

## Description of Activities

### Grow Minnesota! partners conduct the following activities:

1. Communicate regularly with Minnesota businesses and encourage them to grow here. We do this by conducting regular retention activities, including CEO-to-CEO visits and surveys. Company visits often reveal a need for assistance with business expansion, local or state government or the company's general operations, and Grow Minnesota! representatives either provide that assistance directly or refer the company to the appropriate public or private sector organization. Visits are also used as an opportunity to collect feedback on public policy issues which is used to shape the local and state chamber's public policy agendas.

Every visit accomplishes four important objectives: 1) Thank company leaders for doing business in Minnesota and employing Minnesotans; 2) Ask what needs to be done to keep them company here and/or ensure that expansions take place here; 3) Assist with any challenges related to state or local government, business expansion or the company's general operation; 4) Collect comments on public policy issues that are used to shape the business community's public policy agenda at the local and state levels.

2. Process inquiries. When a company is interested in a Minnesota location, Grow Minnesota! representatives share that company's information with all local chambers participating in this program (through a statewide lead sharing pool). Companies interested in Minnesota receive timely responses to their inquiries.

3. Identify, publicize and recommend responses to the trends affecting the development of our state's economy. Utilize the research and analytical skill of experts on the development of our state's economy. Organize and publicize their findings so that it is actionable by local businesses. Entrepreneurs can use this information to shape new businesses and reshape existing ones. Community leaders can use it to redirect private resources so that we have the community institutions necessary to capitalize on emerging trends. For public officials, it is a means of checking the adequacy of our state's economic infrastructure.

4. Over time, Grow Minnesota! will market the state to the nation and world. We will target businesses and individuals that research identifies as good fits for Minnesota. Recruiting talented individuals is as important as recruiting businesses.

## Ownership

Grow Minnesota! is sponsored by the Minnesota Chamber and operated as a program of the chamber. Its advisory committee is chaired by and made up of Minnesota Chamber members and local chambers of commerce.

### How is this different?

Grow Minnesota! is different than previous private-sector economic development initiatives for several reasons. First, we will do everything we can to make our front door attractive but spend most of our initial efforts guarding our back door. While there are plans to market Minnesota as a great place to locate a business, we will focus our initial efforts on retaining companies that have already committed to do business here. We will also encourage them to expand here.

Second, previous operations did not have the ability to take advantage of an in-place statewide local chamber network with close ties to their local businesses. More than 800 Minnesota companies will be contacted each year by state and local chamber staff and business leaders.

Third, we also work closely with other state and local economic development organizations. Our retention calls often trigger requests for technical or financial assistance and we refer these requests to the private or public organization most capable of responding.

Finally, no other economic development program has had a built-in public policy component like that of the Minnesota Chamber at the state level and local chambers at the local level. This is a critical component if we are going to successfully address the state and local public policy issues impeding the growth of Minnesota businesses.

Why do we need a statewide private sector initiative?

- Grow Minnesota! ensures that every Minnesota enterprise feels wanted and appreciated, not just those looking for a new site or planning an expansion.
- A statewide initiative will minimize the competition among Minnesota communities and at the same time, give us more to sell: a major metropolitan area, vibrant regional centers and great small towns. The Minnesota Chamber ensures that all options are presented to our current businesses and business prospects, not just a select few communities.
- History has shown that businesspeople are much more likely to share information with their peers.
- A statewide initiative provides a broader funding base of support.

Most public-sector economic development programs are focused on "deals"; this initiative will focus on retaining and growing private-sector jobs.

