



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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14th Annual Illinois Green Awards Announced 2019 Awardees Reflects Local Leadership Making a National Impact

Chicago, IL - Illinois Green Alliance announced the winners of the 14th annual Emerald Awards for 2019. Each year, the annual Emerald Awards program recognizes the unique green building leadership in Illinois by featuring the best and brightest individuals, projects, and technologies championed in Illinois.

“The projects and leaders recognized are more than innovators in green building solutions, they are committed to making more people in more communities benefit from sustainable design, technology and construction,” said Brian Imus, Executive Director of Illinois Green.

The fourteenth annual Emerald Award winners include:

Nathan Kipnis FAIA, will be honored with the Emerald Award for **Individual Leadership** for his long-time commitment to advancing sustainability within the built environment. His commitment to carbon drawdown action is reflected not only in the award-winning homes he designs but in his work as a dedicated volunteer and advocate for the green building movement. Nate is advancing sustainability at many different scales, from his role locally in helping craft the Evanston Climate Action Plan, to helping pass the Lake Michigan Wind Energy Act, to serving as a founding member and current national co-chair of the AIA’s 2030 Commitment.

The University of Illinois at Chicago, will receive the Emerald Award for **Organizational Leadership** for its plan to advance the practice of sustainability among all campus stakeholders through operations, education, research, and leadership. The recently developed Climate Action Implementation Plan (CAIP) includes stated goals of becoming a Carbon Neutral, Zero Waste, Net Zero Water, and Biodiverse campus that has the potential to reduce UIC greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 15,900 MTCO₂e per year.

The McDonald’s Flagship Restaurant in Chicago’s River North will be recognized with the Emerald Award for **Green Building Innovation**. The structural system, Cross Laminated Timber (CLT), is the first commercial use in Chicago and has a lighter environmental footprint than concrete and steel. The carbon saved by using a CLT and Glulam structure instead of a non-wood structure is equal to removing over 34,000 passenger vehicles from the road for one year and is one of the first to use alternative concrete that sequesters recycled CO₂ into fresh concrete mix.

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The Well Farm at Voris Field in Peoria Illinois is one of the first ‘stormwater farms’ in the country and will receive the Emerald Award for **Community Impact**. As a community driven pilot project, the innovative urban farm approach to green stormwater infrastructure helps achieve community goals of access to fresh food, job creation, reduced flooding and overall increased resiliency in a low-income, underinvested community.

LUCHA, a non-profit affordable housing developer with a mission to advance housing as a human right by empowering communities, will receive the **Illinois Green Mission Award**. Their commitment to and recognition of green building as critical to improving the quality of life for everyone in every neighborhood truly met the spirit of the Mission Award. Most recently, LUCHA completed the first affordable Passive House multifamily building in Illinois, Tierra Linda, and have gone above and beyond by using their experience to educate and encourage building practitioners to raise the bar in green affordable housing projects.

Illinois was recently recognized as the state with the most LEED-certified (Leadership in Environmental Design) square footage per capita and Chicago was ranked the greenest city by the Green Building Adoption Index.

“This year, the outstanding achievements in sustainable leadership being recognized underscores why Illinois is leading the nation in green building innovation,” continued Brian Imus. “Limelight is an opportunity to applaud their efforts and celebrate the achievements of Illinois’ sustainability industry.”

The public is invited to celebrate these sustainability achievements at Illinois Green’s annual [Limelight Reception](#) on Tuesday, May 14th at Venue Six10 located in the Spertus Institute at 610 S. Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Tickets to the event and presentation of the Emerald Awards are available online. For more information regarding Limelight, contact Nicole Spicer at (312) 245-8300 x205 or visit www.illinoisgreenalliance.org.

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About the Illinois Green Alliance

The Illinois Green Alliance is a membership directed non-profit organization working to transform the region’s built environment to become ecologically sustainable, profitable, and healthy. To do so, we engage community leaders and utilize member expertise in education and community outreach through targeted programs and initiatives focused around green homes, communities, schools and existing buildings. With hundreds of passionate members and volunteers who lend their time and expertise, Illinois Green provides nearly 75 educational programs, community engagement events, tours, and advocacy initiatives each year.