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Ohio Chamber Research Foundation Presents Business Awards at Annual Benefit Gala

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation recognized three exceptional Ohio businesses at its third annual Research Foundation Benefit Gala on November 20.

This year's business honorees — Atomic Credit Union, Sierra Nevada Corporation and Hicks Partners — were selected for their distinctive achievements, meaningful partnerships and the important role each plays in advancing opportunity across the state.

"Hicks Partners, Sierra Nevada Corporation and Atomic Credit Union each represent what makes Ohio a top-tier state for business," said Steve Stivers, President & CEO of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. "Their commitment to innovation, community impact and economic growth is exactly what continues to drive our state forward."

Atomic Credit Union — Small Business of the Year



Atomic Credit Union was honored for setting the statewide standard in youth financial education through its expansive network of in-school credit union branches. Operating in dozens of districts across Ohio, the program immerses students in hands-on financial literacy and real-world banking experience. Students manage accounts, process deposits, and learn critical lessons in saving, budgeting and responsible spending — skills that build a more financially confident generation.

The Ohio Chamber proudly recognizes Atomic Credit Union as the 2025 Small Business of the Year for its unwavering dedication to education, empowerment and Ohio's future workforce.

Sierra Nevada Corporation — Innovative Business of the Year



Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC) received the Innovative Business of the Year award for its expanding and transformative presence in Ohio's aerospace and defense sector. Owned by Chairwoman and President Eren Ozmen and CEO Fatih Ozmen, SNC is a global leader in open-architecture engineering across space systems, commercial aviation and national security.

With its rapidly growing Aviation Innovation & Technology Center (AITC) at Dayton International Airport, SNC is cementing Dayton's position as a national aerospace hub. The campus, which features two operational hangars with two more under construction, represents nearly \$100 million in investment and supports hundreds of high-wage jobs.

The company's bold growth and technological leadership make it a deserving recipient of the Innovative Business of the Year award.

Hicks Partners — Business of the Year



Hicks Partners was honored as Business of the Year for its deep and sustained impact on Ohio's business landscape. Since its founding in 2003 by Brian Hicks, the firm has developed robust capabilities in government affairs, strategic communications, public relations, business development, grant writing and association management.

This recognition also reflects Brian Hicks' longstanding leadership within the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. A board member since 2010, he was elected Chairman of the Board in 2023 and has also served as Chairman of the Research Foundation Board. His contributions to statewide policy advocacy, research initiatives, and economic development strategy have shaped Ohio's business environment in meaningful and lasting ways.

The Ohio Chamber is the state's leading business advocate, representing thousands of companies across all industries. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

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