SIB / SpendBrain Launches DownHereX™ and Recognizes Its Inaugural Class of Innovators

New recognition initiative celebrates the leaders driving meaningful improvement inside the organizations that keep the world running.

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, September 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The biggest stories in innovation often happen at the outer edges of what feels possible. Rockets launch into space. AI unicorns attract billions in investment and global attention. Enormous resources are being directed toward technologies designed to tackle some of the world's biggest problems.

SIB believes there is another frontier worth recognizing.

Today, SIB / SpendBrain announced DownHereX™, a new initiative celebrating the people whose ingenuity, technology and resourcefulness solve the everyday problems that keep organizations and the economy moving.

They are the manufacturing leaders finding smarter ways to operate. Healthcare executives stretch resources while continuing to serve patients. Government and higher education leaders make every dollar work harder. Retail and multi-location operators bringing order to enormous, complex organizations. Finance, procurement and operations teams are finding better ways to do more with the resources already in front of them.

Their work may never launch a rocket, but their work matters down here on Earth.

“For decades, we’ve had a front-row seat to the people quietly making organizations work better,” said Shannon Copeland, CEO of SIB. “They aren’t always working with billion-dollar technology budgets or teams of thousands. They are solving difficult, consequential problems with the resources they have. The impact of that work deserves to be recognized.”

SIB / SpendBrain has spent more than 35 years working alongside organizations at the grassroots level of their operations, with a particular focus on the costs required to keep them running. The company works directly with leaders navigating complex vendor relationships, fragmented information, constrained resources, rising costs, and the constant demands of operating efficiently.

That proximity inspired DownHereX™.

The initiative is built around a simple idea: extraordinary innovation is not reserved for extraordinary budgets.

The inaugural DownHereX™ Awards recognize leaders across industries who embody that idea. These are people driving meaningful improvements inside their organizations without the budgets, resources, or attention associated with the world's largest technology companies. Their work spans healthcare, higher education, retail, professional services, waste and environmental services, real estate, manufacturing, and other sectors.

The emphasis is on impact over scale and ingenuity over headlines.

“Some of the most impressive innovations we see happen far away from the headlines,” said Copeland. “It happens when someone finds a better way to run an organization, serve a patient, manage resources, operate hundreds of locations or protect a company’s bottom line. DownHereX™ is our opportunity to put a spotlight on those people.”

For SIB, DownHereX™ also reflects the philosophy behind its own work. Through decades of cost expertise and SpendBrain™, SIB works alongside organizations to bring greater intelligence, accuracy and permanence to the way they manage spend. That work gives SIB a unique view of the people operating behind the scenes—the leaders turning constrained resources into measurable improvements every day.

They may not make headlines.

But they are moving the world forward down here.

The Inaugural DownHereX™ Honorees:

Mike Doughty — Chief Procurement Officer, Pye-Barker Fire & Safety LLC
Paul Straub — Chief Operating Officer, Fox Rothschild LLP
Ryan Perry — Chief Financial Officer, Meridian Waste
Robbie Williams — Vice President, Facilities Management, Public Storage
Axel Lundstrom — Vice President, Indirect Procurement, Danone
Thomas Keenan — Controller, Creative Planning, Inc.
Julien Chemali — CFO, Fortis Solutions Group
Ronald Dean — President & Chief Executive Officer, South Georgia Medical Center
Mark Nix — President & CEO, Infirmary Health System, Inc.
Tyler Hall — VP/Controller, Variety Wholesalers, Inc.
Chris DiSabatino — President, DiSabatino Inc.
Maria Gomelsky — Chief Financial Officer, The Dinerstein Companies
Trevor Liddle — Vice President of Finance and Operations/Chief Financial Officer, Lake Superior State University

Clay Spriet — CFO, Mission Health Communities
Kristopher Nelson — VP, Finance, NVISION Eye Centers
Alan Tabasky — Chief Supply Chain Officer, SnugZ USA
Ernie Vidal — Sr. Manager, Strategic Sourcing & Procurement, AutoNation
Craig Bernstein — President, Doc B's Fresh Kitchen
Will Conroy — Offerings Vice President, Strategy, Cardinal Group
Mike Wolkerstorfer — Sr. VP of Operations, Camping World Holdings, Inc.
Eric Hansen — AVP of Business Operations, San Diego State University
Matt Leavy — Manager, Utilities, Engineering, UC Berkeley
Krystal Conley — Director, Strategic Sourcing, CSC ServiceWorks
Carlos Oliva — Senior VP, Accounting & Financial Reporting, CSC ServiceWorks
Dave Rike — Vice President of Operations, Distranet
Robert Lay — Chief Financial Officer & Executive VP, Adjacent Businesses, Selene Finance LP

About DownHereX™

DownHereX™ is an SIB initiative dedicated to recognizing the people solving consequential, everyday problems across business and the public sector. Through the DownHereX™ Awards and ongoing storytelling, the initiative celebrates innovators creating measurable improvement through ingenuity, technology and resourcefulness, regardless of budget, company size or headline recognition.

About SIB

SIB helps organizations build a permanent advantage around spend through more than 35 years of cost expertise and SpendBrain™, its AI-powered spend intelligence platform. SIB works across industries to help organizations understand, manage, and continuously improve the costs required to run their businesses.

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