



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **APEX Annual Meeting Focuses on the Connection Between Industry and the Economy**

**Duluth, Minnesota:** The Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX) hosted their annual Board of Directors and member-investor meeting and reception on January 15, 2019 at the Kitchi Gammi Club. APEX was pleased to welcome Lourenco Goncalves, Chairman, President and CEO of Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc. (Cliffs) as the featured guest speaker. Goncalves shared insights and opportunities for clean steel manufacturing in Minnesota and discussed Cliffs' leadership role in addressing climate change issues.

Cliffs has long been a global leader in iron ore pellet production, specializing in using ferrous scrap to create high-grade customized pellets that can be fed directly into blast furnaces. This groundbreaking process ensures American steel will continue to be made with American iron. [The American Iron and Steel Institute](#) reports that in 2017, the iron and steel industry generated more than \$520 billion in total economic output and nearly two million American jobs paying over \$131 billion in wages and benefits.

"Now is not a time to cut corners. It's a time to honor nearly 200 years, more than 130 years here in this region, of mining expertise by demonstrating our ability to extract, process and produce iron ore cleanly and safely," said Goncalves. "We hold ourselves to an incredibly high standard because we value the quality of our product as well as the safety of both our people and our environment."

Last year, Cliffs broke ground on the company's first hot-briquetted iron (HBI) production plant in Toledo, OH. With this plant, Cliffs leads the industry in sustainability and clean steel manufacturing. Because this plant is being developed on a reclaimed brownfield site and has been designed to be self-contained, it is positioned to be one of the world's most environmentally compliant manufacturing facilities. It will not emit air pollution, will not create hazardous by-products and will treat and recirculate all water onsite.

Clean manufacturing starts at the source, with sustainable iron-ore mining practices. Nowhere is the iron or mining process more streamlined, more regulated and more perfected than it is in northern Minnesota. Our state's high standards and unwavering regulatory compliance set an incredibly high bar for the rest of the world.



“In Minnesota, we believe that responsible mining can and does coexist with protecting our environment,” said Brian Hanson, APEX President and CEO. “We’ve worked tirelessly to grow our industrial economy smartly and responsibly. Successful iron ore operations like Hibbing Taconite, United Taconite and Northshore Mine have paved the way for new opportunities to mine safely in Minnesota.”

The demand for American steel has increased substantially this year, after a 25% tariff on imported steel was imposed. The tariff impacted the U.S. economy in a number of ways, initially increasing revenues but also causing stock prices to drop. U.S. steel mills have been shipping nearly 5% more product in 2018 than in 2017, with trends to grow.

Managing emissions is one of the American steel industry’s top concerns. Manufacturing steel is an inherently energy-intensive process, but the industry as a whole has made great strides to reduce its overall environmental impact over the past few decades.

Cliffs operates with a commitment to being environmental stewards. The company believes in social responsibility and operates in a way that minimizes impacts and preserves the environment for future generations. The HBI plant in Toledo and safe taconite operations in Minnesota are just a few examples of the company’s dedication to protecting the environment.

At the annual meeting, the APEX Board of Directors also elected the 2019 Executive Committee members.

### **APEX 2019 Executive Committee Officers and At-Large Members**

Chair: Steve Burgess, National Bank of Commerce  
Vice Chair: Lisa Bodine, Giant Voices  
Immediate Past Chair: Brian Thun, maurices  
Secretary: Brad Beard, Essentia Health  
Treasurer: John Strange, St. Luke’s  
At-Large: Chancellor Lendley Black, University of Minnesota Duluth  
At-Large: Deb DeLuca, Duluth Seaway Port Authority  
At-Large: Frank Frederickson, MN Power, an ALLETE Company  
At-Large: Brian Maki, Lakehead Constructors, Inc.  
At-Large: John Swanson, Enbridge Energy Company, Inc.

To learn more about APEX, visit [www.APEXgetsbusiness.com](http://www.APEXgetsbusiness.com)

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### **About APEX**

The Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX) is the private-sector-led business development engine for northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. APEX investor-members represent some of the most influential companies in the region, with a collaborative approach to promoting sustainable economic growth. APEX attraction, expansion and retention efforts focus in areas including aviation, manufacturing, professional services and next-generation forest products. Since 2003, through attraction, expansion and retention efforts, APEX has impacted over 4,300 jobs in the region, resulting in a regional payroll of over \$174.9 million and contributing to over \$24 million annually in state and local taxes. For more information, visit [www.APEXgetsbusiness.com](http://www.APEXgetsbusiness.com)