



Public Affairs

Greater Mankato Growth 2011 Annual Report



Greater Mankato Growth's role in Public Affairs is twofold: (1) Providing **Information** on all sides of issues that could impact businesses, and (2) Creating and facilitating opportunities for **Interactions** and meaningful idea exchange between the business community and public policy makers. Through surveys, emails, face-to-face meetings and candidate and issues forum, GMG is committed to providing opportunities for meaningful dialogue between the businesses impacted by public policy decisions and those making these decisions.

Significant Accomplishments of 2010-11 (based on a 2 year political cycle)

Overall

- **23,000+** Total Page Views in Public Affairs area of GMG website (including those areas below).
- A section on Public Affairs included in **Every** GMG Weekly eNews sent to a distribution list of **1,800+** GMG members.

Information on Public Policy Issues

- **10** Issues Dialogues hosted or co-hosted by GMG in late 2010 and throughout 2011:
 - Higher Education Funding
 - Unemployment Insurance
 - Metrodome and New Facility Options
 - Immigration Reform
 - Local Government Aid (LGA)
 - Bonding Proposal for Civic Center Expansion
 - Performing Arts Center Construction and All Seasons Arena Enhancements
 - Greater Mankato Regional Transportation Connections
 - Local Government Public Financing Offerings and Incentives
 - Mankato Area Public Schools 2011 Technology Referendum
 - MN Tax Policy Reform Impacting Business
- **4** surveys conducted by GMG, which received **626** total responses. Public officials asked GMG to survey business members to gain input on Local Government Aid (LGA), Mankato Bonding Proposal, American Jobs Act and the Federal Debt Limit, with results sent to local, state and federal lawmakers.
- **3,000+** Total Page Views in issues area of GMG website.

Interactions with Public Policy Leaders

- Governor Pawlenty engaged with the business community at Business Before Hours in January, 2010.
- Greater Mankato Day at the Capitol held in February of 2010 and 2011, with more than 300 business and civic leaders promoting the Greater Mankato region to legislators from throughout the state.
- Special invitation to President Obama's Town Hall Meeting in Zumbroata in August, 2011 extended to GMG President & CEO from Congressman Walz's office.

Information & Interactions during Elections

- **18** candidate forums for city, county and state election candidates hosted by GMG, attended by **375** individuals and broadcast online by GMG and local news outlets.
- **69** candidates were sent questionnaires asking for biographical information and questions about what they would do as leader in areas impacting business, with answers to these questions published in the candidates' own words.
- **11,212** Total Page Views in "Greater Mankato Elections" area of GMG website, with **3,822** candidate bio page views and **2,952** candidate profile page views.
- **4** Special Election Editions of eNews sent to a distribution list of **1,800+** GMG members.



Rather than taking a stand on a certain issue or candidate and saying "this is what our business community believes or supports," GMG first asks members what they think, and then shares this information with decision makers. The mistake some people make is that because they don't see us taking strong stands on issues, they think we're passive. However, just because we're not divisive, doesn't mean we're not active. What could be more active than going to the extra effort of getting the entire cross-section of ideas and input from the business community and sharing these perspectives with public policy leaders?

*- Jonathan Zierdt
GMG President & CEO*

Why GMG Leads with Advocacy Instead of Lobbying

Lobbying is taking a clear direction/stance and engaging in activity to persuade another to one's chosen viewpoint.

Advocacy is gathering data and information on a particular issue and then sharing the results with decision makers, so they are informed about how the issue is perceived by different stakeholders.