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NEWS RELEASE

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Chicago, Belvidere, Lisle and Atlanta (IL) Companies Receive 2012 Edie Awards for Economic Development in Illinois

The Illinois Chamber and Illinois Development Council Give "Edies" to Honor Those Who Imagine, Design, Invest, Build and Bring Jobs, Growth and Prosperity to Illinois Communities

CHICAGO – What do a Chrysler plant in Belvidere, a produce distribution operation in Chicago, a new Navistar headquarters in Lisle, a new steel plant in Chicago and an artisan shop in Atlanta, Illinois all have in common?

The answer is today all five projects were announced as winners of the Edie (Economic Development in Illinois) Award. The annual award is given jointly by the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and the Illinois Development Council (IDC) to recognize significant economic development projects finished in the prior year throughout Illinois.

"The economy is recovering slowly but surely and more and more companies are out there investing in our state and creating jobs," said Doug Whitley, president and CEO of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce. "The Chamber is proud to be working with the IDC to recognize some of the exciting developments that were completed across the state."

The Illinois Chamber and IDC believe it's important to showcase recent accomplishments -- especially when they translated into more jobs, tax base and economic vitality in Illinois.

"These companies and the local economic development teams are in the trenches across the state, creating jobs and investing in our communities," said Kim Uhlig, chairman of the Illinois Development Council and business development director at the Morton Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council. "These successful projects are too often overlooked and we wanted to take a moment and reinforce the notion that economic development like this is central to keeping our state vibrant and healthy."

The Illinois Chamber and IDC asked for nominations from across the state for projects completed in 2011. An awards committee reviewed the nominees and determined which projects were worthy of an Edie Award. The Edies will be formally presented at the Illinois Chamber's annual meeting in Chicago on June 8th. The five winners of the 2012 Edie Award are as diverse as Illinois' economy.

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Arch Street Artisan (Atlanta, Illinois) -- The Atlanta Betterment Fund (ABF) was created in July 2008 to help ensure the quality of life in Atlanta by helping the community's businesses and services survive and thrive. The ABF initiated the idea for the Arch Street Artisans shop in January of 2011 because it would help local residents who were known for crafting unique products (such as jewelry, woodworking, homemade candy, stained glass, etc.) but who did not have the resources to open their own business location from which to sell their products. The ABF decided to fund a central commercial location that could be shared by local artisans and out of which they could collectively market and sell their products.

The ABF recruited the artisans and worked with them to renovate a vacant commercial space in downtown Atlanta. The shop opened in July of 2011 and has increased sales tax revenue for the city and provided a unique and fun shopping experience for locals and visitors alike.

Belvidere Assembly Plant - Chrysler Group LLC (Belvidere, Illinois) -- In November 2009, the newly formed Fiat-managed Chrysler Group LLC announced that they could not promise that future models would be produced at the Belvidere Assembly Plant after 2012. That decision needed to be assessed on a competitive basis.

Growth Dimensions (Belvidere's lead economic development agency) and the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity worked with other local and state resources to ensure the future of the Belvidere plant. By the end of 2010, Chrysler had announced construction of a 638,000SF addition to the plant and a \$600 million investment to expand the plant and prepare it for production of future vehicles. The state committed to providing a \$62.1 million business investment package to save 1,950 permanent jobs and generate 700,000 construction hours. Governor Quinn helped to pass and signed legislation into law in December 2009 to expand the EDGE tax credit to benefit the auto industry, which was critical to Chrysler's decision to stay and expand in Illinois.

The project resulted in retaining the operation of seven parts suppliers (six located in Belvidere and one in Sycamore) representing 1,400 jobs in total. During the project period four additional parts suppliers made investments in Belvidere. These four additional suppliers added another 500 jobs. Chrysler Group recently announced that the original \$600 million investment had increased to \$700 million and that the plant would add 1,800 jobs by the third quarter of 2012, which includes nearly 500 for production of the all-new Dodge Dart. In total, the Belvidere Assembly Plant is expected to be operating with 4,500 employees by third quarter this year.

Finkl Steel Plant (Chicago, Illinois) -- Founded in 1879, A. Finkl & Sons Co. (Finkl) is the world's leading supplier of forged die steels, plastic mold steels, die casting tool steels and custom open-die forgings. The company's products are used in a variety of manufacturing applications, including automotive, mining, and air and aerospace. Located in Chicago, Finkl produces more than 100,000 tons of steel each year—distributed domestically and to more than 18 countries worldwide. Finkl decided to build to a new 53-acre manufacturing campus on Chicago's south side that would help them employ the most advanced technologies and equipment, with five times the capacity of its current facility. In addition to creating new jobs, the south-side campus would serve as a catalyst for ancillary redevelopment in the nearby community.

Navistar Headquarters (Lisle, Illinois) -- In the fall of 2010 Navistar announced its intention to move its corporate headquarters to a former Lucent Technologies location in Lisle, Illinois. This move entailed moving its headquarters operations from Warrenville, Illinois as well as integrating its truck and engine product development operations from other locations, which involved moving employees in from out-of-state. Now complete, the 1.2 million-square-foot global headquarters and integrated product development center for Navistar welcomes more than 3,000 employees and several hundred contractors every day.

During construction, more than 2,000 union workers renovated the facility and Navistar paid \$900,000 in fees to the Village of Lisle for permits for construction and move in. This was unplanned revenue for the village. Relocating employees to the area has resulted in over \$50 million worth of homes and there are more to come. As with any project of this size, Navistar teamed up with state and local officials on the final financial package – including a \$100 million investment by Navistar through Illinois Finance Authority bonds, state incentive packages worth \$65 million and Lisle and DuPage County investment in road improvements.

Testa Produce Distribution Center (Chicago, Illinois) -- In 2011, Testa expanded its operations to a restored brownfield site in the Back of the Yards Neighborhood -- previously Chicago's historic Stockyards Corridor. Testa Produce is a 100-year-old family owned and operated wholesale produce distributor, servicing the foodservice industry throughout Chicagoland and the surrounding areas. The company's 91,000 square foot facility is equipped with 180 photovoltaic solar panels and a 238-foot freestanding wind turbine -- the first of its kind in Chicago -- that will generate 30 percent of the building's energy needs. On-site energy generation offsets the equivalent of about 80 homes worth of energy each year. The extensive water management system consists of a retention pond, bio swales, an internal rainwater-harvesting cistern, and a 45,000 square-foot barreled vegetated roof. This system is designed to reduce the facility's water demand by over 40%. Testa's building meets the stringent requirements of the US Green Building Council and as a result the company has been named the first LEED Platinum Refrigerated Foodservice Facility in the United States.

The Illinois Chamber of Commerce promotes the interests of Illinois business by working to improve the state's business climate. The Illinois Chamber aggressively advocates legislation and public policies that support economic growth, and is a source of timely and reliable information on matters important to its members, Illinois employers and the general public. The Illinois Chamber also provides effective programs and services to its 2,000+ members to meet their business needs, including immediate answers to tax and human resources concerns and access to training and consulting services. www.ilchamber.org

The Illinois Development Council is an association of economic development professionals and allies that strives to build relationships, professionalism, and a positive atmosphere in which to create jobs and wealth in Illinois. These individuals are employed by municipalities; not-for-profit economic development councils or community development corporations; utilities; railroads; planning commissions; state government; and other partners interested in retaining and growing businesses in Illinois. Members of the organization participate in mutually beneficial public policy, marketing and educational efforts. www.ildevelopmentcouncil.org.