



*Move Illinois:
The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ILLINOIS TOLLWAY STAFF RECOGNIZED FOR COMMITMENT TO EXPANDING CONTRACT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINORITY-OWNED FIRMS

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway announced today that two staff members have been recognized by the Minority Business Enterprise Input Committee of the Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council Inc. for their outstanding contributions to expanding opportunities for minority firms to do business with the Tollway.

Paul Cerpa, executive manager of the Department of Diversity and Strategic Development, has been selected as recipient of the President’s Recognition Award for 2017, and Chief of Procurement John Donato was selected as one of the Outstanding Buying/Contracting Executives of 2017.

These Sharing Success Awards honor individuals who have demonstrated a particular commitment to increasing opportunities for minority entrepreneurs to provide goods and services.

“The Illinois Tollway is proud that its executives are recognized for their contributions to level the playing field for minority businesses,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. “Paul Cerpa and John Donato go above and beyond to help potential vendors navigate the contract process and get the help they need to succeed in growing their businesses.”

Cerpa, who joined the Tollway in June 2016, oversees the agency’s responsibility in promoting contract diversity inclusion in the overall procurement process and in the Tollway’s 15-year, \$12 billion *Move Illinois* capital program. With more than 30 years’ experience helping to promote and increase supplier diversity, Cerpa has lent his expertise and insights to help expand and improve various Tollway diversity programs, including its Technical Assistance Program, Partnering for Growth and the Earned Credit Program.

“The President’s Recognition Award is the premier award presented to an individual who has excelled in all facets of their job,” said Shelia C. Morgan, president and chief executive officer of the CMSDC. “Paul Cerpa has exemplified his service and commitment in helping MBEs grow and sustain their businesses and have taken a positive action that will effect economic growth in the State of Illinois. Mr. Cerpa continues to go above and beyond his job responsibilities and represent the best of the best.”

Donato has served as the Tollway’s chief of Procurement since 2011 and brings more than 12 years of government procurement experience. He is known for his hands-on approach to working with vendors and creating improvements and efficiencies in the procurement process. A strong advocate for diverse participation in the procurement process, Donato often speaks at events to encourage participation by explaining what is required to do business with the state and the Tollway and how to become aware of solicitation opportunities. Donato has also played a pivotal role in enhancing Tollway practices related to the state’s Business Enterprise Program and Veterans Business Program to be more inclusive for small, diverse and veteran-owned businesses.

“The Outstanding Buying/Contracting Executives Award is presented to the buying or contracting executive who has strengthened minority firms through their commitment to minority purchasing,

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including contracting goods, services, professional services and construction,” said Phillip Barreda, executive vice president of the CMSDC. “John Donato was nominated by the Minority Business Enterprise Committee/ChicagoMSDC and unanimously approved by all.”

Each year, the MBEIC Sharing Success Awards recognize outstanding individuals and corporations who, through procurement and advocacy, have kept supplier diversity at the forefront of America’s business scene. The awards also provide an opportunity to salute the success of minority business enterprises that have defied the odds and built firms that contribute to the national economy through job creation and community development. These firms represent all spheres of business and industry. They are manufacturers, distributors and service firms.

About MBEIC/ChicagoMSDC

The Minority Business Enterprise Input Committee is a group of certified minority business enterprise representatives who provide counsel and recommendations so that programs and projects implemented by the Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council are relevant and supportive of minority business development. The committee, led exclusively by certified minority business enterprises, has an initiative to hold local, state, and federal agencies and prime contractors accountable for enforcement of existing laws and diversity practices with procurement processes.

About the Illinois Tollway

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 292 miles of roadways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80) and the Illinois Route 390 Tollway.

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