



**MINNESOTA
CHAMBER of
COMMERCE**

GROW MINNESOTA! 2014 Annual Report
Record Number of Companies Assisted Statewide

Custom Products breaks ground for plant expansion

Participating in the groundbreaking were (from left): Jenny Smith, Systems West; Emily Johnson, DEED job creation fund; Tom Washa; DEED business community development representative; Robin Sternberg, DEED deputy commissioner; Ray Doering, Systems West; Scott Maki, Custom Products vice president of development; Eric Doering, Systems West; Al Northquest, Custom Products vice president of operations; Keith Johnson, Litchfield mayor; Randy Reinke, Custom Products president; Ed Ulmaniec, Bremer Bank senior vice president; Dee Schutte, Litchfield Chamber of Commerce executive director; Kathi Schaff, Minnesota Chamber Grow Minnesota! director; Randy Zinda – Bremer Bank, vice president.

CUSTOM PRODUCTS PLANT EXPANSION WILL ADD 31 JOBS IN LITCHFIELD

www.cpcabs.com

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development approved the participation of Custom Products of Litchfield Inc. in the Minnesota Job Creation Fund. The company will receive rebates from the state as it completes its expansion and adds jobs during the next seven years. Custom Products became aware of the grant through Grow Minnesota! staff who directed the company to DEED to start the application. Grow Minnesota!, the Litchfield Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Litchfield were instrumental in securing the assistance. The 20,000-square-foot expansion will enable Custom Products to begin manufacturing cabs using expanded processes for several new major customers, and will add 31 jobs in Litchfield.

GROW MINNESOTA! MISSION AND VALUE

Grow Minnesota! is the business retention, expansion and assistance program of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. The program operates in partnership with more than 70 local and regional chambers of commerce and their private-sector economic development organizations. The primary focus is to retain Minnesota businesses and encourage them to expand here.

Every Grow Minnesota! business retention visit has four parts: first, we thank the business owner or manager for having a business in our state and employing Minnesotans; second, we learn as much as we can about the business and its Minnesota activities; third, we ask if we can assist the company to stay and grow in our state; and, fourth, we ask what policy-makers can do to improve our state's overall business environment.

CONTACT US Or your local Grow Minnesota! Partner

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2014 Visit Statistics

757 business visits.

210 businesses assisted.

2,578 jobs protected.

**BEMIDJI VISIT IS LEARNING OPPORTUNITY:
PAUL BUNYAN COMMUNICATIONS
- THE GIGAZONE**

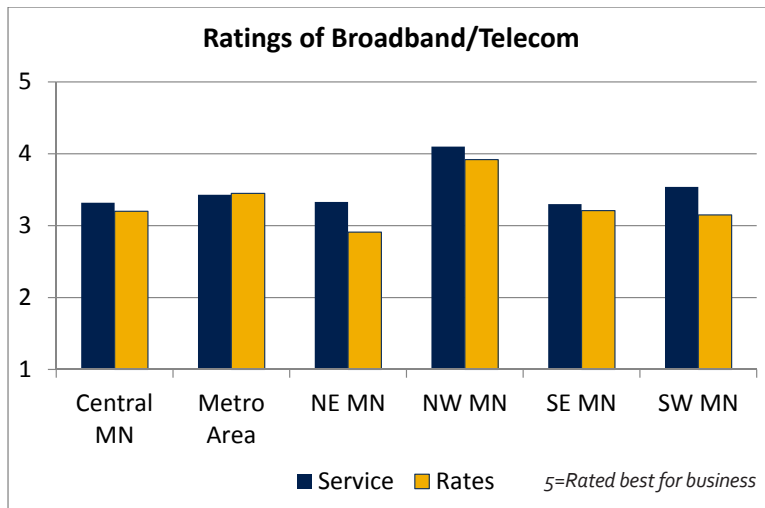
www.paulbunyan.net/gigazone

The Bemidji Chamber Grow Minnesota! team visited with Paul Bunyan Communications in 2014. The in-depth visit was an opportunity to learn about the company's telecommunication advances, and then share PBC's resources with local companies. The chamber also views PBC's new GigaZone as a great business recruitment tool for the community and northern Minnesota. "Paul Bunyan Communications is the largest communications cooperative in Minnesota, and, once completed, the GigaZone will cover over 5,000 square miles of mainly rural areas in the north-central part of the state," said Gary Johnson, Paul Bunyan Communications CEO/general manager.



Photo source: Prairie Business Magazine

Gary Johnson, Paul Bunyan Communications CEO/General Manager



**BUSINESSES REPORT
ADDING JOBS**

2014: **41%**

2013: **36%**

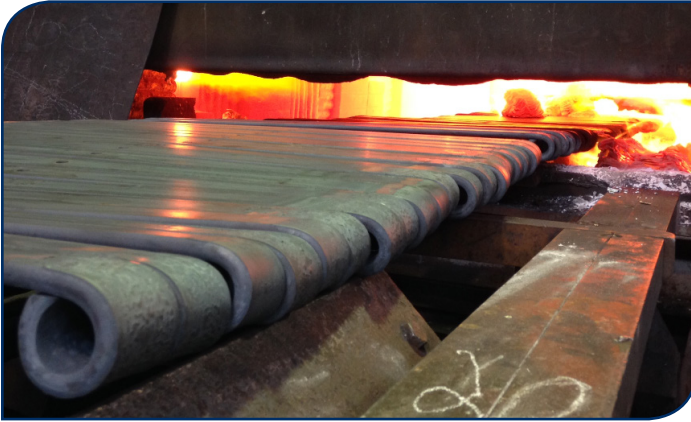
2012: **46%**

**WINONA GROW MINNESOTA! ASSISTANCE
SPURS GROWTH AT PLASTICERT**

www.plasticert.com

The recession of 2008 hit PlastiCert hard as it did many manufacturers. PlastiCert MN was outperforming its founding/sister plant in Pennsylvania, so at the height of the recession PlastiCert closed its Pennsylvania facility and consolidated all manufacturing at its Lewiston plant. "In 2009 we received a Minnesota Chamber Grow Minnesota! Get Ready to Grow award," said Craig Porter, president/owner of PlastiCert, Inc. "We are forever grateful to the Pohlada Family Foundation for funding this program, which has allowed us to steadily recover from the recession and increase our workforce." Fast forward to 2014 and now PlastiCert has entered into new business sectors with multiple customers including the design and production of components for a new consumer computer accessory, and new agriculture fluid application products.





Heating treating process at Zenith Spring Company in Duluth.

APEX VISITS HELP ATTRACT BUSINESS TO ARROWHEAD REGION

www.apexgetsbusiness.com

APEX tailors its Grow Minnesota! program in Duluth and the Arrowhead Region to serve its business development strategy. Local issues are integrated with the standard topics addressed in Grow Minnesota! visits. The Grow Minnesota! Salesforce.com platform allows APEX to access background information and familiarize themselves with businesses before making their first call. Their latest manufacturing strategy consisted of visiting with 100 businesses to identify specific industry needs. They found that \$12 million in heat treating, metal plating and powder coating services were leaving the region every year. APEX is now using this rich data to attract and expand heat treating, plating and powder coating businesses in its region. "We found a great resource in the Grow Minnesota! program and will continue to utilize visits to assist us with future expansion and attraction projects." said Ian Vincent, business developer at APEX.

MANKATO LANDS FED EX EXPANSION WITH GROW MINNESOTA! ASSISTANCE

www.greatermankato.com

Fed Ex Ground is building a new 90,000-square-foot distribution center in Mankato. Greater Mankato Growth worked with project leads for Fed Ex Ground and connected with the existing Fed Ex staff through its Grow Minnesota! program. The facility will more than triple its existing space with state-of-the-art efficiency. Greater Mankato Growth provided marketplace information in the site selection and visited and toured the existing facility. The new center will serve a large regional footprint in south-central Minnesota. Expansion at the new facility will ramp up in the next couple of years. The move will open up the current Fed Ex building for a new manufacturer or distributor to enter the Mankato market, where vacancy rates are low.



New Fed Ex building under construction in Mankato.

Number of
BUSINESSES
ASSISTED:

2014: **210**

2013: **196**

2012: **88**

PLANNED INVESTMENTS

458

Companies reported
major investment plans

135 New facilities

156 Major equipment purchases

167 Renovate or expand current facilities

**THIEF RIVER FALLS VISITS MATTRACKS
A COMPANY BORN FROM INNOVATION**

www.mattracks.com

Mattracks is located in Karlstad, Minnesota and is the result of the imagination of founder Glen Brazier's 11 year old son. After drawing a picture of a large truck with tracks instead of tires he asked his dad, "Could we make something like this?" After several years of engineering and prototypes, Brazier gained a patent and Mattracks were released for sale to the public in 1994. Mattracks are now sold worldwide in over 75 countries, on every continent.



After a Grow Minnesota! visit, Dave Beito, Northern State Bank president, Glen Brazier, Mattracks founder & ceo, and Bill Blazar, Minnesota Chamber interim president posed in front several Mattracks products.

**BUSINESS RESOURCE
CENTER**

You've got
questions.
We have
answers.



BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER

www.mnbizconnect.com

Grow Minnesota's Business Resource Center provides personal attention to inquirers by connecting them to an expert who identifies resources to address their specific business need. Additionally the site offers a database of frequently asked business questions, especially for entrepreneurs and small business owners.

VISIT
www.mnbizconnect.com

PARTNERS: Local chambers of commerce and economic development entities

**Denotes local economic development organization co-partners.*

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| Albert Lea-Freeborn County ALEDA* | Cambridge Area | Greater Mankato Growth Inc. | MetroNorth | Saint Cloud Area |
| Alexandria Lakes Area | Dakota County Regional | Hastings Area | Minneapolis Regional | Shakopee Area |
| APEX | Detroit Lakes Regional | Hibbing Area | New Ulm Area | SouthWest Metro |
| Duluth Area | Eden Prairie | Hutchinson Area | North Hennepin Area | Thief River Falls Area |
| Apple Valley | Edina | 194 West | Owatonna Area | Twin Cities North |
| Austin Area | Elk River Area | International Falls Area | Park Rapids Area | TwinWest |
| Belle Plaine | Excelsior - Lake Minnetonka | Isanti Area | Princeton Area | Two Harbors Area |
| Belle Plaine Community Development* | Fairmont Area | Lake City | Princeton Economic Development* | Waconia |
| Bemidji Area | Fairmont Economic Development* | Lake City Economic Development* | River Heights | Waseca Area |
| Bloomington | Faribault Area | Laurentian | Progress Plus * | White Bear Area |
| Bloomington Prairie | Fergus Falls Area | Leech Lake Area | Redwood Area | White Bear Lake EDC* |
| Brainerd Lakes | Forest Lake Area | Litchfield | RADC | Willmar Lakes Area |
| BLAEDC* | Glenwood Lakes Area | Long Prairie Area | Richfield | Winona Area |
| Burnsville | Grand Rapids Area | Marshall Area | RAEDI* | Worthington Area |
| | IEDC* | Martin County IGNITE* | Rochester Area | |