human resources at Assurance. "If it's not the right thing for people, it's not the right thing for our clients and we just won't do it."

The top company in the large-sized category, with more than 500 employees, is Duke Realty of Indianapolis, Indiana, with a regional office in Rosemont. Duke Realty is one of the largest commercial real estate companies in the country managing approximately 156 million square feet of industrial, office and medical office properties in 17 major metropolitan areas. Among the company's opportunities are telecommuting and four-day workweek plans. Its Wellness program offers points for performance that can be used in a virtual mall, and on Fitness Fridays employees get 20 minutes of exercise time to start their day.

As one of its charitable functions, employees in the Rosemont office volunteered their time to help clean the grounds of the Ronald McDonald House.

"I'm a very small voice in a really great chorus known as Duke," said Genie Green, executive administrator at Duke Realty. "Our people come up with great ideas, and our management decides to employ those ideas."

Detailed profiles of the top companies and other winners will be featured in a special section of the June 22 issue of the Daily Herald Business Ledger.

The Best Places to Work in Illinois program is presented by the Daily Herald Business Ledger in partnership with the Human Resources Management Association of Chicago (HRMAC), the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce, the Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago, MRA — The Management Association and the Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce. Presenting sponsors of this year's recognition event are B. Gunther & Co., and Northern Illinois University Graduate School of Business.

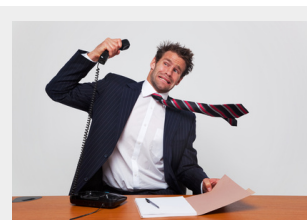
27. Thomas Interior Systems, Bloomingdale
28. The Mx Group, Burr Ridge
29. W.E. Carlson Corporation, Elk Grove Village
30. 3Points, LLC, Oak Brook
31. Michael Silver & Company CPAs, Skokie

MID-SIZED COMPANIES (100-499 employees)

1. Assurance, Schaumburg
2. Skender Construction, Chicago
3. CompTIA, Downers Grove
4. LaSalle Network, Chicago
5. Pariveda Solutions, Dallas, TX
6. Clarity Solution Group, Chicago
7. Domino Amjet, Inc., Gurnee
8. Meda Pharmaceuticals, Decatur
9. Sundance Vacations, Wilkes-Barre, PA
10. Omron Automation and Safety, Hoffman Estates
11. ARCO/Murray, Downers Grove
12. Sonoma Partners, LLC, Chicago
13. National Futures Association, Chicago
14. Advanced Resources LLC, Downers Grove
15. Impact Networking, LLC, Waukegan
16. Redwood Logistics, Chicago
17. Hanson Professional Services Inc., Springfield
18. Porte Brown, Elk Grove Village
19. Spark, Chicago
20. Physicians Interactive, Inc., Libertyville
21. EMKAY, Inc., Itasca
22. Corptax, Inc., Deerfield
23. Association Management Center, Chicago
24. Call One, Chicago
25. NCSA Athletic Recruiting, Chicago
26. Abercrombie & Kent, Downers Grove

LARGE COMPANIES (500-plus employees)

1. Duke Realty, Indianapolis, IN
2. Edward Jones, St. Louis, MO
3. WestPoint Financial Group, Peoria
4. Insuperity, Kingwood, TX
5. Ryan LLC, Dallas, TX
6. Sheppard Mullin, Chicago
7. Sikich LLP, Naperville
8. Lockton Companies, LLC, Chicago
9. Burns & McDonnell, Downers Grove
10. Crowe Horwath LLP, Chicago
11. Littelfuse, Inc., Chicago
12. Diageo, Plainfield
13. Starcom, Chicago
14. Total Quality Logistics, Cincinnati, OH
15. Wiley Education Solutions, Oak Brook
16. Advocate Health Care, Downers Grove
17. ATI Physical Therapy, Bolingbrook



Cold Call Clinic

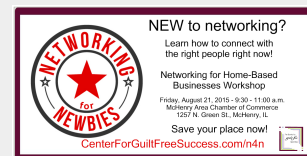


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