

GROW MINNESOTA! Strengthening and Supporting our Region's Existing Businesses

Grow Minnesota! may have only recently been announced as the recipient of a Minnesota Progress Minnesota Award, but the program has been receiving accolades from businesses and those who serve them for years.

As part of this state-wide program founded by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the business development staff of Greater Mankato Growth (GMG) conducts face-to-face visits with area company officials. GMG typically includes in these visits the appropriate government officials from the Greater Mankato Regional Economic Development Alliance (REDA), a regional collaboration of cities and counties that work with GMG in coordinated business retention and attraction efforts. "Strengthening and supporting the region's existing businesses is a priority for us," said GMG President & CEO Jonathan Zierdt. "The health of the businesses in our backyard is critical to our region's robust business climate and overall vitality."

In 2011 GMG performed 43 Grow Minnesota! visits to a diverse collection of businesses from throughout the Greater Mankato region. According to GMG's Business Development Director Tom Riley, while the individual visits aren't often publicized, the benefits can be seen throughout the community. "Because of our commitment to confidentiality, you typically don't hear about these visits, but there are a lot of positive outcomes, some immediate and some that come later. The visits enable us to touch base with a business, see what they're

doing and learn where we might possibly be able to help. We don't profess to know everything about every business, but we can provide connectivity to supply chains and resources that the business may not know about."

The program not only benefits the businesses visited, but the marketplace as a whole. Through the visits, GMG is able to identify overall business challenges and opportunities for the region, leading to proactive economic development activities. The information gathered on these visits is also aggregated with that from other areas across the state, providing state-wide trends and regional comparison data that can be useful to GMG and businesses from the region.

Greater Mankato Growth will continue to support and foster the growth of existing businesses in the region through future Grow Minnesota! visits. For more information or to schedule a Grow Minnesota! visit to your business, go to greatermankato.com/business-growmn.php.

Greater Mankato Growth's participation in Grow Minnesota made possible through the generous funding by:



Far from a typical Grow Minnesota! visit

While Grow Minnesota! visits typically take place in and around the Greater Mankato region, there are times when it's beneficial to visit a company's corporate office. One particularly interesting and impactful Grow Minnesota! visit involved MTU Onsite Energy. After making a number of visits to MTU's facility in Mankato, representatives from and the city traveled to the headquarters of their parent company The Tognum Group in Germany. These visits provided the opportunity to discuss MTU Onsite Energy's current and future growth and investments in the Greater Mankato marketplace and enabled GMG and the city to be responsive to MTU's business development needs. "MTU was one of the companies we identified as having a high potential for growth and supply chain compatibility with other companies in our area, which is why we took a proactive approach to working with their company officials both locally and internationally," explained GMG's Jonathan Zierdt. Over the past year, GMG's interactions with MTU Onsite Energy have resulted in the development of several strategic relationships and industry specific links that benefit both MTU and other organizations in the region.



Grow Minnesota! visit to Tognum headquarters in Friedrichshafen, Germany. Pictured are Jim Pockrandt and Markus Hentschel from MTU Onsite Energy, GMG President & CEO Jonathan Zierdt, Tognum's Ralph Behringer, Mankato City Manager Patrick Hentges and Friedrichshafen Mayor Andreas Brand