

## Daily Herald honors the Best Places to Work winners



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*Radio Flyer named the #1 Best Place To Work in Illinois for Hispanics by Daily Herald*

Over the years, Porte Brown has come closer and closer to a top ranking in the Daily Herald's Best Places to Work in Illinois analysis and competition.

The Elk Grove Village full-service accounting and consulting firm reached the pinnacle at a May 9 luncheon at Abbington Distinctive Banquets in Glen Ellyn.

"This is really exciting news," CEO Joe Gleba said after Workforce Research Group President Peter Burke awarded Porte Brown the No. 1 slot among medium-sized companies of between 100-499 United States employees.

"Many years now we've been fortunate to be able to come here and watch our name slowly, slowly make it down the list — 10, 5 — and we all get giddy at the table every time: 'Oh my God, we're No. 4. We could be No. 3.' So to hear No. 1, this is super-exciting," Gleba said.

“I truly say that having just been recognized in this group has always done really great efforts for our recruiting and retention efforts. So now, being No. 1 I know our marketing and HR (human resources) team are loving this.”

Porte Brown’s employees vaulted the 78-year-old company to the top in their appreciation for, among other things, a profit-sharing plan, third-party counseling programs, fully paid two-week adoption leave, a focus on work-life balance and, naturally, an annual off-site Tax Season Party.

The 2024 Best Places to Work in Illinois contest was hosted for the 19th year by Schaumburg-based Daily Herald Suburban Business in partnership with Workforce Research Group. It was sponsored by Shaker Recruitment Marketing. The Illinois Chamber of Commerce and GOA Regional Business Association were marketing partners.

The program honored 51 companies from across the state. Winners are determined based in part on what employers are doing for employees, including diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and work-life balance — about 20% of the evaluation. The remaining 80% was determined by a survey of employees.<sup>a</sup>

Burke said the engagement rate by employees for the survey was 91%.

“That’s amazing considering that the national average is right around 35%,” said Burke, who previously called this feedback “an amazing management tool” for companies.

In accepting the award for the top Large Company with 500 or more U.S. employees, Ryan LLC Director of Special Claims and Recovery John Brocar described a “rags-to-riches” tale of Ryan’s three founders starting their business in a family garage to becoming “the largest indirect tax consulting business in the United States.”

Founded in 1991, Ryan LLC has headquarters in Downers Grove and Chicago and around 40 international offices, Brocar said.

It’s Ryan’s 13th year participating in the Best Places to Work in Illinois contest.

Among Ryan’s offerings to employees are a four-week sabbatical after five years of employment, the “myRyan” flexible workplace environment, and the 2020 implementation of the RyanMosaic diversity, equity and inclusion program.

“Our founder, Brint Ryan, lives a culture of the company,” Brocar said. “He has an all-employee call every single month where you can ask him live questions, from anybody — from an admin to a vice president and everybody in between. I’m sure he is going to be absolutely thrilled at this recognition because he does love this program across the country. We are honored.”

Ashley Millan, vice president of The Salem Group, a certified woman-owned business in Oakbrook Terrace, acknowledged those who helped the independent staffing and workforce management company repeat as No. 1 Small Company between 15-99 employees.

“Our greatest asset is our people,” she said

Among other things, The Salem Group provides a corporate retreat house in Galena for fun and team building; offers an annual Spirit Week with events and themes; provides training on diversity, inclusion and critical thinking; and celebrates milestones with gifts from bonuses to Cartier and Rolex watches based on tenure.

“Our people are the heart and soul of our organization,” Millan said. “It is what keeps us moving forward and keeps us thoughtful about all the efforts that we make to make The Salem Group a positive and supportive workplace for our employees. This recognition today reaffirms that everything we do ... is intentional but it’s also being recognized by our employees.”

**In the subcategory of Best Places to Work in Illinois for Hispanics and/or Latinos, Radio Flyer Inc., of Chicago earned the No. 1 rank.**

Rockford Mutual Insurance Company earned the Best Place to Work in Illinois for Women.

Burke and Andy Zielonka, Daily Herald Suburban Business’ manager of sales and operations, have conducted the program all 19 years. Zielonka is retiring in July.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Daily Herald. They are my own personal Best Places to Work. Thank you to Peter Burke for 19 years of partnership,” Zielonka said, adding that registration is open for the 2024 competition.

“Lastly I want to thank all the companies here, past and present, who’ve participated in this program. It’s been great learning about your companies and getting to know many of you personally.”