

Governor Laura Kelly Names Manufacturer KanPak Winner of Kansas' Top Business Award

May 12, 2022

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~Honors Business Leaders at Inaugural To the Stars: Celebrating Kansas Business Banquet~

TOPEKA – Yesterday, Governor Laura Kelly announced KanPak, an Arkansas City-based manufacturing company, is the winner of the 2021 Governor’s Award of Excellence, the top award given to a business by the state. The Governor joined the Kansas Department of Commerce in honoring KanPak and other Kansas businesses at the inaugural *To the Stars: Celebrating Kansas Businesses* banquet, a new annual celebration of Kansas businesses and their contributions to communities and the state economy.

“Private sector leaders like KanPak have helped make Kansas one of the best places in the nation to do business,” **Governor Laura Kelly said.** “By creating jobs and driving economic growth, local businesses improve the communities they serve. Congratulations to KanPak and the other amazing Kansas businesses for their outstanding contributions to the state.”

Founded in 1965 as Kansas Food Packers, KanPak began as a family-owned dairy company producing juices, coffee drinks, and ice cream treats. In the decades since, KanPak has grown to be an industry leader and innovator in aseptic beverage and dessert packaging technology. KanPak's customers include nationally recognized brands such as Chick-fil-A, Whataburger, and 7-Eleven. Once a small operation, KanPak now distributes products worldwide.

This year's *To the Stars* banquet honored 178 businesses, including 133 Merit Award winners and 45 Regional Award winners. In addition to KanPak, six Regional Award winners were recognized as the overall statewide winner in their award categories. These include:

- Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas, Pittsburg, Hospital/Non-Profit Award
- Dodge City Brewing, Dodge City, Retail Award
- Landoll Corporation, Marysville, Business Innovation Award
- NIC, Inc., Olathe, Service Award
- Paul Porter, Iola, Welcome Back Award
- Waylon Sheetz, Belleville, Under 30 Entrepreneur/Businessperson Award

"We are grateful to the Kansas business community for supporting strong communities, healthy families, and a high quality of life," **Lieutenant Governor and Commerce Secretary David Toland said.** "These businesses are prospering and creating new opportunities for growth across our state."

The 2021 *To the Stars* banquet was delayed until May 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 celebration will take place this fall, and the nomination process will launch this summer. The complete list of this year's winning nominees, along with photos from the event, can be found [here](#).

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