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**CHICAGO RANKS SECOND IN THE NATION FOR NUMBER OF FAST GROWING  
SMALL BUSINESSES**

*95 Chicago Businesses Make the 2014 Inc. 500 List of Fastest Growing U.S. Companies*

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and World Business Chicago (WBC) today announced that Chicago ranks second in the nation in the number of fast growing small businesses according to the annual *Inc. 500/5000* list released today. The city is home to 95 companies on the list, more than Atlanta, Austin, San Diego, Houston, San Francisco, Dallas and Denver, and five Chicago businesses are in the top 500 fastest growing in the nation. Only New York City has more businesses on the list.

"Small businesses are the backbone of Chicago's economy and these rankings reinforce the idea that this city is a place where entrepreneurs want to start and grow their businesses," Mayor Emanuel said. "We have been working diligently to ensure that doing business is easier than ever before - eliminating the corporate head tax, creating the Small Business Center and more - because as small businesses like these grow, they create jobs, promote economic development and grow our city's economy."

The *Inc. 5000* represents a comprehensive look at one of the most important segments of the economy—America's independent entrepreneurs. The companies names to the 2014 *Inc. 500* were selected from a group considered to be the most competitive in the list's history - to make the cut, companies had to have achieved a minimum of 918.59% in sales growth over the previous three-year period.

Chicago-based Max Digital was the highest ranked of the Chicago businesses. The company, which develops cloud-based marketing and retailing software for the auto

industry, ranked #51 on the list with three year growth of 5,483.1% and 2013 revenue of \$6.6 million. In addition, four Chicago small businesses ranked in the top 500. They are:

- Insureon (#107) – provides liability, property and other insurance for more than 45,000 small businesses.
  - \$11.8 million in revenue in 2013 three-year growth of 3,357.8%.
- Paramount Lodging Advisors (#188) – provides brokerage, financing and other services to hotel owners and developers.
  - \$2.5 million in revenue in 2013 and three-year growth of 2,288.4%.
- Protein Bar (#200) - a chain of fast-casual restaurants serving health-conscious, high-protein food.
  - \$14.2 million in revenue in 2013 and three-year growth of 2,181.7%.
- Restaurantwave (#366) – company makes disposable, environmentally-conscious tableware products for customers, including hotels, restaurants, and caterers.
  - \$2.4 million in revenue in 2013 and three-year growth of 1,307.3%.
- AKTA (#414) - develops mobile apps and offers innovation consulting, branding services, and user experience design. Three-year growth of 1147.49%.

“There is great momentum building among Chicago’s small and medium sized businesses; companies thrive here due to the city’s diverse economy, easy access to the world, and unmatched talent base,” said World Business Chicago President & CEO Jeff Malehorn. “Mayor Emanuel’s Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs aims to make Chicago the ideal location for companies of all sizes to thrive, and we welcome *Inc.*’s news that our city truly has become a magnet for the fastest growing companies in the U.S.”

Supporting innovation and entrepreneurship is a key component of the [Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs](#) and ChicagoNEXT, Mayor Emanuel’s council of technology advisors. ChicagoNEXT is a dedicated effort to drive growth and opportunity in the business climate related to science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship and to positively impact new venture formation, while accelerating the growth of established businesses.

"It's a tribute to the great work ethic and opportunities in the city of Chicago that has made them thrive on this very competitive list. What surprises me, even though I know it's coming, is the sheer variety of the paths our entrepreneurs take to success, thematically reflecting how our economy has evolved," said *Inc.* Media President and Editor In Chief Eric Schurenberg. "This year, there are far more social media and far fewer computer hardware businesses than there were, say, six years

ago. But what doesn't change is the fearsome creativity unleashed by American entrepreneurship and Chicago is right at the forefront."

The 2014 *Inc. 5000* was unveiled in the September issue of *Inc. Magazine*. For the complete list, visit [inc.com/inc5000](http://inc.com/inc5000).

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