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ABI's Mike Ralston to Receive Manufacturing Champion Award

DES MOINES, Iowa – The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) is proud to announce that its President, Mike Ralston, will be honored with the Manufacturing Champion Award at the 2024 Legends in Manufacturing Awards, held during the Iowa Manufacturing Conference on October 2, 2024.

Mike Ralston, who has led ABI since 2005, has long been recognized for his commitment to supporting and advancing Iowa's manufacturing sector. Throughout his career, Ralston has been an advocate for policies and initiatives that promote innovation, job creation, and economic growth within the state.

"Mike travels to all corners of the state each and every year advocating for Iowa manufacturers and there is no more deserving recipient than Mike who has dedicated the last two decades of his career to advancing manufacturing in Iowa," said Chad Reece, ABI board chair.

Under his leadership, legislative victories for manufacturers include:

- Sales and use tax exemption for supplies used in manufacturing
- Workers' compensation reform
- Unemployment insurance tax system reform to emphasize re-employment

Three key initiatives launched during his tenure include:

- Elevate Advanced Manufacturing - an initiative designed to promote careers and educational pathways in advanced manufacturing.
- Iowa Manufacturing Conference - brings together experts to provide insight and advice on the top challenges and opportunities facing Iowa manufacturers.
- Coolest Thing Made in Iowa - competition aimed to highlight the state's vibrant manufacturing industry.

"Mike Ralston truly embodies an Iowa manufacturing legend," said Mike O'Donnell, director of the Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) at Iowa State University. "In his nearly twenty years leading ABI, Mike has been a driving force, ensuring that business leaders have the climate, connections, and education to succeed. His presence and steady leadership have made him the face of Iowa industry, while his lasting individual connections have made him a trusted advisor to so many of us across the state."

As a Manufacturing Champion, Ralston joins a group of past honorees who have made significant contributions to Iowa's manufacturing landscape. The award recognizes individuals who demonstrate exceptional leadership and advocacy for the industry, helping to secure Iowa's place as a top state for manufacturing.

Media inquiries and pre-event interviews are encouraged. Media is also welcome to attend the awards.

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The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) has been the voice of Iowa business since 1903. Its mission is to provide a strong, unified voice to business and industry on issues affecting Iowa employers. ABI is comprised of member companies representing all industries and sizes in Iowa's 99 counties. ABI members employ more than 330,000 Iowans.