

NEWS RELEASE

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MICHIGAN WORKS! KENT & ALLEGAN COUNTIES SEEKS NOMINEES FOR ITS FIRST ESSENTIAL SERVICE AWARDS

New awards program will honor employees who perform essential services most people take for granted.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., September 16, 2008 —Did you ever think about what might happen if no one showed up at your favorite restaurant to cook breakfast or take your order, or if all the people hired to clean restrooms at a busy airport took the day off? How unpleasant would it be if the people responsible for cleaning rooms at the hotel where you planned to spend the night called in sick?

Michigan Works! Kent & Allegan Counties is seeking nominees for the first annual Essential Service Awards to recognize people working indispensable, but traditionally, undervalued jobs. “These workers are essential to a smoothly running business, organization and community,” said Win Irwin, chairman of the board for Michigan Works! Kent & Allegan Counties. “Yet, as a group, this segment of workers has become virtually invisible in our society.” Irwin added that the program is as much about raising awareness of the value of essential workers as it is about the award itself.

Nominations can be submitted by employers or the community at large in a variety of categories, including hospitality, retail, healthcare, transportation, clerical support, food service, general labor, childcare, nonprofit/government, custodial, housekeeping or groundskeeper. Criteria for the awards are based on the person’s wage, work attitude and ethic, and work history. There will be 10 awards presented – one from each category.

“We are encouraging everyone to nominate exceptional essential workers that they encounter in their daily routine — the server who always has their coffee ready just the way they like it, the parking attendant who greets them with a smile, or the groundskeeper who keeps the ice off the sidewalk” said Irwin.

Michigan Works! will work with employers for nominees submitted by people who want to show their appreciation, but do not have access to employment information about their nominee.

Nomination forms are available at the Michigan Works! Kent & Allegan Counties web site, www.michiganworkska.org, or can be picked up at Michigan Works! Kent & Allegan Counties, 144 East Fulton street, Grand Rapids, or at the Service Centers. Completed forms must be returned by Oct. 16 to the Fulton Street office, submitted via e-mail to ESA@michiganworkska.org, or faxed to (616) 336-4118. Additional information about the Essential Service Awards program is available by calling (616) 336-4100. The inaugural Essential Service Awards will be recognized at the November 17, 2008 Economic Club meeting.

About Michigan Works! Kent & Allegan Counties

Michigan Works! Kent & Allegan Counties provides a network of employment and training programs and services for employers, employees, and job seekers with the goal of creating a sustained workforce with the required skills to maintain and enhance the economy of Kent and Allegan Counties.

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