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The health of Minnesota manufacturers is vital to our state economy and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. Nearly one-quarter of our members are in the manufacturing sector. We are your voice and your advocate.

This e-newsletter is distributed to keep you abreast of issues. We welcome your feedback. Please contact Jennifer Byers, vice president of external operations, at (651) 292-4673 or jbyers@mnchamber.com.

At the Legislature: R&D credits signed into law

Activity has resumed at the Legislature following the Easter/Passover break. The Legislature must adjourn by May 17. The pace has slowed, and some lawmakers are indicating they may wrap up business early.

Job creation remains a major focus of this session, and manufacturers already have benefited from provisions in the jobs bill signed by Governor Pawlenty. The legislation – HF 2695, Lenczewski, DFL-Bloomington/SF 2568, Bakk, DFL-Cook – includes significant changes in research and development credits. First, the credit is increased from 5 percent to 10 percent. Second, it will be made a refundable credit. Third, partnerships and S-corporations will become eligible for the credit. For additional details on the credit, contact Tom Hesse, vice president of government affairs, at (651) 292-4678 or thesse@mnchamber.com.

The bill also allocates \$17 million for angel investor credits in FY 2011, \$12 million in FY 2012 and \$11.9 million in FY 2013. These credits are paid for by repeal of the low-income fuel tax credit.

Federal HIRE Act: Check your eligibility

Minnesota employers may be eligible for tax breaks under the new HIRE Act – The Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment Act – signed into law March 18 by President Obama. The \$17.5 billion jobs bill is intended to spur hiring and help small business owners.

The bill includes \$17.5 billion in tax cuts, business credits and subsidies for state and local construction bonds, and moves \$20 billion into the highway trust fund for spending on highway and transit programs. It exempts businesses that hire unemployed workers from paying the payroll security tax through December 2010. For a summary of the bill, click [here](#).

Plastics Recycling Program: Put the wrap on costs for manufacturers

Manufacturing facilities statewide are avoiding waste hauling and landfill disposal fees, reducing packaging and shipping costs, and improving the environmental performance of their facilities by simply reducing and recycling plastic films like stretch wrap. *It's in the Bag* is a plastic bag and film recycling program operated by Minnesota Waste Wise, a subsidiary of the Minnesota Chamber. The program assists businesses in reducing costs related to plastic waste reduction, while also providing employment for adults with disabilities.

Recovering 200,000 pounds of stretch wrap per year results in net revenue of \$1,750 and avoided disposal savings of \$6,300 for a net benefit of \$8,050, according to statistics provided by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources. *It's in the Bag* has recycled approximately 6 million



pounds of plastic bags and film since the program's inception in 2003. "It is a value-added service for customers of local businesses, it saves our member-businesses money on waste disposal costs, and it provides jobs for Minnesotans," said Mark Blaiser, Minnesota Waste Wise executive director.

The program is now available in five Minnesota areas – the Twin Cities, Duluth, St. Cloud, Sandstone/Hinckley and Waseca. For information on how to participate, contact Minnesota Waste Wise at (651) 292-4675 or mnwastewise@mnchamber.com.

Webinar: Safety in the workplace

The Minnesota Chamber, through our network of safety leaders, is sponsoring a webinar series, "Building a Total Safety Culture." The presenters are safety experts in their respective fields eager to share their experience of what works to help employers of all sizes maintain a safe workplace. Topics and dates are:

February 16: Potential Hazards and Near Miss Reporting (archived)

June 15: Good Hiring Practices & Employee Safety Orientation

October 12: Job Safety Analysis

The webinars are noon to 1:00 p.m., free to Minnesota Chamber members. To register or to review previous programs, click [here](#).

Manufacturers' Coalition: Future meetings

April 15: The Manufacturers' Coalition will meet from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. April 15 at the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, 400 Robert Street N, St. Paul. The meeting will feature a presentation on workforce resources available for businesses and manufacturers by Bonnie Elsey, Workforce Division director for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. In addition, Luann Bartley, Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association, will update the group on efforts to retain and strengthen the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system's two-year technical education programs. A number of other items are on the agenda as well. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Jennifer Byers at jbyers@mnchamber.com.

June 10: The Manufacturing Coalition will meet June 10 at New Flyer in St. Cloud. For more details on that meeting, or to RSVP, contact Jennifer Byers at jbyers@mnchamber.com.

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COMMERCE

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