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Members of the  
Marshall Area  
Chamber of Commerce

# Manufacturers take advantage of global marketplace

## Minnesota Manufacturing Week to be held October 22 - 26

The health of Minnesota manufacturing is vital to our state economy and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. Manufacturers continue to employ about one in seven of the state's workforce. These 347,000 employees and their companies produce \$34.1 billion of manufactured goods, representing the largest share of any major industry of our gross state product at nearly 16 percent.

Manufacturers across the country have faced difficulties in recent months. Those challenges also provide opportunities, and Minnesota companies are responding.

Numerous success stories have been identified through visits with manufacturers as part of Grow Minnesota!, the Minnesota Chamber's distinctive private-sector initiative targeting business retention and expansion. Nearly 50 chambers of commerce are local partners in this effort, and the statewide network is growing.

Foreign competition in a global marketplace offers an excellent example. Companies recognize they need a competitive edge, and they've done that by focusing on customer service and excellence. Providing face-to-face selling is key, plus the technology of the Internet plays huge roles in ordering and shipping functions. Companies also have stepped to the plate with greater focus on custom products and same-day turnaround.

As exports continue to enter the U.S. market, Minnesota companies are expanding their international trade, too. Many have begun overseas trade as well as exporting of jobs, either through cooperation with foreign manufacturing plants for general assembly portions of their manufacturing processes or development of their own overseas facilities.

Our Grow Minnesota! visits have confirmed

many of the same findings identified in a 2005 report prepared by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). Among those highlights:

- Companies of all sizes engage in global activities, although medium and larger companies are more likely to be active.
- Businesses strongly embraced global practices between 1998 and 2003, increasing exports, imports and outsourcing production abroad.
- Globalization has not had a negative impact. Minnesota businesses are doing more design and customized work than ever. Manufacturers that were making parts are now producing assemblies and/or complex components of a finished product. This high value-added work is keeping them ahead of many



David Olson

foreign competitors.

A healthy manufacturing sector has significant ripple effects. Almost two supporting jobs are created for every manufacturing job. DEED estimated that the industry has contributed about 933,900 jobs – of which 586,000 were nonmanufacturing – and more than \$81 billion, or about 38 percent, of Minnesota's gross domestic product in 2006.

Last year, manufacturing exports alone generated \$15.2 billion in revenue for the state. Manufacturing exports grew by 10.1 percent from 2005 through 2006.

Minnesota Manufacturing Week, Oct. 22-26, is an excellent opportunity to recognize these companies for their contributions to our local and statewide economies. It's noteworthy that almost 91 percent of Minnesota manufacturing firms have fewer than 100 employees. And the typical manufacturing job pays \$50,000 a year, according to DEED.

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# October Business Briefs

## Shape Minnesota Business Priorities

MACC will host a policy development session in conjunction with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, October 23 at 12 Noon at The Schwan Food Company. Join Minnesota Chamber President David Olson for a candid discussion on many key business issues. The input provided by local businesses will help shape the business agenda for the 2008 Legislative Session and develop proactive solutions to help grow your business and move our economy forward.

David was recently elected as chair of the Minnesota Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Board of Directors. One of his goals is to strengthen the relationship between employers and MnSCU institutions. Share your views on the role of MnSCU and how we can work together to better prepare Minnesota's workforce. Call the Chamber at 532-4484 if you are interested in attending.

### *Manufacturing Week, continued from page one*

Large and small manufacturers are scattered across our communities, and their contributions to jobs and tax base are clear. Not to be overlooked, however, are their employees' roles in many aspects of community life.

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce is the leading association for manufacturers in Minnesota. Nearly one-quarter of our members are in the manufacturing sector. We are your voice and your advocate as we work year-round to strengthen your future.

*David Olson is president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. For more information, visit the Web at [www.mnchamber.com](http://www.mnchamber.com).*

## ABE Computer Classes offered to aid your workforce development needs

Marshall Area Adult Learning Center located on the third floor of the Lyon County Courthouse, is a place where adults can come to learn skills needed to improve their employability. Classes are available include English as a Second Language (ESL), General Education Development (GED), Citizenship, Basic Education, and Computer classes. **All classes are at no cost to eligible participants.**

Computer classes are of special interest to businesses that may need to assist employees brush up on computer skills. Classes are taught via tutorials which allow students to progress at their own pace. The Computer Lab is open Monday through Thursday from 2 pm to 6pm with an instructor available during those times to assist students. Other computer class times will be considered upon request. Students have an array of programs available to them to learn. These include Windows XP, Microsoft Office Suite 2003 with Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook, and Publisher, and Quicken 2006. Recently added to this list are Windows Vista and the new Microsoft Office Suite 2007.

Windows Vista is the new operating system available from Microsoft. It has a new interface that allows for more efficient use of an employee's time. Employers should consider using the

Learning Center's services to educate their staff on this new program.

Microsoft has also come out with a new, entirely different office suite to coincide with the Vista release. Though MS Office Suite 2007 has all the same capabilities of the previous editions, it has a completely new interface and a few added extras. The interface allows users to have an up-front view of the options for each menu, instead of navigating through a list of menus to reach the option. Each menu has its own tab heading within the window.

Within Word, PowerPoint, and Publisher, graphics can be manipulated. This includes changing colors, shape, size, and orientation of the graphic. The files can then be saved in the standard format or saved as Portable Document Files (PDF) for use on web pages, which allows for quicker download speeds. This would allow businesses to make available various forms and literature to the public and their employees. It is an asset to any employer to have an employee who understands these programs.

At the Marshall Adult Learning Center, the instructor will provide personalized teaching to allow the student to succeed. Many students have come from the 30 hours of training with a working understanding of three or more programs.

If you would like to participate in computer classes, call the Learning Center at 537-7046.

**[www.marshall-mn.org](http://www.marshall-mn.org)**  
**Your Marshall business  
information source!**

## Become an Employer of Choice Strategies for Investing in Frontline Workers

The costs associated with the turnover of hourly wage and frontline employees such as medical assistants, food workers, and cashiers can be high. In the hospitality industry, turnover costs are between \$3,000 and \$13,000 per departed worker.

But companies don't have to be completely helpless against the revolving door of hourly wage earners. "With the right support, these workers are productive, stable, and upwardly mobile and provide maximum benefit to employers," says Arthur Rothkopf, U.S. Chamber senior vice president and head of the Chamber's Education and Workforce Initiative.

Here are some no-cost strategies for retaining hourly wage and frontline employees:

- Create a culture where employers and staff share responsibility for how the work is completed.

- Give employees input into management decisions such as work schedules or customer service protocols.

- Provide opportunities for learning and personal enrichment by connecting employees with One-Stop Career Centers.

- ♦ Introduce flexible work options, including starting and ending times.

- Connect employees with work support programs such as child care assistance programs.

- ♦ Establish partnerships with community-based organizations that offer support services such as marriage and family counseling.

- ♦ Become an advocate for employees by serving on local Workforce Investment Boards or by joining your local chamber of commerce.

- ♦ Educate employees on the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, a refundable tax credit for working people who earn low to moderate incomes.

Visit [www.uschamber.com/goto/frontline](http://www.uschamber.com/goto/frontline) for more strategies.

## Politics: It's Your Business -- Know the rules of engagement for political activity

With the 2008 presidential campaign nearly in full swing and House and Senate candidates already positioning for next year's elections, it's time for businesses to start paying attention to politics. Business owners need to understand the rules regulating business involvement in elections.

While state election laws vary, the rules governing federal election activity are uniform. Below are a few important things businesses should know about federal election laws.

**Corporate Contributions**-Corporations cannot give anything of value to a candidate, campaign, and, in most cases, a party or make cash contributions to federal candidates or their campaigns. If a corporation wants to donate to a federal candidate, campaign, or party, it can do so by forming a political action committee (PAC). The Federal Election Commission ([www.fec.gov/](http://www.fec.gov/)) or an experienced election law attorney can provide information about PACs.

**Noncorporate Contributions**-Sole proprietors, individuals, and partners can make donations to federal candidates, campaigns, and national parties within the proscribed limits. These limits are indexed and change yearly. For 2007-2008, the limits are as follows: An individual can give \$2,300 to each candidate or candidate committee (campaign) per election (primary or general), \$28,500 to a national party each calendar year, and \$5,000 to any political action committee each calendar year. There are also overall limits on total contributions to all candidates, PACs, and parties that generous contributors should review.

**Candidate Appearances**-Incorporated businesses may invite a candidate or the representative of a candidate or political party to appear on corporate premises before its so-called restricted class (shareholders, executives, administrators and their families).

A limited number of persons from outside the restricted class also may attend these functions. At such

meetings, corporations can endorse candidates or restrict appearances only to favored candidates or parties.

A corporation can invite a candidate to address all of its employees, including those outside the restricted class.

While the candidate can expressly advocate his or her election, the corporation cannot express its preference for particular candidates or parties at these general attendance meetings.

Such restrictions do not apply to nonincorporated entities. While companies can and should encourage all their employees to vote, the corporation must ensure that it does not coerce or threaten any employee with regard to supporting particular candidates, parties, or PACs.

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**Marshall Area  
Chamber of  
Commerce**

The Chamber serves 430 members and has been helping the Marshall area prosper since 1930.

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The Chamber Perspectives is published twelve times each year by the Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce as a service to our members. Comments and contributions are welcome. Please call us with corrections or additions to our mailing list.



# **Business After Hours**

**Service Enterprises, Inc.,  
Western Mental Health Center,  
Arc Southwest & The Daily Grind**

**Monday, October 29  
5:30 to 7 PM**

## **The Daily Grind**

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Now in its 60th year, the event is an opportunity to increase public awareness of the contributions and skills of American workers with disabilities. Four local agencies are partnering with The Daily Grind to sponsor Business After Hours. Please join Arc Southwest, Service Enterprises, Inc., Advance, and Western Mental Health Center for Business After Hours on Monday, October 29. Learn more about the services provided by these agencies while enjoying appetizers and the ambiance of The Daily Grind.

**This event is free and open to all MACC members, their employees and guests. Please plan to attend!**

**Mark your calendars now.....  
November's Business After Hours will be hosted by**

## **To be announced!**