



MINNESOTA  
CHAMBER of  
COMMERCE

# GROW MINNESOTA!

BUILDING OUR ECONOMY BY BUILDING BUSINESS

## 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 over 900 Minnesota companies a year – thanking them for operating in our state and when necessary providing direct assistance to help them succeed and grow in our state. Last year, we assisted over 215 Minnesota companies. Our Pohlad Family Foundation ‘Get Ready to Grow’ program alone assisted 91 companies and helped retain 1,300 jobs.

The private sector is clearing the paths 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 55 local chamber partners conduct face-to-face retention visits with over 900 businesses statewide each year to encourage them to remain and expand in Minnesota.

**Expansion assistance:** Retention visits have helped us build relationships with local companies. They know that Grow Minnesota! is a resource and

partner when it comes to identifying resources and navigating the permitting necessary to 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 seven years close to 600 companies have received one-on-one assistance.

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

### Making business assistance more accessible:

The past seven years of visits have brought us into contact with more than 4,000 companies. With more than 100,000 companies in the state, this is not enough. Grow Minnesota! has expanded to include an on line business assistance tool, **BusinessConnection**. **BusinessConnection** includes all of the state’s most frequently used business assistance resources, both public and private sector. Businesses can use this database and network, available via [www.mnbizconnect.com](http://www.mnbizconnect.com) and **1-888-MINN-BIZ (1-888-646-6249)**, to research and solve a wide variety of business-related problems. There is no charge for using it and **BusinessConnection** is available 24/7. Many inquiries can be answered immediately through a key word search of the data base. Others require

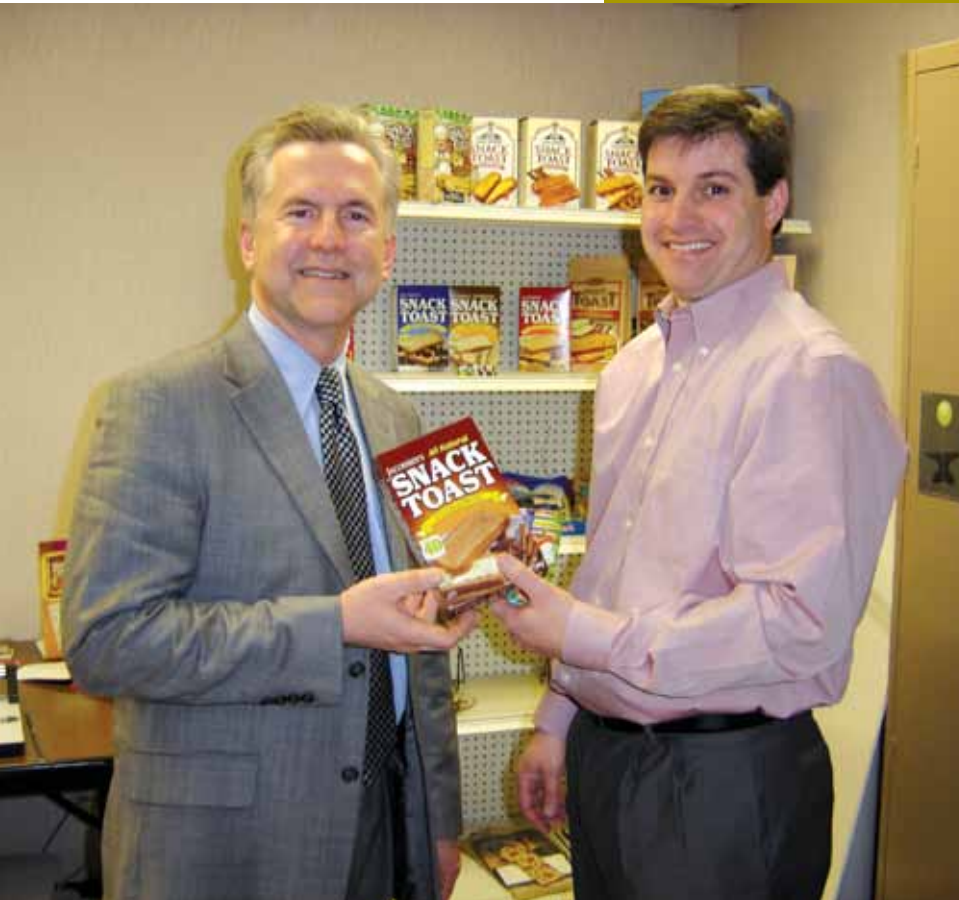
referrals to organizations that can resolve them. **BusinessConnection** allows businesses across the state to access information via a single entry point. In addition, it increases and supports the ability of local economic development leaders – both private and public sector – to respond to local businesses as well as to inquiries from businesses considering a Minnesota location.

“Our first year of partnership in Grow Minnesota! is off to a very positive start. Businesses called on thus far have expressed their appreciation for our retention visit. Volunteers received valuable feedback on what it’s like to run a business in our community, and learned a lot about the companies that make our community strong. All are looking forward to participating in future visits. We are a smaller chamber, but have set our visit goal number high. This is based on the level of volunteer interest and commitment we have seen to date. The more businesses we can visit throughout the year, the more businesses we will be able to thank for the jobs they have in our community ...as well as provide assistance when needed. In addition, the visits provide a valuable face-to-face opportunity to develop and renew business to business relationships plus open up a line of communication if we are called on for further assistance in the future.”

*Pat Anderson, President  
Cannon Falls Area Chamber of Commerce*

## GROW MINNESOTA!

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



## THANKING MINNESOTA'S LEADING EMPLOYERS

Kelly Guncheon of Guncheon Financial, LLC and Co-chair, TwinWest Grow Minnesota! Task Force on the left; Josh Kasden, President of Log House Foods headquartered in Plymouth on the right. They are pictured with Log House Foods' products that are sold nationwide.

"TwinWest assisted Log House Foods in securing high-speed business Internet service. Log House Foods had checked into high-speed business cable service in prior years, but due to an issue of installing the Internet to the site from an adjacent property, it was cost prohibitive. After the Grow Minnesota! visit, TwinWest contacted Comcast Business Services to see if they could re-visit the situation with Log House Foods. Upon re-evaluation, Comcast Business Services was able to reduce the installation costs to Log House Foods and service was brought to the business."

*Bruce Nustad, President  
TwinWest Chamber of Commerce*

## LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PARTNERS

Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce  
Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce  
Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce  
APEX in partnership with Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce  
Austin Area Chamber of Commerce  
Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce  
Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce  
Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce  
Burnsville Chamber of Commerce  
Cambridge Area Chamber of Commerce  
Cannon Falls Area Chamber of Commerce  
Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Detroit Lakes Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce  
Elk River Area Chamber of Commerce  
Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce  
Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism  
Fergus Falls Area Chamber of Commerce  
Glencoe Area Chamber of Commerce  
Glenwood Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Mankato Growth, Inc.

Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce  
Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau  
Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce  
Hutchinson Area Chamber of Commerce  
International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce  
Isanti Area Chamber of Commerce  
Itasca Economic Development Corp. (IEDC) in partnership with Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce  
Lakeville Area Chamber of Commerce & CVB  
Litchfield Chamber of Commerce  
Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce  
MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce  
Milaca Area Chamber of Commerce  
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Monticello Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
Mora Area Chamber of Commerce  
Northfield Area Chamber of Commerce  
North Hennepin Area Chamber of Commerce  
Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism  
Park Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

Progress Plus in partnership with River Heights Chamber of Commerce  
Redwood Area Chamber & Tourism in partnership with Redwood Area Development Corp.  
Richfield Chamber of Commerce  
Rochester Area Economic Development Inc. in partnership with Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce  
Saint Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce  
Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce  
SouthWest Metro Chamber of Commerce  
Thief River Falls Chamber of Commerce  
TwinWest Chamber of Commerce  
Two Harbors Area 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