

Original Link: <https://northernkentuckyusa.com/kentucky-association-of-manufacturers-announces-manufacturer-and-employee-of-the-year>

Louisville, KY – The Kentucky Association of Manufacturers (KAM) announced the winners of its 15th annual Manufacturer & Employee of the Year Awards at their Awards Luncheon this afternoon at the Seelbach Hilton in Louisville.

Hahn Automation won in the Small Business Category; Holley Performance Products won in the Mid-Size Business Category; GE Appliances won in the Large Business Category. Each was selected based on the following criteria:

Innovative and entrepreneurial leadership with regard to products, production method, or services;

Recognized leadership in making a key contribution to the quality of life in the Commonwealth and the community; and

Active involvement in organizations that advance industry and manufacturing.

Danette Wilder, SealingLife, Inc., was selected as the 2015 Employee of the Year. Nominees were judged on four criteria:

Innovation, Teamwork, Community Service and Leadership.

The independent 2015 Awards Selection Committee consisted of:

- Rich Cleary (Committee Chair), Member – Frost Brown Todd LLC, Louisville
- Dr. Larry Ferguson, Vice Chancellor for Economic Development and Workforce Solutions – Kentucky Community and Technical College System, Versailles
- Steve Kerrick, Partner – Mountjoy Chilton Medley, LLP, Louisville
- Ray Leathers, President & CEO – Roll Forming Corporation, Shelbyville
- Becky Naugle, State Director – Kentucky Small Business Development Center, Lexington
- Gary Stewart, Retired CPA, Louisville
- Tim Whitaker, Environmental Compliance Manager – Ashland, Inc., Calvert City
- Wade Williams, VP Manufacturing, Business Retention & Expansion – Northern Kentucky Tri-ED, Covington.

“These awards pay tribute to those from our manufacturing community who provide leadership, demonstrate high standards, promote manufacturing here in the Commonwealth, and this year’s winners personify the best of the best,” stated KAM President and CEO Greg Higdon. “We had a record number of really top-notch nominees this year, making our selection committee’s job even more difficult than usual. We thank the committee for their diligent work and congratulate all of our nominees, and our 2015 winners.”

Danette Wilder, SealingLife, Inc. – Employee of the Year

With the impressive list of Danette Wilder’s accomplishments, the exceptional reputation and success of SealingLife, Inc. comes as no surprise. When SealingLife first opened its doors in 2008, founder and President Danette Wilder eagerly faced the many challenges of being a woman-owned rubber product manufacturing company in a predominantly male industry. She pursued the AS9100 international aerospace quality certification, an unheard-of accomplishment for smaller companies the size of SealingLife.

Ask any employee of SealingLife and they will tell you that Danette epitomizes what it means to work as a team. Continually emphasizing that “there is no ‘I’ in teamwork,” she is passionate about always working for the benefit of her SealingLife team. Although she is President and CEO of the company, if there is not a scheduled meeting or other business matter demanding her time, you will find Danette on the production floor with every other SealingLife employee.

Even with the demands of her busy schedule, Danette prioritizes time to serve her local community. As an educational speaker and volunteer for several local non-profit organizations, Danette was recently appointed to Kentucky’s Workforce Innovation Board. She is Vice-President for the Bluegrass chapter for the Kentucky Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (KY FAME) and has served on many other community boards.

Danette Wilder lives by the principle of “leading by example.” She is driven by her sincere desire to help others succeed. Danette

Page Link: <https://northernkentuckyusa.com/kentucky-association-of-manufacturers-announces-manufacturer-and-employee-of-the-year>

distinguished character, both professionally and personally, contributes to her recognition as an influential leader in all of her accomplishments. Congratulations to Danette Wilder, winner of the 2015 Manufacturing Employee of the Year Award.

Hahn Automation – Manufacturer of the Year – Small Business Category

Hahn Automation stands out as a leader in custom automation equipment, serving the automotive, household and pharmaceutical industries from its North American headquarters in Boone County, Kentucky. With values such as responsibility, reliability and focus on being future-oriented, Hahn Automation creates the “know-how of tomorrow” for internationally operating businesses.

Founded in 1990 by two German engineers, Hahn has grown into an internationally recognized company. More recently, Hahn invested \$3 million in expansion of their manufacturing center in Boone County, doubling their engineering and production capacity as well as creating 20 new full-time jobs.

Hahn’s leadership in Northern Kentucky is actively involved in the European American Chamber of Commerce Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky International Trade Association. In 2015, John Baines, Hahn’s current North American president, was nominated by Governor Beshear to serve on the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board as the information technology representative.

Recognizing the need to attract a new generation of workers to its manufacturing facilities, Hahn Automation is a founding member of the Northern Kentucky Chapter of the Kentucky Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (KY FAME), with a focus on attracting a new workforce to the manufacturing industry.

Hahn Automation’s continued leadership in innovation, commitment to their community, and responsibility for corporate advocacy makes them the perfect selection for the 2015 Manufacturer of the Year Award in the small business category.

Holley Performance Products – Manufacturer of the Year – Mid-Size Business Category

For over 50 years in Bowling Green, KY, Holley Performance Products has been an industry leader in high performance exhaust products, standalone EFI systems, carburetors, intake manifolds, superchargers, water pumps, plumbing components and fuel pumps for street and race applications. With a central concentration on the high-performance aftermarket, where its world-famous carburetors have won more races than all others combined, Holley products have powered every NASCAR team since the 1950s. In 2014, Holley announced their creation of a state-of-the-art research and development work cell facility for designing industry-leading exhaust systems at their Bowling Green headquarters. The revolutionary facility brought an investment of \$1,325,000 to South Central Kentucky and generated 20 new jobs.

Holley Performance Products is a valued member of their local community of South Central Kentucky, with key leaders serving on the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce Motorsports Steering Committee as well as working to develop a strategic plan to grow the local economy through the community’s rich motorsports heritage. Additionally, every year Holley brings the Holley National Hot Rod Reunion to Beech Bend Raceway, a three-day event hosting about 20,000 visitors and pumping an estimated \$10 million into the Bowling Green economy. Holley Performance Products recently announced partnership with On Track, a Motorsports Education initiative that integrates critical STEM concepts beneficial to the development of talent for the future workforce of South Central Kentucky. Holley is also a long-time member of Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), Performance Warehouse Association, and active participants with NASCAR, NHRA, ARCA and other racing organizations that assist in the advancement of business and innovation in South Central Kentucky.

As the industry standard in both the development and manufacturing of high-performance automotive products through their dedication to innovation and responsibility to corporate citizenship and advocacy, we congratulate Holley Performance Products for winning the 2015 Manufacturer of the Year Award in the mid-sized company category.

GE Appliances – Manufacturer of the Year – Large Business Category

GE Appliances, a world-class manufacturing company with industry-leading products, has invested more than \$1 billion since 2010 to revitalize and reshore its U.S. facilities, processes and products, with the majority of that funding going to Appliance Park in

ge Link: <https://northernkentuckyusa.com/kentucky-association-of-manufacturers-announces-manufacturer-and-employee-of-the-year>

Louisville, Kentucky. In the process, GE has revitalized a 60+ year old manufacturing facility, added over 3,000 new jobs, developed a new collaborative product development process, and worked to build a new culture that affords employees at all the opportunity for full engagement. Additionally, GE has created a product design process open to designers from every region of the world, all while challenging their competitors with world-class products with first-to-market features and leading-edge technology. As an additional benefit to their ongoing reshoring process, hundreds of new service and part manufacturing jobs were created in Kentucky, Indiana and other surrounding states to meet the demands of GE's growth strategy.

For more than 60 years, GE Appliances and its employees have been known for giving back to the community through volunteerism, expertise sharing, and product and monetary donations. With a focus primarily in the areas of Education/Workforce Development, GE drove collaboration among area manufacturers to create the Blueprint for Bridging the Industrial Skills Gap. An Urgent Call to Action from Greater Louisville Manufacturers, which resulted in the establishment of the Greater Louisville Chamber of KY FAME and the first Advanced Manufacturing Technician class enrolled at Jefferson Community & Technical College.

GE Appliances' commitment to the advancement of manufacturing and the industry is widespread; including CEO Chip Blankenship's leadership of the National Association of Manufacturers' national task force on Competitiveness & the Workforce in 2014, creating an action plan and toolkits for manufacturers across the country to use to help improve the manufacturing skills of the workforce.

For their dedication to continued innovation, responsibility to corporate citizenship, and advocacy of the manufacturing industry both locally and nationally, we are pleased to announce GE Appliances as the 2015 Manufacturer of the Year Award winner in the large company category.

Congratulations to all of our 2015 Award Winners!

##

About KAM

Established in 1911, the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers is Kentucky's most effective advocate for manufacturers. KAM's mission is to protect and create a manufacturing-friendly environment in Kentucky. In addition to advocating, KAM connects, educates and provides cost-saving programs and products to members. For more information, go to: www.KAM.us.com