



## Eleven Companies Earn AIM Next Century Awards

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A global center of classical music in the Berkshires, a company attracting diverse workers to the construction industry and a technology mainstay on Cape Cod are among 11 Massachusetts companies to be honored with AIM Next Century Awards for 2019.

Next Century awards honor employers, community organizations and individuals who have made unique contributions to the Massachusetts economy and the well-being of the people who live here.



AIM announced today that 2019 Next Century awards will go to iCorps Technologies of Boston; DRB Facility Services of Boston; Zogics of Lenox; Tanglewood of Lenox; MGM of Springfield; Peerless Precision Inc. of Westfield; Lynn Tokarczyk and Business Development Strategies Inc. of Medway; Onset Computer Corporation of Bourne; Rand-Whitney Container LLC of Worcester; Lampin Corporation of Uxbridge; and Interstate Electrical Services Corporation of North Billerica.

“AIM created the Next Century Award to honor the accomplishments of companies and individuals creating a new era of economic opportunity for the people of Massachusetts. These remarkable people and institutions - world leaders in their fields – inspire the rest of us by exemplifying the intelligence, hard work and dedication to success that has built our commonwealth,” said John R. Regan, President and Chief Executive Officer of AIM.

Award winners will be honored at AIM regional celebrations in Boston on September 12, Pittsfield on September 19, Holyoke on October 3, Easton on October 10, Worcester on October 16 and Lawrence on October 24.

Each event will run from 5-7 pm and is free to AIM members.

Here are summaries of each recipient, along with the date and location of the celebration when each will receive the award.

### **iCorps Technologies | Boston Regional Celebration, September 12, 5-7 pm, District Hall**

iCorps Technologies has been providing comprehensive, visionary information technology outsourcing to businesses across the Northeast since its founding in 1994.

What began as a part-time business called Off-Hours Consulting quickly grew to the iCorps Technologies of today, with cofounders Mike Hadley and Chris Stephenson continuing to prioritize service while empowering clients through technology.

Today, iCorps is ranked by the Boston Business Journal as one of the 25 largest IT consulting companies in Massachusetts. It earned Microsoft's 2018 Partner Award Recipient for Security and Compliance. The company employs 65 people and is rapidly expanding both its geographic footprint and the industries it serves.

iCorps has moved beyond its Boston roots, with an established presence in New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Charleston. The company is expanding offerings to meet emerging needs within the legal, life science, professional service, and start-up sectors, while upgrading services in stronghold verticals such as finance and construction.

iCorps provides a broad selection of on-site and remote IT services including outsourced IT support, cloud computing and optimization, managed programs for cybersecurity and business continuity, staff augmentation, and technology assessments. The company provides advanced technical expertise for clients leveraging products from Microsoft, AWS, Dell, Citrix, VMware, Sophos, Datto, SonicWALL, MimeCast, and more.

It's a crucial service for any company looking to thrive in a rapidly changing technology landscape.

"The iCorps team has either known how to do things right off the bat or has been able to find the answers very quickly. Once I hit the limits, that's where I can have the iCorps team finish things up for me, or take it to the next level," said Austin Brinson, VP of Data Analytics, B.GOOD restaurant chain.

Hadley remains at the helm of iCorps, ensuring that the next generation of business leaders experience "the high standards, expertise, ethics, intense customer focus, and comprehensive IT services offerings on which the company was founded."

### **DRB Facility Services | Boston Regional Celebration, September 12, 5-7 pm, District Hall**

Boston-based DRB Facility Services, formerly known as Done Right Building Services, has established a sizable presence in the New England building maintenance industry in a short period of time. Founded by Anthony Samuels in 1993, DRB has grown to more than 600 employees and provides a full range of facilities services for both corporate and government clients.

That rapid growth has continued this year, as DRB expects to grow revenue by 50 percent.

DRB's success has created economic opportunity in communities where it is most needed. The company, a 100-percent minority-owned enterprise, is committed to developing a workforce that reflects the proportion of people in the community that are of color, females, veterans, and handicapped.

"As our company has grown, we have worked to develop the people, processes, and tools required to address the changing needs of our clients," said Samuels. "Building systems have become more complex, as have the needs of building owners and managers, and our clients have asked for greater attention toward safety, environmental, and diversity requirements."

"Integral to our success is our people. DRB continually recruits and develops the greatest talent in the building services industry," Samuels said. "With over 11 years industry experience on average, and an optimal balance between management and staff, our management team is the best in the business."

DRB provides janitorial, landscaping and snow removal services to some of the largest companies in the United States. Employees are assigned to project teams to establish and enforce expectations for each facility. Project teams are cross-trained to ensure proper coverage.

Samuels was among the first participants in Eastern Bank's Business Equity Initiative, an initiative designed to help enterprises of color grow.

### **Tanglewood | Berkshire Regional Celebration, September 19, 5-7 pm, Hotel on North**

The economic benefit provided by the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra is music to the ears of Berkshire County.

Tanglewood's renowned summer-long festival of classical and popular music draws more than 300,000 concert-goers annually and generates an estimated \$127 million in economic activity, according to research conducted by Williams College Professor Stephen Sheppard.

That impact includes a new \$30 million performance, education and visitor complex to support both the orchestra's summer institute for advanced young performers and the new Tanglewood Learning Institute for adults. The new center sits adjacent to the Koussevitzky Music Shed, Seiji Ozawa Hall and facilities housing the Tanglewood Music Center and its 300 students.

"Tanglewood has an enormous impact on the economy of Berkshire County," Sheppard concluded in a 2018 report.

Tanglewood generates between 930 and 1,100 jobs directly or indirectly, representing a payroll of \$35 million. Although many are seasonal, these jobs provide an overall average income exceeding \$40,000 a year, generating \$15 million in federal, state and local tax revenues.

Sheppard found a 51 percent increase in visitor spending at Tanglewood, where average attendance has increased by 11 percent in the past 10 years. The effects on the county's economy result in an unemployment rate that is 1.8 percentage points below what it would be otherwise.

Tanglewood anchors a vibrant arts and tourism economy that also includes the Berkshire Theater Festival, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Williamstown Theater Festival and the Normal Rockwell Museum. The Tanglewood festival regularly draws musical superstars such as Joshua Bell, Renee Fleming, YoYo Ma, Emanuel Ax and John Williams.

The history of Tanglewood began with a series of concerts held in 1934 at the Interlaken estate of Daniel Hanna, about a mile from today's festival site. The Boston Symphony Orchestra first performed in 1936 and the festival moved a year later to "Tanglewood," an estate donated by Mrs. Gorham Brooks and Miss Mary Aspinwall Tappan.

"Tanglewood" took its name from Tanglewood Tales, written by Nathaniel Hawthorne, while he lived in a cottage located on the estate.

### **Zogics | Berkshire Regional Celebration, September 19, 5-7 pm, Hotel on North**

It's been a dizzying ride for fitness industry supplier [Zogics](#) from its origins in founder Paul LeBlanc's Richmond garage 12 years ago to two consecutive years on the Inc. magazine list of 5,000 fastest-growing private companies in the United States.

Dizzying, but far from disruptive, for a laid-back company that offers employees flexible time off, an on-site gym, \$500 a year to spend on Berkshire cultural events, subsidized organic community supported

agriculture (CSA) shares, and an office where dogs comfortably share the space with workers.

Zogics is one of the wellness industry's largest suppliers for fitness professionals. The company sells products ranging from exercise equipment to gym flooring and lockers to eco-friendly cleaning supplies to organic bath/body products. They serve more than 20,000 commercial gyms, schools, and workplace wellness programs around the world.

The company employs 20 people at its headquarters in Lenox and has distribution facilities throughout North America and Europe. Annual sales are approaching \$15 million, and the company has been growing at between 25 and 30 percent annually.

"Our culture centers around creating the right environment for each employee to excel. Our employees are the heart of our success," said LeBlanc, "We strive to cultivate a dynamic, engaging, and challenging workplace that inspires employees to give their very best every day."

Appearing on the Inc. 5,000 list for a second time is rare and comes on top of Inc. honoring Zogics as among the Best Workplaces in America.

"In an incredibly competitive business landscape, it takes something extraordinary for a business to succeed. At Zogics, that 'extraordinary' is a mix of products we all stand by and employees that believe in the work they're doing. Our team isn't just one that sells health and fitness — we fully embrace it," LeBlanc said.

### **MGM | Holyoke Regional Celebration, October 3, 5-7 pm, Wistariahurst Museum**

The \$960 million MGM Springfield has redefined the term "transformative development" in downtown Springfield as New England's premier resort casino destination.

The commonwealth's first full-gaming property has created thousands of jobs and drawn more than six million visitors since opening a year ago in a South End neighborhood of Springfield that for years struggled with economic development and the after-effects of a 2011 tornado. MGM Springfield generated \$253 million in gross gaming revenue during its first 49 weeks of operation.

Forty percent of MGM Springfield employees live in Springfield. The company, part of MGM Resorts International, partnered with Holyoke Community College and Springfield Technical Community College to establish the Massachusetts Casino Career Training Institute to train people for an industry that was, at the time, brand new to Massachusetts.

Built with a unique "inside-out" design intended to integrate the resort and its customers with the neighborhood, MGM Springfield has been a catalyst for development up and down Main Street in Springfield.

MGM Springfield's real estate partner, Davenport Companies, is building a \$2 million CVS store in its Davenport Square site across Main Street from the casino. Balise Auto Group is building a \$6 million Mazda dealership on property it has acquired over the years adjacent to its Hyundai dealership. And there are hotel and apartment proposals for the old York Street Jail site, where city development efforts have been frustrated for years.

Neighborhood businesses like Red Rose Pizzeria are expanding to deal with an uptick in customer traffic.

"The unique design of our resort is something that is very special to us, and we wouldn't change it for the world," said MGM Springfield President Michael Mathis. "As Main Street in downtown Springfield becomes more activated, you're going to see more people bouncing back and forth."

MGM Springfield has also ramped up the entertainment scene in downtown as manager of both the MassMutual Center and Symphony Hall venues. The company has brought big names such as Cher, Aerosmith, Stevie Wonder, Aaron Lewis, Steve Martin and Martin Short to downtown Springfield.

### **Peerless Precision Inc. | Holyoke Regional Celebration, October 3, 5-7 pm, Wistariahurst Museum**

Peerless Precision of Westfield lives up to its name. The 20-person, family-owned machine shop in Westfield specializes in making parts for the aerospace, defense, and medical devices industries that require precision to .0001 inch.

“Peerless Precision Inc. believes that you should design your products within 5 millionths without having to worry about manufacturability, consistency and accuracy; just send us the specs – we take care of the rest,” the company says.

Kristin Maier Carlson became president of Peerless in 2012, taking the reins from her late father when he became ill. She has since led the company through significant growth, expanded its markets and improved efficiency through lean manufacturing.

Carlson, who grew up around the shop from the age of 15, says she learned from her father the importance of providing educational and training opportunities for employees. The company spends significant time ensuring that expert-level workers pass along their skills to younger colleagues.

The company is also deeply involved with local schools. Carlson sits on the steering and advising committee for Westfield Technical Academy and West Springfield High School’s Pathways to Prosperity Program, and the company opens its doors annually to Westfield Middle School for student tours

“We want to show kids that manufacturing can be a cool and rewarding option for them,” Carlson says.

“One thing I have changed is we used to manage with a ‘top-down’ approach. Since taking over I have developed more of a ‘bottom-up’ culture. By embracing employee ideas, they are apt to share more and buy into the very ideas they are suggesting. I also drive a customer-focused culture. We all know and understand that without the customer, we are nothing,” Carlson said in an interview with innovate413.

Her vision for the future involves doubling the size of the company facility on Mainline Drive and increasing the work force. She would like to use one side of the building for production and the other side for job shop work, research and development, and prototyping, which would allow Peerless to expand into a global market at that point.

### **Lynn Tokarczyk, Business Development Strategies Inc. | Easton Regional Celebration, October 10, 5-7 pm, Easton Country Club**

Lynn Tokarczyk may have helped to create more jobs and business investment in Massachusetts than anyone else.

The founder of the government tax incentives consulting firm, [Business Development Strategies, Inc.](#), (BDS) has assisted more than 100 Massachusetts businesses with creating 10,000 new jobs and retaining another 20,000 jobs. Those companies have saved more than \$100 million in state and local taxes and invested more than \$1 billion in Massachusetts cities and towns by navigating the often-mystifying maze of state and municipal business incentives with help from the BDS team.

Since its founding in 2003, BDS has built an impressive record of success assisting a “Who’s Who” of prominent companies identify, negotiate and secure tax incentives in the form of Tax Increment Financing (TIF), state tax credits and other tools under the state’s Economic Development Incentive Program.

Like any experienced dealmaker, Tokarczyk makes her work look easy. But the business behind the scenes is anything but simple.

BDS has worked on many of the largest expansion and retention projects in the state with companies that include Samsonite, TripAdvisor, IPG Photonics, Horizon Beverage, Keurig, New England Ice Cream, MACOM, MilliporeSigma, Moderna, Analog Devices and Waters Corporation.

Tokarczyk, who serves as a member of the AIM Board of Directors and Executive Committee, started her career as the founder and owner of an upscale women's clothing boutique, where she honed her skills in sales and business. She took those skills in a new direction when she joined the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) as a project manager, and later, an MOBD regional director. Recruited by Ernst & Young as manager for the New England Area State and Local Tax Incentives practice, Tokarczyk rose to become a senior manager before starting her own consulting firm.

Named 2017 Business Person of the Year by the Tri-Town Chamber of Commerce and included in the New England Real Estate Journal's 2018 Women in Real Estate, she is passionate about achieving the best result for every client. That tireless commitment to success is what puts Tokarczyk and her team among the leading tax incentive consultants in the state.

### **Onset Computer Corporation | Easton Regional Celebration, October 10, 5-7 pm, Easton Country Club**

Onset Computer Corporation of Bourne has for 38 years been a technology mainstay in a region better known as a tourist destination.

Few of the thousands of vacationers who pass Onset's 40,000-square-foot design, engineering and manufacturing facility on their way to Cape Cod beaches realize that the company is one of the world's leading supplier of data loggers, weather-station products, wireless sensors, and web-based monitoring systems.

Onset's award-winning HOBO® data logger and weather station products are used around the world in a broad range of monitoring applications, from verifying the performance of green buildings and renewable energy systems to agricultural and coastal research. InTemp® loggers dramatically simplify the process of monitoring temperature-controlled environments by streamlining daily temperature checks and reducing the paper trail burden.

It is a business that has continued to grow and evolve since Onset began in 1981. The company now employs 160 people, a number that has risen by 15 percent during the past several years.

Data loggers are compact, battery-powered devices equipped with an internal microprocessor, data storage, and one or more sensors. They are connected to a computer, programmed by accompanying software, and then placed in the testing location - inside and outside, underground or underwater - where it records the desired measurement. Once the data is collected, the data logger is then reconnected to the computer and the software reads the data and displays the measurements in graphs and charts.

Onset's first data logger was built by Lon and Ellen Hocker in a barn behind their North Falmouth home in 1981. The business grew by word of mouth in the local scientific community, and the company quickly expanded.

Onset says its central competitive advantage is the degree to which employees are committed to a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and customer support. The company also gives back to the community in its hometown of Bourne and beyond - employees participate in Give-A-Day-On-Onset (GADOO) by either supporting the local food pantry or another charitable foundation.

## **Lampin Corporation | Worcester Regional Celebration, October 16, 5-7 pm, Mechanics Hall**

Robin LeClaire knows a thing or two about the value of companies developing their own talent. After all, LeClaire was an original employee of Lampin Corporation and spent 31 years at the company before assuming the role of president two years ago.

Uxbridge-based Lampin is an employee-owned company that makes precision parts and components for some 370 major manufacturers in the aerospace, telecommunications, robotics, defense, renewable energy, medical device, optical, and laser industries. The company's services include value engineering, precision machining, subassemblies, laser marking, metal treatment, and finishing—individually or in combination—to quickly deliver precision parts.

"Because Lampin is 100 percent employee-owned, we have a stake in the outcome. Our employee-owners take pride in maintaining machines and seeing customer orders from start to finish. Lampin is among the select few 100 percent employee-owned manufacturing companies in the United States and the pride and quality are demonstrated in our work," the company says.

Lampin Corporation moved to its present five-acre site in 1985. The original 4,000-square-foot building has been expanded twice and now houses 22,000 square feet of networked CNC equipment operating 24 hours a day.

Lampin employs 35 people, a number that has increased as the company has grown during the past five years.

The company was founded by Harold Fairbanks as the Laminated Pinion Gear Company in 1964. The company had a couple of owners through the years until Scott Rossiter purchased the business in 1982 and renamed it the Lampin Corporation. Rossiter in 2001 elected to sell 30 percent of the company to the employees through the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) and subsequently sold all of the company shares to the ESOP in 2006.

LeClaire's journey through the ranks of the company to the corner office underscores the Lampin's commitment to promoting from within and creating educational opportunities for employees working in a complex corner of manufacturing. Lampin offers in-house training and also works with the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership and Quinsigamond Community College to send new employees for in-depth education in manufacturing and CNC programming.

The company last year awarded six grants to students and schools in the Blackstone Valley to support programs in engineering, science and robotics. Lampin employee-owners also mentor students at the Blackstone Valley Chamber Education Hub.

## **Rand-Whitney Container LLC | Worcester Regional Celebration, October 16, 5-7 pm, Mechanics Hall**

Rand-Whitney Container may be the largest independent manufacturer of corrugated products in New England, but don't think the company is resting on its laurels.

Rand-Whitney in July acquired Pennsylvania-based Specialty Finance and Consulting Corporation, a manufacturer and distributor of corrugated sheets, corrugated packaging and related products and services. The acquisition comes less than a year after Rand-Whitney invested \$20 million to expand its 350,000 square-foot complex of manufacturing, design and office complex on Rand-Whitney Way in Worcester.

Throw in millions of dollars in capital improvements to machinery and it's clear that Rand-Whitney, part of The Kraft Group of Foxboro, intends to be the big kid on the block for years to come.

Rand-Whitney corrugated products range from simple shipping containers to custom die-cuts and high-end retail merchandisers and displays. Its protective packaging products include wood and foam to ensure even the most delicate products make it to their destination unharmed.

The company calls itself a one-stop solution for packaging needs, offering everything from engineering, design and testing to fulfillment and real-time information processing.

Rand-Whitney also places a premium on using environmentally sustainable materials.

The company owns a 100 percent post-consumer waste linerboard mill and is able to create packaging that uses a high percentage of post-consumer waste. The linerboard mill transforms more than 900 tons per day of old corrugated containers into 700 tons per day of recycled linerboard. It is the only mill in the country to do so with 100 percent post-consumer waste and water.

The Rand-Whitney Group traces its origin to 1857, when Elvira F. Dodge started a company making folding cartons in her home in Leominster. In 1938, Whitney Box of Worcester acquired Dodge Paper Box, forming the modern company. The combined entity was named Rand-Whitney.

From its beginnings the company has prided itself on family values and recognizes that its greatest asset is the employees. Rand-Whitney aims to provide its employees with a good compensation package and a positive work environment in return for quality work. The company strives to foster a family atmosphere, boasting many employees that have worked there for decades.

The Kraft Group employs more than 5,000 people.

### **Interstate Electrical Services Corporation | Merrimack Valley Employer Celebration, October 24, 5-7 pm, Salvatore's**

Interstate Electrical Services, headquartered in North Billerica, is a full-service electrical contractor with offices in Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Founded in 1966 by Pat Alibrandi with little more than a desk, a chair and a van, the company has grown to become one of the largest merit shop electrical contractors in New England with more than 600 employees and a fleet of more than 180 service vehicles. The company's work spans the commercial, industrial, healthcare, biotech, life sciences, engineering, service and energy sectors.

Interstate Electrical Services has been named as one of the top 400 electrical contracting firms in the United States.

Interstate is a leader in construction and electrical prefabrication, with a 100,000 square-foot Operations Center in Tewksbury, that serves as a full-service prefab shop for offsite electrical component assembly. UL certification and targeted material delivery ensures consistent quality and reduces site footprint and packaging waste.

In-house project coordinators and detailers work through every phase of a project, turning coordinated construction drawings into actionable plans for material assembly, testing, and just-in-time point of installation delivery of the finished ready-to-install electrical components and systems. This opens up extensive job opportunities beyond the traditional electrician or journeyman roles.

Interstate is at the forefront of reducing the labor gap in the trades and dedicates its time and resources to entice potential employees with robust apprenticeship programs. From high school graduates to those re-entering the workforce to college students, the electrical trade can be an appealing option for those who might not have a specific degree or technical background or perhaps are looking for a second career.

Interstate's various apprenticeship programs mean trainees have a steady job while learning through hands-on, on-site training. They also enjoy benefits like health insurance and paid time off. When an apprentice completes the program, he or she leaves debt-free and have already joined the workforce. Interstate has over 200 electrical apprentices at any given time, and they receive full pay and benefits.

Interstate's internship and co-op programs allow students to work with trained professionals on-site to see how their interests line up with the industry. The company works with more than 25 local schools to recruit paid interns in every department, ranging from finance, to business and administration management to software detailing.