

2008-2009

GROW MINNESOTA!

BUILDING OUR ECONOMY BY BUILDING BUSINESS

MINNESOTA
CHAMBER of
COMMERCE

100  business unified.

MINNESOTA NEEDS BUSINESSES MINNESOTA NEEDS JOBS

More than ever before, Minnesota needs a private-sector effort to retain and expand our business base. That is the goal of Grow Minnesota! The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with local and regional chambers of commerce, conducts regular retention visits with nearly 800 Minnesota companies a year – thanking them for operating in our state and helping them overcome any obstacles to success and growth in Minnesota.

The private sector is clearing the path for job growth in Minnesota. The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce has a tradition of making our state's business environment more competitive through its leadership in shaping public policy. Our emphasis now has expanded to include building the statewide economy by working with businesses one-on-one.

The primary focus of Grow Minnesota! is retaining Minnesota businesses and encouraging them to expand here. This statewide initiative also unites Minnesota communities behind the premise that our state as a whole is greater than its parts. Each community visits local companies. When appropriate, we share what we learn. Working together to build the state's economy benefits all of Minnesota – our small towns, vibrant regional centers and growing metropolitan areas.

HELPING BUSINESSES SUCCEED

Visiting companies: The Minnesota Chamber and its 44 local chamber partners conduct face-to-face retention visits with nearly 800 businesses statewide each year to encourage them to remain and expand in Minnesota.

Direct assistance: We follow up with any business that indicates a specific need and offer assistance or refer it to the appropriate organization. About one business in seven needs follow up, and in the last five years we have given one-on-one assistance to more than 500 companies.

Informing our public policy agenda: With every retention visit, we learn the perspective of Minnesota business owners. We use it to shape our public policy agenda and understand trends affecting the economy. It receives wide distribution through our website, annual report, annual meeting and various presentations around Minnesota.

Make business assistance more accessible:

The past five years of visits have brought us into contact with more than 3,500 companies. With more than 100,000 companies in the state, it is not enough. Next year, Grow Minnesota! will expand BusinessConnection, our database and referral network. BusinessConnection includes all of the state's business assistance resources, both public and private sector. Businesses can use this database and network, available via www.mnbizconnect.com and 1-888-MINN-BIZ (1-888-646-6249), to research and solve a wide variety of business-related problems. Many inquiries can be answered immediately. Others require referrals to organizations that can resolve them. BusinessConnection allows businesses across the state to access information via a single entry point. In addition, it will increase

and support the ability of local economic development leaders – both private and public sector – to respond to local businesses as well as to inquiries from businesses considering a Minnesota location.

“(Grow Minnesota! helps) retain businesses in Minnesota and to help them expand...it creates an environment where local business leaders realize that the community is working to support them. Even in this tough time, we have a number of businesses that today are contemplating expansions or have them in the works, which will add jobs to the community.”

~ Randy Kehr, president, Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce, from “Local Economy Grows” as told to Brian Scott, KIMT News 3

GROW MINNESOTA!

If you are interested in receiving a Grow Minnesota! visit or know someone who is, please contact us at growminnesota@mnchamber.com or (651) 292-4674.



THANKING MINNESOTA'S LEADING EMPLOYERS

Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
Brad Meier, president

In June, Brad Meier, president, Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism and Tom Kuntz, mayor of Owatonna, visited with Tanvir Arfi, president, SPX Service Solutions, Americas at the company's North American headquarters in Warren, Michigan. This marked the first out-of-state headquarters visit completed by a Grow Minnesota! local chamber partner.

SPX Service Solutions specializes in diagnostic products, tools and equipment and services for vehicle manufacturers and service centers. The company employs over 750 people in Owatonna, Minnesota. The visit stemmed from a local effort of Owatonna Partners for Economic Development to connect with ownership located outside of the Owatonna area. At the visit, Mr. Arfi commented that the employees in Owatonna were unusually dedicated, but he worried that, because several engineers currently live outside of Owatonna and gas prices were so high, significant changes would have to be made to the commuting schedule either by the company or by its employees. The Owatonna contingency agreed to help SPX by providing new resident information to employees to show the benefits of living in or near Owatonna.

Pictured: An employee at the SPX Service Solutions in Owatonna, Minnesota.

LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PARTNERS

Leaders

Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce
Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce
Austin Area Chamber of Commerce
Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce
Brainerd Lakes Chamber
Burnsville Chamber of Commerce
Cambridge Area Chamber of Commerce
Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce
Detroit Lakes Regional Chamber of Commerce
Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce
 Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce
Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
Fergus Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
Greater Mankato Growth Inc.
Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau
Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce
Hutchinson Area Chamber of Commerce
International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
Lakeville Area Chamber of Commerce & CVB
Litchfield Chamber of Commerce
Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce
MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce

Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce
North Hennepin Area Chamber of Commerce
Northfield Area Chamber of Commerce
Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
Park Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
River Heights Chamber of Commerce
Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce
Saint Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce
Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
SouthWest Metro Area Chamber of Commerce
Thief River Falls Chamber of Commerce
Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce
TwinWest Chamber of Commerce
Waconia Chamber of Commerce
Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce
Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce
Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce

Associates

Glenwood Area Chamber of Commerce
Milaca Area Chamber of Commerce

Affiliates

APEX in partnership with the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce