



CHICAGO INNOVATION AWARDS™

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Top 10 Most Innovative New Products and Services in Chicago Region Honored at Chicago Innovation Awards Ceremony

- **Mayor Richard M. Daley and Financial Markets Pioneer Leo Melamed are Speakers**
- **Chicago Firefighter Honored with Visionary Award**

Chicago, IL— The ten most innovative new products and services brought to market or to public service in the Chicago region over the course of the past year were honored at the 8th annual Chicago Innovation Awards ceremony held at the Goodman Theatre on Tuesday, October 20.

The first People's Choice Award of the Chicago Innovation Awards was presented to Abbott for the “mom-friendly” design of its Similac® SimplePac™ infant formula packaging. The annual Young Innovators' Award went to Heartsounds, a business developed by UIC business school graduates; and the Innovation Visionary Award was won by a Chicago firefighter for the special device he invented to fight fires in high rise buildings.

The full range of innovation in the Chicago region and the diversity of its economy was on display at the event. Products ranging from a service designed to bring internet access to airplanes (GoGo Inflight Internet), to the new Modern Wing of the Art Institute were honored. High tech products such as a system for measuring how much a website is being used (comScore) to a low tech garden hose reel that has captured enormous market share by using water pressure to reel in the hose (Suncast Corporation) were included in the celebration.

“The purpose of the Chicago Innovation Awards is to shine a bright light on the creative spirit of the Chicago region,” said Thomas D. Kuczarski of the innovation firm Kuczarski & Associates, founder of the awards with the prominent local journalist and foundation executive Dan Miller. “One of the most important lessons of the awards is

how many organizations of all sizes are engaged in innovation, bringing a strong and steady stream of new products and services to market or to public service each year.”

There were more than 250 nominations for the Chicago Innovation Awards this year, with more than 800 people attending the full-house event at Chicago’s Goodman Theatre. Guest speakers at the event were Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, and Leo Melamed, the founder of financial futures and Chairman Emeritus of the CME Group, Inc.

The ten winners of the 2009 Chicago Innovation Awards are:

- **Aircell for Gogo Inflight Internet Service**—Bringing Internet service to passengers on commercial airline flights.
- **comScore, Inc. for ComScore Ad Effic Suite**—Showing the value of online advertising by quantifying an online campaign’s impact on sales.
- **Groupon, for collective buying power**—Bringing a new approach to group buying strategies on the Internet.
- **EveryBlock, for local news feeds**—Keeping people informed about the news right down to the block on which they live.
- **Rescue Vac Systems, Inc. for the Rescue Vac 800 Series Rescue Kit**—Giving rescue workers a swift system for saving people involved in trench collapse accidents.
- **Suncast Corporation, for the No Crank Water Powered Hose Reel**—Providing homeowners a swift water-powered system for reeling up a garden hose.
- **The Art Institute of Chicago, for its new Modern Wing**—Offering museum visitors a one-of-a-kind space for the viewing of modern art.
- **The Robotic Surgery Program of the University of Illinois at Chicago**—Expanding the ways in which robotic surgery is brought to bear in precise surgery with more rapid recovery.
- **Tripp Lite, for its ECO Series Uninterruptable Power Supply System**—Reducing the environmental impact of a home’s electrical system.
- **Visible Vote**—Providing citizens expanded access to their elected officials.

The First People’s Choice Award of the Chicago Innovation Awards

The global health care company Abbott was named winner of the first People’s Choice Award of the Chicago Innovation Awards, winning an open vote on the Internet that attracted more than 11,000 ballots. The Nutrition Division of Abbott was recognized for its innovation -- a new way of packaging Abbott’s well-known Similac baby formula to make formula preparation easier. The new Similac packaging, which was designed based on information gathered from parents, can be held in one hand. It has a hinged lid, a scoop that stays in the lid, and a design that matches the scoop with the rounded bottom of the container. It is a design that is capturing market share, a good sign of an effective innovation.

Runners up for the People’s Choice Award, and also recognized at the Goodman event, were Handi-Treads, a new design stair treat; ArtistData, an online publishing platform for musicians; JumpForward, LLC, a sports relationship management system for those

involved in youth sports; the Wit Hotel, for setting a new standard for urban hotels; and Harrison Harmonicas, the first performance quality harmonica manufactured in the U.S.

The Innovation Visionary Award

Chicago firefighter Lt. Michael Wielgat was named winner of the 2009 Innovation Visionary Award for his invention and development of the HERO Pipe, a system that is seen as having great potential for fighting fires in high rise buildings. The system has shown impressive capacity to rapidly knock down fires on floors that cannot be reached by ladders.

The Young Innovator Award

Matthew Morris and Michael McCoy, recent graduates of the Liautaud Graduate School of Business at UIC were awarded the 2009 Young Innovator Award for development of Heartsounds, a business that is developing sound separation technology developed at UIC to build highly sensitive and precise cardiac monitoring systems that can detect ailments of the heart. The device is on the verge of FDA approval.

The Chicago Innovation Award ceremony at the Goodman Theatre is the culmination of a process that begins each spring with a call for nominations. It includes a special event at which all nominees are honored for their commitment to innovation, and a day-long executive education program at the Kellogg School.

Gold Sponsors of the Chicago Innovation Awards are the Wrigley Corporation and the law firm McGuire Woods. All activities held in connection with the awards are free of charge to all involved.

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Contact: Ray Boyer 312-330-6433