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Economic Development Association of Minnesota (EDAM) Announces Excellence in Economic Development Award Winners

(Minneapolis – January 29, 2026)

Winners of the Excellence in Economic Development Awards were announced on January 22, 2026 as part of EDAM's annual Winter Conference. The awards recognize projects and professionals in the economic development industry who have gone above and beyond or overcome significant challenges in the last year.

Please visit our website to view brief videos about each recipient and access award ceremony photos:

<https://edam.org/awards>

2026 RECIPIENTS

- **Economic Developer of the Year | Leslie Dingmann, Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation**
Recognizes a true leader in the industry who exemplifies excellence in economic development and leadership. It denotes use of best practices, collaborative thinking, creativity and a spirit of innovation.
- **Emerging Professional of the Year | Brian Fleming, Sherburne County Economic Development Authority**
Recognizes outstanding achievement by an emerging leader with less than five years of experience in the economic development industry who shows promising leadership skills and positively impacts their organization, community, and/or region through economic development.
- **Innovation Award**
Recognizes a creative solution to an economic development challenge, awarded to a community, county, organization, individual, or a collaborative team.
 - **Innovation Award * Greater Minnesota | City of Luverne and Kids Rock! Child Care Center**
 - **Innovation Award * Twin Cities Metro | EXCITE 2025**
- **Project of the Year**
Recognizes a project that has had a positive impact in Minnesota that demonstrates collaboration, creativity, and complexity, while retaining employment and capital investment.
 - **Project of the Year * Greater Minnesota | The House Food and Tap, St. Joseph, MN**
 - **Project of the Year * Twin Cities Metro | African Economic Development Solutions, St. Paul, MN**

About EDAM

The Economic Development Association of Minnesota (EDAM) is a state-wide association of professionals who specialize in economic development. EDAM champions economic development through education, collaboration and advocacy. The organization's nearly 600 members consist of public, private and nonprofit professionals who are interested in staying informed and connected to current economic development strategies and best practices. EDAM was originally established in 1967 as the Minnesota Industrial Development Association and has evolved over the last 50 years to an organization dedicated to collaboration and innovation in the economic development industry.

