

SPIRIT 2026



PRESENTED BY



Spirit of the Entrepreneur Awards: Facts & Figures

SINCE 2003

Over
1,000
attended the event in 2019,
setting the attendance record!

207 have received the
award, representing
355 entrepreneurs

15,453 people have
attended the event

\$300,000+

scholarships have been awarded to students studying
entrepreneurship at Cal State San Bernardino, funded by
the proceeds of the event and donations from attendees.

REVENUE LEVELS OF PAST AWARD RECIPIENTS



A SNAPSHOT OF THE 2025 FINALISTS

Aggregate Annual Revenues: **Appx \$400 million**

Aggregate Number of Employees: **Appx 1,600**

MOST REPRESENTED CITY:
Ontario – 6 companies



LOCATION, BY COUNTY

AWARDS & ENTERTAINMENT

Past events have
included both
presentation of
awards and top
flight entertainment,
including:

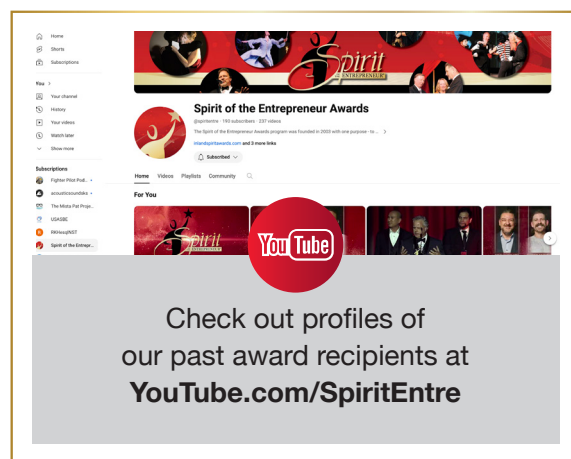
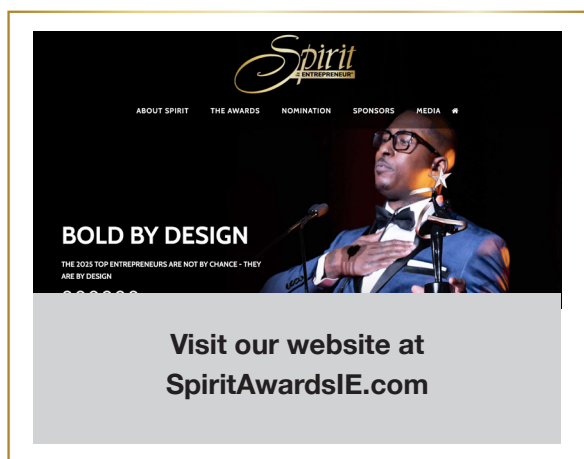
- Rock Legend Eddie Money
- Troy Clarke & His Big Band Orchestra
- The Drum Café
- Brian Olsen – *Art in Action*
- Vintage Trouble Rock Band
- Matt Marcy – Comedian/ Magician
- Ekenah Claudin – *Transcending Box*
- Greg Adamson – *Facing the Music Performance Art*
- A-Max Entertainment – *Flash Mob & Shadow Interpretive Dance Performances*
- Black & Whyte – *Dueling Piano Concert*

Support the Spirit of the Entrepreneur

Founded in 2003 by the Randall W. Lewis Center for Entrepreneurship at Cal State San Bernardino, the Spirit of the Entrepreneur Awards is the premier business event of Inland Southern California. Often dubbed the “Oscars of business” by attendees and past award recipients, the primary goal is to recognize entrepreneurial role models and highlight the incredible business successes of the region.

In addition, each event features student business concepts from Cal State San Bernardino as part of the Garner Holt Student Fast Pitch Competition, where they compete for \$7,500 in prize money. The top students make a 90-second pitch of their startup idea to the audience, which votes for the best pitch in terms of presentation and business potential.

Becoming a sponsor and attending the event will give you a glimpse into the most anticipated business event of the year. Be a part of expanding your network and exposure to the prime movers of our region! Your sponsorship helps us recognize the individuals and companies that are overcoming obstacles, believing in their dreams, taking risks, and persisting in the face of long odds. They embody a spirit – the Spirit of Entrepreneurship – that is to be celebrated.



Profiles of Past Award Recipients



The Cramer Family
STAR MILLING CO.
Moreno Valley

2025 Spirit Award Recipient,
Family Business Legacy

Since officially becoming Star Milling in 1970, the mill has continued to evolve and diversify, including a significant transition from focusing on commercial markets to consumer markets. In 1988, to expand their line, an extruder was put into place for the manufacturing of dog food, cat food, and commercial fish food. Each generation of the Cramer family has brought new ideas while honoring the company's heritage. Thoughtful succession planning and a shared understanding of when to lead—and when to let go—have kept the business resilient across four generations.



Melina Maza
TKB BAKERY AND DELI
Indio

2025 Spirit Award Recipient,
Food, Hospitality & Entertainment

Nestled in the heart of Indio, TKB Bakery & Deli has turned family tradition into national acclaim. What began in 1991 as The Kids' Business – a neighborhood cookie venture led by three siblings and their parents, Athena and Paul Sippel – has grown into one of the most celebrated delis in America. Today, under the leadership of Melina Maza, the firm continues to excel – earning Yelp's Top 5 ranking for Best Restaurants in America four consecutive years – and is continuing its growth with the addition of a food truck and plans to open a second location in Riverside.

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Nomination & Judging Process

Each Spring, the Spirit of the Entrepreneur accepts nominations for its annual event. To be eligible to receive an award, the nominee must be an owner and/or active key manager of the firm and be primarily responsible for the overall performance of the company.

Nominating an entrepreneur is simple!

All nominations are made through our short online submission form. Self-nominations are encouraged. Once nominated, we perform a brief review of the nominee to ensure eligibility. If eligible, we contact each nominee and provide them with a 3-page electronic business & nominee profile form that must be completed for the judging process. All nominees that submit the profile form will be evaluated by a panel of judges consisting of past Spirit of the Entrepreneur Award recipients.

Once the judging process is complete, nominators will be notified as to the status of their nominee.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR FROM NOMINEES?

Innovation - Entrepreneurs and companies that have innovative products or services, use unique business practices or are constantly pushing the boundaries of their industry.

Leadership - Entrepreneurs that possess strong leadership skills that inspire their team to reach new levels of success.

Performance - Entrepreneurs and companies that have achieved significant financial performance as measured by growth, revenue, profitability and sustainability.

Character - Entrepreneurs that demonstrate personal integrity and values that have earned them respect from their team, peers, industry and the greater community.

Entrepreneurial Mindset and Vision - Individuals who truly possess the entrepreneurial mindset and are constantly pushing to improve their businesses, always striving to advance their ventures and facilitate progress in the industries in which they work.

Meet Minimum Criteria - Companies nominated should have been in business at least 2 years and have achieved a minimum annual revenue level of \$400,000.



Benefits of Spirit Sponsorship

The Spirit of the Entrepreneur offers progressive companies an opportunity to align their brand with the top business event of the Inland Southern California region. This event showcases your company to the leading entrepreneurs of the region and provides an exceptional opportunity to increase your visibility and build relationships with a distinct target audience of decision-makers.

Premier Sponsorship Benefits

Partner your brand distinctly with the only “Oscars of Business” awards gala that ultimately serves to further education and innovative economic awareness surrounding the top professionals that trail blaze the Inland Empire! An undeniably signature way to illustrate and exhibit your definitive support to the success of those entrepreneurs and community leaders that bring distinction to this region all while supporting a non-profit program in direct contributions to higher education.

The Premier Title Spirit sponsor would stand to benefit from the multi-levels of reputable exposure through this Spirit event season! The many areas of brand continuity throughout the 4-month “Spirit Season” of engagement leading up to the distinct black-tie celebratory event include various channels of outreach, marketing, and live event. As well, there are strategic areas of media distribution via multimedia advertisements and direct public relations that are a part of the Title partner sponsorship level.

Benefits & Marketing Exposure

PRINT/ DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENTS	PREMIER \$50K	Diamond \$35K	Platinum \$15K	Gold \$10K	Silver \$5K	Judging Reception \$10K	Welcome Expeience \$15K	VIP Reception \$9.5K	VIP After Party \$7.5K
DIGITAL JUDGING BOOKS Premier Sponsor: Cover/ TOC Title notation & logo Diamond Sponsor: Inside Front Cover logo						SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
Logo on Foreword on Digital Judging Books									
ADS Premier Sponsor Dedicated Event Ad									
Event Ads – Sept-Nov (various publications)		•	•	•	•				
SHOW PROGRAM Premier Sponsor: Cover/ TOC Title notation & Centerfold + Full Company profile Diamond Sponsor: Inside Front Cover Advertisement in Digital & Print Event Program + Full Company profile									
Advertisement in Digital Event Program		•	•	•	•				
Post-Event Congratulations & Thank You Ad		•	•	•	•		•		•

TICKETING	PREMIER \$50K	Diamond \$35K	Platinum \$15K	Gold \$10K	Silver \$5K	Judging Reception \$10K	Welcome Expeience \$15K	VIP Reception \$9.5K	VIP After Party \$7.5K
VIP Experience Tickets to Gala	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT				SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
Gala Tickets to Main Event			10	10	5				
Tickets to Judging Reception									
Tickets to Preview Reception									
Tickets to VIP Reception									
Tickets to After Party			5	5	5				

PR & COMMUNICATIONS	PREMIER \$50K	Diamond \$35K	Platinum \$15K	Gold \$10K	Silver \$5K	Judging Reception \$10K	Welcome Exeptione \$15K	VIP Reception \$9.5K	VIP After Party \$7.5K
SPIRIT WEBSITE Premier: Logo Prominently Featured on Website homepage and interior pages – masthead or top navigation Diamond: Logo Prominently Featured on Website HOMEPAGE						SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
Logo Featured on Website HOMEPAGE		•	•						
Logo Featured on Website SPONSORS Page		•	•	•	•				
Logo Featured on specific reception event registration pg									
EMAIL MARKETING Premier & Diamond Sponsor Dedicated Email Campaign(s)									
Announcement of Semi-Finalists Email	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	•	•	•				
Judging Reception Digital Invitations									
Finalist Announcement Email Campaign			•	•	•				
Gala Event Digital Invitation Email Campaign			•	•	•				
PR Dedicated Press Release(s)									
Mention in Event Press Releases (Sept thru Nov)		•	•	•	•		•		•
TICKETING Premier: Digital Ad on Ticketing panel and logo display on issued tickets Diamond: Logo Featured on Ticketing panel									

ON-LOCATION EVENT MEDIA	PREMIER \$50K	Diamond \$35K	Platinum \$15K	Gold \$10K	Silver \$5K	Judging Reception \$10K	Welcome Expeience \$15K	VIP Reception \$9.5K	VIP After Party \$7.5K
SHOW DECOR Premier: Prominent GoBo Logo Display in Main Gala & showroom Diamond: Prominent GoBo Logo Display in Gala reception									
GoBo Logo Display in event area	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT				SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
On-site Event Banner Signage			•	•	•				
Digital Logo Display on Screens			•	•	•				
Judging Reception Signage									
Preview Reception Signage									
VIP Reception Signage									
After Party Signage									•

EVENT SPEAKING	PREMIER \$50K	Diamond \$35K	Platinum \$15K	Gold \$10K	Silver \$5K	Judging Reception \$10K	Welcome Expeience \$15K	VIP Reception \$9.5K	VIP After Party \$7.5K
30-Second Video Profile During Event				•		SOLD OUT	•	SOLD OUT	•
Opening Reel 60-Second Video Profile During Event			•						
Premier Sponsor: Stage Welcome, 90-Second Video During Gala & Recognition at Receptions Diamond Sponsor 90-Second Video During Event									
Speaking Opportunity - Present an Award at Gala		•	•						
Speaking Opportunity at Judging Reception									
Speaking Opportunity at VIP Reception									



FANFARE FAVORITES

Wine Sponsor for Gala Reception **3000.**

Champagne Sponsor **3000.**

Centerpiece Sponsor **3500.**

Gala Reception Photo Booth Station **2200.**

Show Program Sponsor **2500.**

GARNER HOLT STUDENT FAST PITCH

Fast Pitch MVP Sponsor **2500.**

Fast Pitch ALLSTAR Sponsor **2000.**

Host the 2026 Garner Holt Student Fast Pitch Semi-Finalist event!

Held shortly before the Spirit Awards Program in order to determine the TOP 5 Competing students who will deliver their final performance and unveiling on stage! Your company sponsorship notoriety is included in all related digital media promotions and advertising directly connected to CSUSB University reach, as well as at the GHSFP semi-finalist event presentation!

\$300,000+ IN SCHOLARSHIPS

have been awarded to students
studying entrepreneurship
at Cal State San Bernardino,
funded by the proceeds of
the event and donations
from attendees.



OVER 15,000
people have attended the
event since its inception in 2003.



OVER 4,300
entrepreneurs have been
nominated for the award.

W W W . S P I R I T A W A R D S I E . c o m

For more information contact Mike Stull at (909) 537-3708 or mstull@csusb.edu.

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