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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 1, 2004

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(Governor to Recognize Five Iowa Companies for Performance Excellence)

Cedar Rapids—The Executive Council of the Iowa Recognition for Performance Excellence (IRPE), the Office of the Governor, and the Iowa Quality Center are proud to announce that The HON Company, Oak Steel Plant and The HON Company, Geneva Plant (operating companies of HNI Corporation), Muscatine; Eastern Iowa Community College District, Davenport; John Deere Credit, Johnston; Facilities Planning and Management, Iowa State University, Ames have received Iowa Recognition for Performance Excellence awards for 2004.

Governor Thomas J. Vilsack will present the awards at the annual Governor's Recognition of Performance Excellence Celebration in the Holiday Inn University Park, West Des Moines, Tuesday, March 1, 2005 at 6:00 p.m.

The prestigious Iowa Recognition for Performance Excellence awards were established five years ago to recognize those businesses and organizations in the state who have completed a strenuous review and evaluation of their leadership, strategic planning, customer focus, analysis of information, human resource focus, process management and business results. The process is aligned with the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, and the Baldrige Criteria are used for the assessment.

The HON Company, Oak Steel Plant and John Deere Credit will be recognized at the Silver level and Eastern Iowa Community College District; The HON Company, Geneva Plant; and Facilities Planning and Management – Iowa State University will be recognized at the Bronze level. In the past four years, there have been 32 applications for the performance excellence awards, and 13 have been recognized for their achievement, three at the silver level and 10 at the bronze level.

There is no monetary award, but those who complete the process say it helps them identify strengths and weaknesses within their companies, provides training for continuous improvement and leadership development, and assures customer focus and efficiency within their operations. This process is a proven method for organizations to achieve their highest potential and become more competitive in the world marketplace. For this reason the process is used by more than 40 states to support their economic development efforts.

Companies and organizations that complete the Iowa process are also better positioned to prepare for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

Other organizations that completed various levels of the Iowa performance recognition process include Muscatine High School, and Veterans Memorial Hospital in Waukon. These organizations will be recognized for their commitment to performance excellence.

The IRPE process, awards and examiner training are coordinated by the Iowa Quality Center, based in Marion, Iowa. Applications to begin the process are open to organizations involved in business and manufacturing, education, government, human services, non-profit or health care.

For more information about the IRPE process and the March 1st celebration, contact Gary Nesteby at the Iowa Quality Center, (319) 398-7101 or visit the IQC website at [www.iowaqc.org](http://www.iowaqc.org).

For more information and reactions from The HON Company, contact Dale Lucht, (563) 264-7442.

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