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The health of Minnesota manufacturers is vital to our state economy and the Minnesota Chamber. 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](mailto:jbyers@mnchamber.com).



*State Revenue Commissioner Ward Einess explains the Governor's Jobs Recovery Act. Elizabeth Abraham, president and majority owner of Top Tool Company in Minneapolis, is president of the Minnesota Manufacturers' Coalition.*



### Lobby your legislators for tax relief

Minnesota manufacturers have significant opportunities to help reduce their costs even as they are challenged in today's economy. Governor Pawlenty has proposed changing the capital equipment sales tax refund to an up-front exemption. The current refund program is an administrative nightmare and can hamper cash flow for small and medium-size companies.

Changing this law will be challenging in the current economic climate as the state faces a projected multibillion-dollar shortfall in its general fund. Legislators must hear from you.

The capital equipment sales-tax exemption is among the many recommendations included in the Governor's Jobs Recovery Act. Another noteworthy proposal is to reduce the corporate income tax rate by half over six years. Ward Einess, commissioner of the Department of Revenue, discussed the governor's proposal at the February meeting of the Minnesota Manufacturers' Coalition at Minnesota Wire in St. Paul. "Our quality of life in Minnesota will falter if we don't incentivize the economy's real engine, small business generally, and manufacturers specifically," Einess said. "Our employers are the key to Minnesota's economic vitality."

Please contact your legislators now and underscore the importance of passing the Jobs Recovery Act. Go to the Minnesota Prosperity Project site – [www.minnesotaprosperty.org](http://www.minnesotaprosperty.org) – and make your voice heard. Your company or association also can create your own Minnesota Prosperity site at no charge by contacting Doug McGregor at the Minnesota Chamber, (651) 292-4681 or [dmcgregor@mnchamber.com](mailto:dmcgregor@mnchamber.com).



### Federal 'Card Check' threatens business vitality

The Minnesota Chamber is playing a leading role to defeat the Employee Free Choice Act, also known as "Card Check," which is expected to be introduced any day in Congress. We are working with our national partners including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. Our primary focus is on state public policy, and we also intervene on federal issues that pose a significant impact on the statewide business community. Card Check clearly rises to that level.

If enacted, this bill would require the National Labor Relations Board to certify a union without a secret ballot, if a majority of the bargaining unit employees signed cards. It also would change the bargaining and mediation process, allowing binding arbitration if no agreement is worked out between labor and management within 120 days. Lastly, the act would step up penalties on employers.

Contact your U.S. representatives and senators now by visiting the Minnesota Prosperity Project site – [www.minnesotaprosperty.org](http://www.minnesotaprosperty.org).



### CONVERGE MARCH 18 ON THE CAPITOL

Business leaders can be most effective in advancing their issues by talking face-face with their lawmakers and other key legislators. Business Day at the Capitol affords that opportunity. The Minnesota Chamber is seeking to have 2,000 business leaders from across the state deliver their priority issues to policy-makers. Reinforce the message that businesses also are hurting in this economy and cannot afford to absorb additional costs. Register by contacting Lisa Engdahl at (800) 821-2230, (651) 292-4699 or [lengdahl@mnchamber.com](mailto:lengdahl@mnchamber.com), or online at [www.mnchamber.com](http://www.mnchamber.com).

### TAKE THE RISK OUT OF INNOVATION:



## Systematic Inventive Thinking (SIT) Seminar

**March 26 – 8:00 A.M.-9:30 A.M.**  
**The Minneapolis Club**  
**729 Second Avenue South – Minneapolis**

Systematic Inventive Thinking has built a global reputation with Fortune 500 companies and manufacturers by helping them take the risk out of innovation. Omri Linder and Yoni Stern will help familiarize businesses with this powerful approach to innovation and understand how it can help companies create products and transform their business models.

Cost for this seminar, conducted in partnership with Generate Companies, is \$30. [Register by paying via PayPal](#). Questions may be directed to Graham Arntzen at [graham@generatecompany.com](mailto:graham@generatecompany.com).



## ENERGY SMART: SAVE MONEY THROUGH ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Rising energy costs are increasingly taking a bigger bite out of budgets and especially so for manufacturers. Minnesota businesses now have a new resource for improving energy efficiency and saving money. Energy Smart, a program of the Minnesota Chamber, is a statewide initiative designed to help businesses take advantage of conservation programs and increase energy efficiency in their buildings and operations.

Energy Smart is borne out of current state law that requires utilities to reduce electricity demand in specific increments on an annual basis. Our staff will help steer businesses to these utility programs as well as other resources that can assist in analyzing and making informed choices on a company's energy usage, efficiency upgrade options, potential cost savings and available financial incentives. For additional information, businesses can contact Jill Curran, Energy Smart program manager, at (651) 292-4653 or [jcurran@mnchamber.com](mailto:jcurran@mnchamber.com), or visit the Web site at [www.mnenergysmart.com](http://www.mnenergysmart.com).

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## DISPLAY YOUR PRODUCTS

The Minnesota Chamber office hosts a variety of business leaders and policy-makers in its offices on a regular basis. Our front reception area features products made by Minnesota Chamber members, and we welcome the opportunity to showcase a product or part made by your company. It's an excellent opportunity to recognize the trademark of quality Minnesota merchandise. If you have an item you'd like to share, please contact Kim Anderson at [kanderson@mnchamber.com](mailto:kanderson@mnchamber.com).

## NEXT MEETING

Minnesota Manufacturers' Coalition will meet April 15 at Precision Gasket Company. Watch your e-mail for a detailed agenda.

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