



## news release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Grow Minnesota! excels in business development**

#### *Greater Mankato Growth part of state-wide program from the beginning*

(April 12, 2012) - Grow Minnesota! was named as a recipient in the inaugural Progress Minnesota awards sponsored by *Finance & Commerce* (<http://finance-commerce.com/2011/12/progressmn/>). The award recognizes individuals, companies and associations that are driving business and industrial growth and development in Minnesota. Grow Minnesota! and other Progress Minnesota winners were formally recognized April 11.

Grow Minnesota!, a subsidiary program of the Minnesota Chamber, is conducted with 57 local chamber of commerce and economic development partners statewide, including Greater Mankato Growth (GMG). Grow Minnesota! had another impressive year, with nearly 1,000 one-on-one conversations conducted with owners or top management of companies. "The Minnesota Chamber truly has a two-pronged strategy for building the state's economy," said Bill Blazar, senior vice president of the Minnesota Chamber. "We're still working to strengthen the statewide business climate. Plus, we're rolling up our sleeves to help companies one at a time. We're seeing results on both fronts."

In 2011, Greater Mankato Growth performed 43 Grow Minnesota! visits with a diverse collection of businesses throughout the Greater Mankato region and plans to double that number in 2012. The GMG business development staff typically invite area government officials to participate in the meeting, including a staff member from the state and the Regional Economic Development Alliance (REDA), a regional collaboration of cities and counties that work with GMG in coordinated existing business development support and business attraction efforts. The visits provide the opportunity to thank existing businesses for choosing to operate in the marketplace, gain insight on their current and future strategic direction and explore ways to assist by identifying and connecting them to supply chain and resource opportunities.

"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."

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 during the visits is aggregated with data collected state-wide, providing business trends and regional comparison data for the entire state that can be useful to GMG and businesses from the region.

"Grow Minnesota!, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's distinctive private-sector initiative, is dedicated to retaining and creating Minnesota jobs. Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. has been a valuable partner since the program began in 2003," said Blazar. "At the heart of our work are one-on-one conversations with business owners and top-level management. The proactive approach from Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. has resulted in local successes – an affirmation of the value of checking in with businesses on a regular basis, and then solving problems related to their local operations in a timely fashion. We are proud to have such a strong partner focused on the development and growth of the economy in southern Minnesota."

GMG's participation in Grow Minnesota! during 2012 is made possible through generous funding by Brunton Architects. For more information on Grow Minnesota! visit [greatermankato.com/business-growmn.php](http://greatermankato.com/business-growmn.php). Businesses that would like a Grow Minnesota! visit may contact Greater Mankato Growth at (507) 385.6640 or [info@greatermankato.com](mailto:info@greatermankato.com).

#### **About Greater Mankato Growth**

Greater Mankato Growth (GMG) is committed to advancing business for a stronger community. As the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development organization serving the regional marketplace, GMG advances business through: existing business support, new business growth, business promotion, talent development, public affairs, community marketing, visitor attraction and servicing and civic engagement.

#### **About the Regional Economic Development Alliance**

In 2009, the Regional Economic Development Alliance (REDA) began with a progressive group of communities and counties joining together with Greater Mankato Growth in business attraction and development efforts. REDA participants include Eagle Lake, Lake Crystal, Le Sueur, Madison Lake, Mankato, Saint Peter and Blue Earth County. By working together, the group is able to efficiently provide regional and individual city and county information to businesses interested in the Greater Mankato marketplace. As a result of promoting the individual strengths of each community, along with the combined assets of the regional marketplace, all experience collective success.

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