



## Press Release

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### *New Jersey Celebrates Exporters*

**Newark, New Jersey.** On May 17, 2023, the New Jersey District Export Council (NJDEC) proudly recognized excellence among New Jersey's leading exporters at the first-ever New Jersey International Trade Awards (NJITA). Held at Galloping Hill Golf Club, this inaugural event celebrated local businesses in four categories, including Exporter of the Year, Service Exporter, New Exporter, and Minority Owned/Diverse Exporter.

During her welcome remarks, Susan Widmer, Director at the U.S. Commercial Services in Northern New Jersey, noted that, "Hosting this program gave us the opportunity to spotlight the significant impact of exporters on our state's economy. We are pleased to be the catalyst to start this important new tradition. As such, we have already begun planning for next year's Ceremony - which will take place on May 15, 2024."

Melanie L. Willoughby, Executive Director of the New Jersey Business Action Center, kicked off the festivities by complimenting the NJDEC for its role in producing this program. The morning's dynamic program then began with a fireside-style chat between Tom Bergeron (editor and co-founder, ROI- NJ) and Mike Mardy, a well-known and highly-regarded New Jersey entrepreneur who currently sits on a wide-range of corporate boards after enjoying a distinguished career in the role of Executive Vice-President and CFO at Tumi. Their lively discussion set the tone for the event and served as an inspiration to every attendee.

The impressive agenda continued as key leaders representing the four winning organizations shared their insights and experiences as exporters in a panel presentation facilitated by Sally Glick, CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP). The honorees included Gokhan Alkanat, Rowan University; Diana Levy, Undercover Snacks; Bill Killeen, Acrow Bridge; and Daniel Marino, Intelligent Security Systems who each offered unique perspectives to address today's competitive export environment while preparing and positioning to tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

The audience, comprised of current and potential exporters and those who work closely with the exporting community, was appreciative of the welcome remarks and the proclamation offered by Governor Murphy acknowledging the hard work and impressive results of the state's exporters. William E. Spear, Manager of the New Jersey Office of Export Promotion, summed it up well with this observation, "Honoring tremendous New Jersey goods and services helps extend the message about exporting throughout the state."