

Dear Friend of the Baldrige Program,

November was marked by two significant events at the Baldrige Program: one a sign of business as usual and one a sign of change. First, the Secretary of Commerce announced that, for the 24th consecutive year, [U.S. organizations had received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award](#). Second, Congress and the President approved an appropriation that includes zero funding for the Baldrige Program in FY2012.

First, I want to assure you that you can expect some business as usual from the Baldrige Program in 2012. Consistent with its commitment to the sustainability of the program, the Baldrige Foundation board voted to provide ongoing FY2012 funding for the program in lieu of federal appropriations. The Baldrige Award process will take place in 2012. Planning is well underway, and we'll keep you informed of any process changes.

But—similar to our experience in November—you can also expect some significant changes from the program in 2012. The program and members of our stakeholder community are turning the contingency plans we've made over the past year into action plans for 2012 and beyond. We're working in two parallel contexts:

- At the Baldrige Program, we're preparing a business model and business plan that don't rely on federal appropriations for sustainability. To save hours and financial resources, the Baldrige staff has identified program activities to cut as well as many to simplify. For example, we'll send one staff member (rather than two) to work in the Baldrige booth at most conferences, eliminate mass paper mailings (but retain electronic ones), and limit changes to processes and products that customers have rated highly. We're also accelerating an activity we began several years ago: the streamlining of many processes related to the award process, examiner training, Quest for Excellence, Criteria booklet production, and logistics. As many of you know, the Foundation will save some funds by not reimbursing travel and lodging costs for attendance at Examiner Preparation. As a result of all these efforts, we'll save many dollars and more than 9,000 hours of staff time. To use that time, we're identifying and acting on ways to generate revenue through our products and services. Although this shift is challenging, it brings us exciting new opportunities that we look forward to sharing with you.
- With the Baldrige Foundation, the Alliance for Performance Excellence, and ASQ, we're working toward creating a future Baldrige Enterprise that would coordinate and integrate the partners' activities for greater efficiency and effectiveness. The goal of this nascent endeavor is to best serve our current and future customers while ensuring the growth and sustainability of all the partners.

During the past year, many of you have expressed your concern and support for the Baldrige Program's future. Speaking for the staff, I thank you, our extended Baldrige family, for your encouragement, your good wishes, and your interest in our well-being. We consider you—our network of stakeholders and partners—a key strategic advantage as we work to ensure the sustainability of Baldrige. We're all extremely proud of our 24-year legacy, and we look forward

to many more years of working with you to serve our country. If you have questions or comments, please contact the Baldrige Program at 301-975-2036 or baldrige@nist.gov.

Harry Hertz
Director, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program