



Milwaukee Downtown, Business Improvement District #21
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Milwaukee Downtown names its 2025 Downtown Achievement Award Winners

Key downtown projects and organizations recognized at Milwaukee Downtown's 2025 State of Downtown

MILWAUKEE (Oct. 17, 2025) – Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 hosted its annual Downtown Achievement Awards program on Thursday, Oct. 16, as part of its State of Downtown event at the Milwaukee Public Museum. Nearly 250 stakeholders, business owners and community members gathered to learn about the economic climate of Downtown Milwaukee and review the organization's upcoming initiatives.

The morning began with a keynote address from Milwaukee historian John Gurda, followed by a recap of Milwaukee Downtown's core program successes. The program concluded with the awards ceremony, where just over a dozen projects, businesses and leaders were recognized for their contributions to the central business district. Winners of the 2025 Downtown Achievement Awards included:

- **Milwaukee Repertory Theater**, winner of the He(art) of Community Award, for continuing to add vibrancy to Downtown Milwaukee's arts scene with the opening of its new Associated Bank Theater Center.
- **Baird Community Commons**, winner of the Public Space Award, for creating a gathering place that is connecting neighbors and spurring seasonal events.
- **Milwaukee Public Market**, winner of the Magnetism Award, for shining a spotlight on Downtown Milwaukee through accolades and the prestigious International Public Markets Conference hosted this past June.
- **Enerpac Tool Group**, winner of the Downtown Investment Award, for relocating their corporate headquarters to Downtown Milwaukee.
- **Biggy Coffee**, winner of the Gathering Grounds Award, for reactivating the vendor space at Red Arrow Park.
- **Riverwalk Boat Tours and Rentals**, winner of the Ripple Effect Award, for providing freshwater access for exploration and discovery through its captained private charters and self-captained pontoon boat rentals.
- **J. Jeffers & Co.**, winner of the Brick and Mortar Award, for reinvigorating Downtown Milwaukee through historic preservation and inventive adaptive reuse with its Journal Square project.

- **Taylor's**, winner of the Milestone Award, for enlivening the East Town neighborhood for the past 30 years.
- **The Marcus Corporation**, winner of the Milestone Award, for transforming Downtown Milwaukee's entertainment and hospitality offerings over the last 90 years.
- **Milwaukee Fire Department**, winner of the Milestone Award, for serving the community with courage, integrity, and honor for the last 150 years.
- **Light the Hoan**, winner of the Illuminating Community Award, for leading the monumental task of lighting both sides of the city's iconic Hoan Bridge.
- **Gary Witt**, winner of the Arts and Culture Champion Award, for revitalizing Downtown Milwaukee's historic theaters and leading the charge for a lifeline to venues across the country through the creation of the National Independent Venue Association.
- **Eileen and Barry Mandel**, winners of the Downtown Champion Award, for believing in Downtown Milwaukee as a full and complete neighborhood for students, young professionals, and empty nesters, and for supporting the tools for success for disadvantaged populations.

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About Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21

Milwaukee Downtown, Business Improvement District #21, is an organization established in 1998 to support the interests of the downtown Milwaukee business community. Created through private sector leadership, Milwaukee Downtown is a management district organization that oversees 150 square blocks representing approximately 500 property owners in the center of downtown Milwaukee. The organization funds specific initiatives aimed at creating a clean, safe, and welcoming downtown. More info is available at www.milwaukeedowntown.com.