

Two Western North Carolina Companies take home Manufacturing Leadership Awards

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Press release from North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership:

The [North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership](#) (NCMEP), a public-private operating alliance working to help manufacturing companies become operationally efficient and well positioned to grow profitably, today announced the winners of its 2016 Manufacturing Leadership Awards at mfgCON in Greensboro, North Carolina. The state awards program recognizes manufacturers for their commitment to the North Carolina manufacturing sector, as proven by outstanding performance.

“NCMEP is thrilled to announce this year’s Manufacturing Leadership Award winners and recognize our outstanding ecosystem of manufacturers across the state. This program recognizes manufacturing organizations that have demonstrated excellence in creating exceptional results in developing markets, continuous improvement, innovative technologies, advanced talent management or sustainable manufacturing,” says Phil Mintz, NCMEP Director and Interim Executive Director of NC State’s Industry Expansion Solutions (IES). “As we continue to grow this program, we look for deployed solutions that solve unique business problems through effective, innovative expansion programs or initiatives.”

The winners of the 2016 Manufacturing Leadership Awards are:

Overall Excellence: [Sierra Nevada](#), Mills River, North Carolina

- Sierra Nevada has brought 400 jobs to the area and has contracted with hundreds of local vendors, haulers, and businesses throughout the brewery’s construction and continuing into daily operations.*
- Sustainability metrics (energy, water, and waste) are tied to each employee’s annual bonus which incentivizes participation and sustainable behavior and ideas.*
- The company’s comprehensive internal training program requires all employees to engage in a minimum of 24 hours of training during the year. Workshops are regularly offered in partnership with Blue Ridge Community College in subjects such as leadership and effective communication.*
- The pace and intensity of the company’s innovation strategy can be clearly seen in its weekly “new product meeting,” during which the technical brewing teams, production brewing teams and R&D discuss and brainstorm new ideas and review and evaluate progress on projects already underway.*

Sustainability: [The Bark House at Highland Craftsmen Inc.](#), Spruce Pine, North Carolina

The Bark House at Highland Craftsmen Inc. manufactures natural architectural products. Company founder Marty McCurry innovated a use for an unused by-product of the logging industry—tree bark. This company is the original manufacturer of beautiful bark wall coverings for the interiors and exteriors of buildings. Its retail clients include Christian Louboutin, Sherber and Rad, Lululemon, Bass Pro Shops; its products have also been used within Parsons New School for Design, the University of

Chicago, national sports arenas, medical centers, and many others. Bark House is the only company to receive 10 “Best for the World” awards from B Corp, a nonprofit third-party certification agency, and a PLATINUM level certification from Cradle to Cradle, which measures the sustainability of a product and its manufacturing processes.

John E. Skvarla, III, Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, presented the awards.