Watson operates her own chiropractic practice, provides in-home health care, and is opening an Anytime Fitness center.



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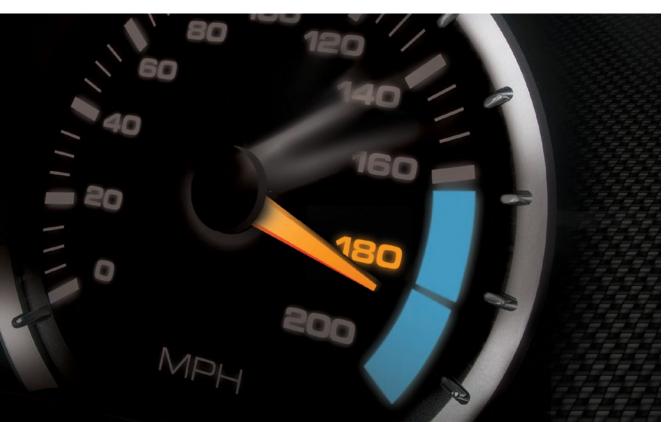
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Community-Minded Corporation

I would like to thank you for the article that you wrote regarding the history of Marvin Windows and Doors ("Hope and Fear," November 2012). Too often in today's culture of 'evil corporations,' we are bombarded with the negative aspects of large corporations (i.e. executive bonuses, lavish trips for board members, and lay-offs to boost dividends). It is great to hear how some corporations are loyal to their communities, and a publication such as yours promotes the communal benefits of a company willing to carry mortgages, assist with college, and feed the people within the city they are established.

In expounding the benefits of this company to a community, you inspire some readers to seek out these types of companies to dedicate their own ethics and values. If only more employers, employees, and communities would create their own individual "value statements," I think that we would all gain by expanding our values throughout our communities as has occurred in Warroad.

> Franklin Martin Chief Building Official City of Inver Grove Heights

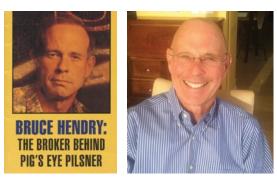
Where Are They Now?

Bruce Hendry sets his sights on historic brews and better schools.

n fall 1993, Bruce Hendry was in the news for two reasons: his role in opposing a state bailout of Northwest Airlines, Inc., and, more important, as chairman and CEO of St. Paul's now-defunct Minnesota Brewing Company. The former Schmidt brewery had recently reopened, employing 150 people, and its Pig's Eye beer was a surprise hit. Our profile explained how the lifelong entrepreneur and dealmaker engineered the revival of a brewery that had been around since the turn of the 20th century. By 2002, however, the brewery had shut down again, and Hendry, a former senior vice president at the Minneapolis securities brokerage Craig-Hallum & Co., went on to join a distressed-real-estate investment fund as a general partner.

Today Hendry, 70, is retired but still doing deals. In November, he and business partner Glen D. Nelson sold part of the Minnesota Brewing property to Dominium, a Plymouth-based developer and property manager, which plans to build new townhomes on the land and create hundreds of housing units in the former brew and bottle houses.

The brewery's warehouse, however, was not part of the deal. Hendry and Nelson, along with Dave Kreitzer as general manager, plan to fit a small brewery, restaurant, and museum in the space's 70,000 square feet. The Fort Road Brewery, as it's tentatively called, will target



Two decades after he revived the old Schmidt Brewery, Bruce Hendry (in 1993, left, and today) has new plans for the site.

the craft beer market. The planned museum will pay homage to the history of the property-"Beer has been brewed there since before St. Paul was a city," Hendry says—including the underground caves where brewers stored beer in a pre-electricity era. The new brewery will make use of the property's well, which contains water estimated to be at least 30,000 years old.

Hendry also recently launched, with a few friends, a website called Better-ed.org, focused on the Minneapolis school system. The site aims to improve transparency by providing a central source for information about where tax dollars go, budgets, school rankings, student achievement, and more. Hendry says, "Very few people understand the numbers, even in business." —Kenzie Zimmer

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Cheers, and Happy New Year

Doing Things in Reverse:

Perspective and inspiration for the year ahead.

any of you will be reading this month's edition between Christmas and New Year's—while enjoying time away from the office, I hope. Odds are you'll also be reflecting on your challenges and accomplishments of the year just ending while organizing, at least in thought, some professional and personal goals for an even better 2013.

Strategic growth is a top priority for most Minnesota business leaders, based on our quarterly economic survey of 15,000 business execs. If we've learned anything from the Great Recession, it's that we all must constantly reinvent our businesses; we all need to be entrepreneurs, even inside Fortune 100 companies.

For inspiration on this topic, it's hard to beat Ernst & Young's annual Strategic Growth Forum, which attracts nearly 2,000 of the nation's top CEOs, entrepreneurs, advisors, investors, and thought leaders. The forum, held in November, is the culmination of the firm's Entrepreneur of the Year Awards. The incredible stories behind this year's Upper Midwest and National winners can be found at http://bit.ly/Sveow8 and http://bit. ly/SDXUDe. And here are some of my favorite takeaways from this year's phenomenal forum speakers, two with a fresh perspective on doing business, and two bigger-picture viewpoints:

Mistakes Wanted: LetterLogic, Inc.'s founder and CEO Sherry Stewart Deutschmann runs a \$25 million firm processing statements, invoices, and checks for other businesses. At LetterLogic, the employees come first, not the customers. The company also flips things around when it comes to making mistakes: instead of trying to avoid mistakes, it encourages them. "You're required to make mistakes and to come to your quarterly meeting explaining the detail of your mistake, whether it was personal or professional, and what you learned from that mistake," Stewart Deutschmann says.

Jeff Davis, president and CEO of Orabrush, spent 23 years in sales, marketing and general management at Procter & Gamble Company. Today, he says, "everything I learned in my previous life I'm doing in reverse." His 20-person, two-year-old business has thus far generated 10 billion Internet impressions and sold 2.5 million of the company's tongue brushes in 100 countries, using a process of innovation and development that takes half the time and less money than traditional approaches. Orabrush buys millions of viewers on YouTube and asks them to choose between different colors, packaging, and pricing. Every 24 hours viewers choose a winning combination, and Orabrush switches out a new set of options for viewers to choose from. "Over the course of an 8 to 12 week period, we know what we load up is going to sell," Davis says. Visit http:// bit.ly/TAa8dv to see a panel discussion in which he participated.

The Bigger Picture, Personal: "Don't play the result" is the advice from actor, author, and philanthropist Michael J. Fox. Like an actor who knows a pie is going to be thrown in his face, but has to look totally surprised by it, business leaders have to avoid playing off of assumed results-positive or negative-and instead perform each step along the way as well as they can. When Fox learned that he had youngonset Parkinson's disease, "it was like knowing I was going to be hit by a bus but not knowing when it would hit me." Instead of dwelling on that inevitability, he maintained his acting career, wrote three bestsellers, and started a foundation that has since



raised \$300 million to speed progress developing therapies for Parkinson's.

The Bigger Picture, Economic: Frederick W. Smith, founder, chairman, president, and CEO, of FedEx Corp. offers this economic forecast: "We're anticipating for 2013 a little more than 3 percent, maybe 3.4 percent growth worldwide, and an increase of a little over 2 percent for U.S gross domestic product." Visit <u>http://bit.ly/VjQvpJ</u> to learn why, and to hear much more from Smith, who so impressed one attendee that he was asked if he might consider running for President of the United States.

Inspiration closer to home comes in the form of Bahram Akradi, chairman, president, CEO, and founder of Life Time Fitness, who started with nothing and today leads the nation's premier health and fitness company. If you have time to use only one of the URL links in this column, it should be http://bit.ly/TFM37A, which will take

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Capella Tower Suite 3500 225 South Sixth Street Minneapolis, MN 55402 MAIN: (612) 604-6400 www.winthrop.com A Professional Association you to his acceptance speech at our 2012 Minnesota Business Hall of Fame program. Visit <u>http://bit.ly/SveB2f</u> to see his speech as well as those of the other four excellent, also inspiring Hall of Fame honorees this year: Buffalo Wild Wing's Sally Smith; Communications Systems Inc.'s Curtis Sampson; Ecolab's Doug Baker Jr.; and U.S. Bank's Richard Davis.

When it comes to getting the New Year off to a great start, Akradi may be in a class by himself. Not content to just make a resolution, his company is leading Commitment Day 2013, with the goal of having more than 300,000 people in 30 cities participate in a 5K run on New Year's Day. The idea is to attract as many people as possible to collectively take a stand against poor health. Visit http://bit.ly/ TLYiN1 for more about Commitment Day.

Other great local business leaders offering up words of inspiration and wisdom during 2012 include our Outstanding Directors (<u>http://bit. ly/QrcTO1</u>) and Family Business Award winners (<u>http:// bit.ly/VjQOAD</u>).

Though the articles in each issue of *Twin Cities Business* deliver core insights, some of the best content associated with such a feature can be found only at its related event, when we hear from the honorees directly, or by visiting the links above.

I encourage you to join us at our events, not just because of the successful leaders you'll meet and hear from, but for the interesting individuals and compelling networking opportunities you'll find at the reception and later at your table. In fact, you still have time to sign up to join us January 10, when we honor the small business award winners profiled in this issue. What better way to start the New Year feeling inspired than to hear firsthand from thriving, successful business leaders? TCB

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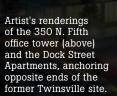
Ten years post-Twinsville, a Target Field ballpark village may finally be rising.

decade ago, developers Bruce Lambrecht and Rich Pogin conceived of "Twinsville," a complex of offices, apartments, and retail space that would rise on nearly seven acres of parking lots, extending from the left-field corner of a new ballpark north to Washington Avenue. Target Field was built, of course, and Twinsville fell under the control of Texas-based developer Hines. But development was a casualty of the recession.

Now the Twinsville site is back for another at-bat. In September Hines broke ground on the Dock Street Apartments, a 185-unit complex on the Washington Avenue side of the site. In early November, Hines announced plans for a 20-story office tower on the opposite end of the site directly across from the ballpark, tentatively called 350 North Fifth, but it is dependent on securing tenants.

So are we looking at Twinsville 2.0? Not exactly. For one thing, Hines is calling the site North Loop Green (for now). Second, there's no grand plan, as there originally was with Twinsville. "We have to see where the market takes this," says Bob Pfefferle, director of Hines' Minneapolis office. The Dock Street project will house market-rate rental apartments, a hot market right now.

Hines is conceiving of the development in phases, Pfefferle says, with Dock Street representing the first. If some version



of 350 North Fifth comes to pass, that would be another phase. That would leave two parcels in between those first two for development. The center of the site contains two massive I-94 freeway ramps, which will be challenging to develop around. In short, there are more innings left to play before we know the final score.

—Gene Rebeck



A Bright Idea

A local solution for the toxic innards of compact fluorescent bulbs.

Mercury, No. 80 on the periodic table of elements, is known as one of only two elements that are in a liquid state at room temperature (the other is bromine) and for health risks that come with exposure to it.

In 1992, Minnesota, along with several other states, began requiring that all fluorescent bulbs be recycled, but of the up to 350 million compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) sold each year, the return rate from consumers is less than 3 percent. (Industrial return ranges from 22 to 25 percent.)

That's a problem, because CFLs contain mercury, and consumers are prohibited from disposing of them in the trash. In 2005, Mankato-based VaporLok Products, LLC, invented recycling bags to handle CFLs and protect mercury from escaping from a cracked or damaged bulb. The latest model, the VaporLok Capture, which has an added layer of mercury protection, became available this past June, with patent pending. The metallic bags come in several sizes and include instructions on how to properly dispose of used CFLs in your area.

VaporLok CEO Brad Buscher is anticipating success for one specific reason: There are essentially no competitors in the industry. VaporLok won't disclose sales figures, but is predicting annual revenue of \$50 million to \$60 million from the bags by 2018. The endeavor has been financed by Buscher himself and a partnership with disposal giant Waste Management, Inc. Consumers can currently buy the bags online—a container that holds up to four CFLs retails for
\$6.99—and bring them to a local hardware retailer for disposal. Some retailers charge for this service.

The fly in the ointment is that Home Depot and many small retailers accept CFL recycling at no charge, with no bags. Buscher is confident the manifest dangers of the bulbs will sway consumers to invest in their own safety.

"We are positioned in front of a tidal wave," Buscher says. "People are going to be looking for a solution and hopefully they will do the right thing." —Laura Sievert

Green Acres

With a new name and a slew of renovations, a historic Eden Prairie barn looks to become the place to be.

When Steve Schussler purchased Eden Prairie's Goodrich-Ramus barn in 2010, the creative force behind Rainforest Café, Galaxy Drive In, and Disney World's T-Rex and Yak & Yeti restaurants planned to turn it into a storage facility.

The barn was slated to be replaced with a drainage pond, but it was the city's oldest (built in 1942), which sparked community efforts to save it. After outbidding himself twice in a sealed-bid county auction, Schussler paid \$82,000 for it.

Recalling a parade of cows he'd seen in Chicago, the playful Schussler posted 17 life-size fiberglass cows in front of the barn along Pioneer Trail, because, he says, "Wouldn't it be cool to just make people laugh and smile every day on their way to work?"

The support Schussler received was overwhelming, he says, and prompted him to open the property to the people by making it an event center draped in his trademark romanticism and sentimentality. He built a white splitrail fence, turned the silo into a wine cellar, hung crystal chandeliers, and put in some 15 antique jukeboxes. "This whole barn is built around romance," he says, and the

Digital Product = Analog Behavior?

StoryCub's videos try to break into a crowded kids' programming marketplace.

Reading to your kids is an age-old activity, the only business built into it being books and blankies. But Dave Swerdlick, the man behind Fridley-based StoryCub, has seen immediate success producing videos that read to other people's kids. StoryCub is a video series featuring people reading storybooks out loud. It spent four days atop iTunes' "Kids and Family" podcasts in September with the book All About Poop, and stories are currently viewed in more than 200 countries.

StoryCub, launched last May, features real people who introduce themselves prior to reading, with their voices narrating the story's pictures. Different from an e-book, the video

contains no text and is not interactive. Swerdlick sees it as a "call to action" to emphasize to parents the importance of one-on-one reading and to get kids excited about a particular title.

Swerdlick works with publishers and authors to obtain the rights to create the videos. The videos cover a variety of books, from "forgotten" titles published years ago to popular new stories to authors that have not gone through a major publisher. "There are a lot of individual authors that are going the route the music industry went," he explains, "and they want to self-publish." In November, StoryCub released its first book featuring sign language for hearing-impaired kids. A StoryCub

app was recently released for most major platforms.

Swerdlick, who has a background in music promotion, runs StoryCub with the help of a few outside editors and marketing via social media. Despite its small staff, it competes with videos from big names such as Sesame Street, Nick Jr., and PBS' Sprout.

Currently, StoryCub is selffunded, although Swerdlick is actively looking for investors. (He has depended on word of mouth for marketing.) Swerdlick says he has not settled on a revenue model, but is exploring video ads and licensing deals with tablet manufacturers, particularly tablets geared to kids. -Kenzie Zimmer

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Business Communications MYTH vs. **REALITY**

Bill Popp Chair and President POPP Communications



Myth: It's easy to identify when a cyber criminal has accessed your databases and records.

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For example, in 2011, a cyber criminal entered the customer database of a highly regarded company. The cyber criminal found, contacted, and offered the same products at a lower cost to one of the company's high-value customers. The cyber criminal then entered and manipulated the sales database of the company by placing an order. The company made and sent the products to the customer. The cyber criminal entered the company's sales database, accounting records, and shipping records and deleted all evidence that the order had ever occurred. The cyber criminal billed the customer for the products.

The company paid for the supplies, production, and distribution, but the cyber criminal received all of the compensation. The company had a firewall; unfortunately, it was an early-generation firewall.

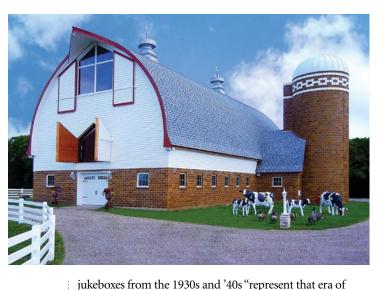
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planners. "We want to try to make money, but not gouge

Schussler hopes to open for business in the spring. For

now, the cows are the main attraction. "Some people have

to drink coffee in the morning," says Schussler, "and some

people have to get their dose of the cows." -Megan Wiley

dancing and fancy-free living." Schussler has invested more than \$1 million in the property to date, and projects annual revenues of more than \$1 million. The 6,400-square-foot space has a capacity of 299, which has prompted calls from wedding and event

anybody," he says.

RUNNING ON

Where are all the gas stations going?

he small corner service station died decades ago. The truism that every commercial thoroughfare would have a gas station every mile or so came to an end in the 1990s. But now, even iconic gas stations that served major intersections (27th and Hennepin in Minneapolis, Blake Road and Highway 7 in Hopkins) are shuttered, and ever fewer offer actual repairs and oil changes.

Where are all the service stations going?

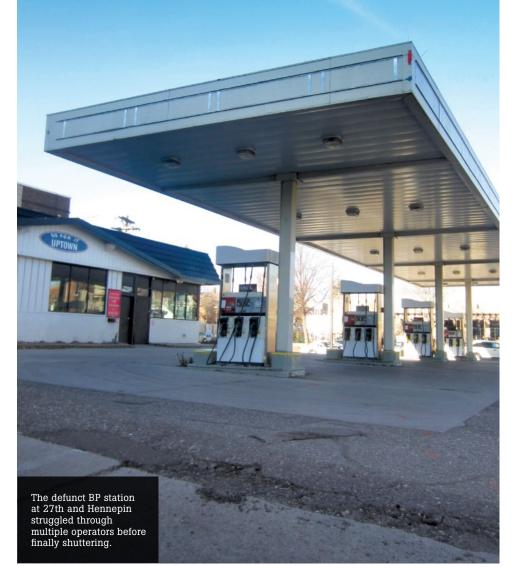
In Minnesota, 2,120 convenience stores sell gas, down about 4 percent from 2008, according to the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS). The state's total number of fueling outlets is down about 12 percent from 1998.

Lower-volume stations have exited the market as fuel margins have become razor-thin, says Jeff Lenard, vice president of industry advocacy at NACS. Typical markup on a gallon is 16 to 18 cents; after costs, stations make about 3 cents per gallon, he notes. Soaring fuel prices have

exacerbated the issue, as small stations' cash flows are diminished by higher inventory costs. And Costco and Walmart, which rake in revenues selling cartloads of goods, sell gas nearly at cost.

"And you're not going to see new [stations] popping up," says Rick Bohnen, who started working at his father's ExxonMobil station in South Minneapolis at age 15 and took it over in 2004, subsequently acquiring a second station across the street. "It costs a ridiculous amount of money to get into this business."

Bohnen rattles off a barrage of headwinds facing his industry, citing credit card fees as the strongest gale. After climbing 21.6 percent in 2010, credit and debit



card fees paid by U.S. convenience stores jumped 23 percent to a record \$11.1 billion in 2011, according to NACS. Rising property taxes and

regulations mandating equipment

upgrades are among other changes eating into earnings, says Bohnen. For the small shops that remain, many owner-operators "can't afford the help and end up behind the counter." —Jake Anderson

Competitive Edge

Burger Staredown Inside the burger battle brewing by Lake Calhoun.

My Burger and Burger Jones sit at

opposite ends of strip malls separated by Lake Street. Jones boasts table service, a more extensive menu that includes cheese curds, alcohol-infused shakes, buffalo wings, nachos, and hot dogs. My Burger is quick-serve-there's no "dining" going on here.

Nonetheless, there is quite a bit of clientele crossover. "We have people who say their friend's favorite place is Burger Jones, and their favorite place to go is My Burger, so they have to alternate between the two," says My Burger Co-Owner John Abdo.

However, John Emerson, general manager of Burger Jones, credits parent company Parasole Restaurant Holdings' loyalty program for

creating loyalty to Burger Jones. "My customer here is the same customer who eats at Manny's, who eats at Pittsburgh Blue, and who eats at Salut."

While both restaurants agree there's room

	Burger Jones	
	BURGER JONES	MY BURGER
Location opened	2009	2011
Locations	2	2
Burgers sold daily	500	250-500, depending on the day and season
Number of seats	140 (plus 60 on patio)	60
Burger and fries	\$7.99 (lunch), \$9.98 (dinner)	\$5.45
What's the beef?	7-ounce all-beef patty, 75/25 grind	4 oz. Angus patty, 80/20 grind
Bun source?	Parasole bakery	Franklin Street Bakery

for two, and having both in such proximity is a conversation-starter if nothing else, Emerson admits to adding lower-priced options, such as burger-and-fries combos, in preparation for My Burger's arrival. —Megan Wiley



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TAX TIME OVERTIME

Say the words "tax time" and you might picture an accountant buried under an enormous heap of documents, pencil in hand, furiously crunching numbers on a calculator. Just how busy are local accountants in the days and weeks leading up to the federal filing deadline in the spring? We asked about 50 of Minnesota's largest accounting firms to share the average overtime hours that their accountants worked last April. Turns out they don't call April the World Series of accounting for nothing. *—Christa Meland*

COMPANY	HEADQUARTERS	LICENSED MN CPAS (AS OF APRIL 2012)	AVERAGE OVERTIME HOURS IN APRIL 2012
McGladrey LLP	Chicago (formerly Minneapolis)	254	39
Grant Thornton LLP	Chicago (has a Minneapolis office)	86	13
Moquist Thorvilson Kaufmann & Pieper LLC	Edina	50	32
Kern DeWenter & Viere Ltd.	Bloomington	49	0
Smith Schafer and Associates Ltd.	Rochester	40	60
Copeland Buhl & Company PLLP	Wayzata	38	37
Mahoney Ulbrich Christiansen & Russ PA	St. Paul	30	38
Schlenner Wenner & Company	St. Cloud	26	40
Eikill & Schilling Ltd.	Duluth	20	90
Wilkerson Guthmann	St. Paul	20	40



• Northern Tool + Equipment agreed to pay \$215 million to acquire The Sportsman's Guide and The Golf Warehouse from French retail giant PRR Group.

• **Supervalu** announced plans to cut 700 store level positions at its Shaw's Supermarkets subsidiary. The company also reduced benefits for its corporate-level staff.

• Dorsey & Whitney Managing Partner Marianne Short left the firm to join United Health Group as chief legal officer.

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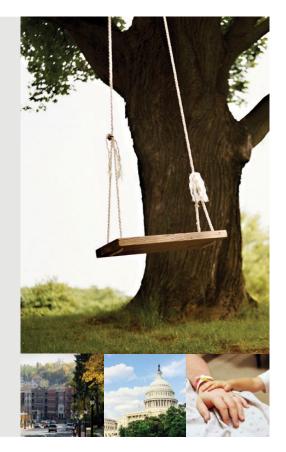
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SELLING IT John Rash

Beating Donor Fatigue

The American Refugee Committee's award-winning Somalia campaign.

The Strategy

The Creative

Caring Americans give billions to charity. Minnesotans are known to be particularly generous. But even with—or perhaps because of—the most dire, daunting challenges, donor fatigue can set in. This is particularly the case with global disasters, be they manmade or natural.

The Minneapolisbased American Refugee Committee is well aware of these dynamics. So it turned its campaign for famine relief in Somalia on its head. This, in turn, turned a lot of heads, including those at the Drucker Institute, which late last year awarded ARC its Peter F. Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation. ARC's "I Am a Star" campaign deserved the award. Any entity that can make a feel-good campaign about Somalia usually viewed as helpless and hopeless—is on to something. The "star" refers to Somalia's flag, but more important, those willing to help—especially the members of the sizable local Somali diaspora. They partnered in creating the campaign, which had the added benefit of better unifying Somali expats.

The multimedia effort included an IAMASTAR.org website, which encouraged people to brainstorm on raising funds for famine relief. There was an upbeat video of local Somalis and ARC staffers providing relief in Mogadishu. Social networks helped extend the message. And the original social networks car washes, bake sales, fun runs—were used to raise money and build bridges between Mogadishu and Minnesota, as well as between Somali immigrants and native Minnesotans.

"What we're trying to do is to really recognize that some of the solutions to the world's toughest problems are only going to be solved by a process we call co-creation—by throwing open our doors and welcoming people from around our community to try to work on these things and solve them, and not just leave it to the



NGO [non-governmental organizations] and nonprofit people sitting in their office," says ARC President and CEO Daniel Wordsworth. "What we have to do is build belief in a place there is great disbelief. So we designed a campaign that was filled with belief, hope, and beauty."

The Buy

Barely a buy—but plenty of buy-in, which impressed the Drucker Institute. Documented results included engagement of more than 35,000 people from 65 countries (one of them Secretary of State Hillary Clinton), 240,000 weekly website views during the peak of the campaign, 128 community events, and 1,158 volunteers connected. Most important, \$6.9 million was raised to help more than 200,000 Somalis with water, health care, and sanitation. Better make that \$7 million: The Drucker award came with a \$100,000 prize (provided by the Coca-Cola Foundation), which will further advance the effort.

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Café Maude at Loring Park

High praise for a North African-influenced sibling of a South Minneapolis favorite.

Café Maude has expanded. The cozy Armatage neighborhood eatery has opened a branch on Loring Park, in the old Nick and Eddie space, with a more upscale air and more North African flavors on the menu.

The interior is luxe, headed toward louche, with deep cushions on long banquettes and a goldenorange glow in the lights. Abstract oil paintings reach up toward impossibly high ceilings, and everything seems touched with an air of infinite leisure. Even though Bar Lurçat took over the old Loring Café's building further down the block years ago, Maude might be the true successor to that particular Minneapolis legacy.

The best way to start a meal is more Niçoise or Italian than North African: with chickpea fries-fat bricks of a polenta-like chickpea purée, set until firm, sliced, and fried. Or you could enjoy your chickpeas in a Tunisian-style lablabi, a refined soup of a butterysmooth purée with a swirl of chili-scented oil on top.

Ubiquitous brick chicken is a feat of culinary engineering here—one in which the showboating is entirely justified. Deboned cuts of white and dark meat are layered, pressed together, and cooked into a succulent

whole. It's all flavored with duqqa, the Egyptian mixture of ground hazelnuts, fennel, coriander, and cumin, with a light farro pilaf and a swirl of apricot purée on the side.

A lamb shank, on the other hand, is a feat of oldfashioned slow-cooking. The meaty flesh falls in shreds from the bone before it even makes it to the table. This dish gets the spice it needs from merguez, a Moroccan lamb sausage coated in a rich marsala reduction.

Maude's original macaroni and cheese-more penne tossed in an opulent fondue-has made the journey north. And the flavor of the moment-baconfinds its highest, best use in a bowl of popcorn tossed with bacon fat and chili powder.

All this marks an improvement on a neighborhood restaurant that was already pretty good. We predict even some South Minneapolitans will prefer the new Maude to the old.

Café Maude at Loring 1612 Harmon Pl., Mpls. 612-787-9080 cafemaudeatloring.com

What Works

The atmosphere is divine. Even if the food weren't as good as it is, it would be worth spending an evening here.

What Doesn't Skip dessert. What we tried

was oversized, over-rich, over-baked. Have one of the excellent cocktails instead. (You get the leftovers from the shaker in a little pitcher.)



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Ice Castles

Winter's most popular attraction will doubtless be the gigantic ice castle occupying the Mall of America's north parking lot through most of February. Created by Colorado-based Ice Castles, LLC, the massive structure will cover more than an acre and feature approximately 50 ice towers, some as high as 40 feet. Visitors will walk through giant caverns and passageways of ice, all of which will be lit by thousands of LED lights at night. Through Feb. 20, Mall of America, Bloomington, mallofamerica.com

Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida,* upgraded

Hennepin Theatre Trust and local musical theater company Theatre Latté Da have partnered for a new series called Broadway Re-Imagined, of which Elton John's *Aida* is the first effort. The idea is to let Latté Da Artistic Director Peter Rothstein, a certifiable genius when it comes to musicals, re-imagine—and improve—popular Broadway shows that could benefit from an upgrade. Jan. 3–27, Pantages Theatre, Mpls., 612-455-9500, hennepintheatretrust.org





Long Day's Journey into Night

For the first time in its history, the Guthrie Theater is tackling Eugene O'Neill's masterful exploration of addiction and dysfunction. Written in the 1940s, when such issues weren't discussed in polite society, the play chronicles the psychic meltdown of the Tyrone family during one particularly harrowing day at their seaside cottage. Joe Dowling directs; Helen Carey and Peter Michael Goetz star. Jan. 12–Feb. 23, Guthrie Theater, Mpls., 612-377-2224, Guthrietheater.org

Out There 25

For 25 years, the Walker Art Center's Out There series has showcased some of the most brazen, provocative theater and performance in the world. This year's program is as adventurous as ever, featuring the Texas-based experimental theater troupe Rude Mechs, German performance collective She She Pop, Australia's leading independent theater company, Back to Back, and a mash-up of dance styles from luminaries of the French scene. Jan. 10–Feb. 2, Walker Art Center, Mpls., 612-375-7600, walkerart.org





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20 TWIN CITIES BUSINESS tcbmag.com JANUARY 2013

Plugged In

The best opportunities for networking this month.

By Kara Eliason



{January 9}

Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's 2013 Session Priorities Dinner

If you're looking to rub elbows with local leaders in business and government, this is your event. More than 1,200 are expected to attend, including chamber members and business owners. The evening includes an issue briefing session, reception, dinner, and program. "My favorite part of the event is the pre-dinner networking. It's a who's who of business and government. [You have] direct access to the influencers in the state of Minnesota," says Michele Engdahl, manager, government and community affairs, Thomson Reuters. **4 p.m., \$130, Saint Paul RiverCentre, 651-292-4654, mnchamber.com**

{January 10}

Small Business Success Stories

Learn from some of Minnesota's noteworthy small businesses. This year's honorees include Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlet, Cold Spring Brewing Company, Felling Trailers, Healthland, Kottke Trucking, Renters Warehouse, Steinwall, Summit Brewing Company, Virtelligence and Watson Chiropractic. *Twin Cities Business* magazine's annual celebration attracts more than 200 professionals, making it a great place to network. **5:30 p.m., \$75, Radisson Plaza Hotel, Minneapolis, 612-336-9288, tcbmag.com**

{January 12}

Long Day's Journey Into Night Opening Night

This is the first time the Guthrie Theater will present the Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning drama, starring acclaimed actors Helen Carey and Peter Michael Goetz. Joe Dowling directs the story about the Tyrone family, whose bonds begin to unravel over the course of one day in a seaside Connecticut home. While the play runs through February 23, opening night is the best time to bump into business leaders and members of the arts scene. If you're looking for VIP access, a \$2,000 donation will get you into the Guthrie Circle. Members receive invitations to exclusive opening night receptions, events, and behind-the-scenes tours. **7:30 p.m., \$24-\$54**, **Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, 612-377-2224, guthrietheater.org**

{January 19}

Duets: An Evening of Perfect Pairings

The Junior League of Minneapolis' annual event features food and drink pairings from a variety of Twin Cities restaurants, such as Red Stag Supperclub. Even if you've attended in the past, you'll want to check out this year's new venue, Aria at the Jeune Lune, in Minneapolis' Warehouse District. Event sponsors include Eminent Interior Design, J. Hilburn, and Ridgedale and Eden Prairie centers, so expect professionals from the design and retail industries, plus lots of Junior League members. **7 p.m., \$125, Aria at the Jeune Lune, Minneapolis, 612-238-8460, jlminneapolis.org**



{January 24}

Diamond Awards

Sports stars, medical professionals, and business leaders attend this fundraiser for brain, nerve, and muscle disorder research at the University of Minnesota. The Minnesota Twins host the event at Target Field, and past attendees include Kent Hrbek and Twins President Dave St. Peter. The event features a silent auction, raffle, patient stories, and an awards presentation. And if you're a baseball fan, you may want to snap a photo with the World Series trophies from 1987 and 1991, which will be on display in the VIP reception. **5:30 p.m., \$150, Target Field, Minneapolis, 612-624-4444, minnesotadiamondawards.org**

{January 26}

Masquerade, The Black & White Ball

Professionals ages 25 to 40 attend this annual event put on by ACS CURE, a young professionals fundraising group for the American Cancer Society. There's a black-and-white theme this year, along with a new venue, Aria at the Jeune Lune. Activities include dancing, poker, a photo booth, and silent auctions. "The environment is hip, energetic, and conducive to meeting new people," says Elijah Shaw, CEO of ICON Services Corporation. "It's an elaborate event. Everyone's dressed up, the food is amazing, and it's exceptionally fun," says James Schugel, former WCCO television personality. 8 p.m., \$75, Aria at the Jeune Lune, 651-255-8100, acs-cure.org



{January 26}

Doubt Opening Night

This world premiere production by the Minnesota Opera tells the story of Sister Aloysius, on a mission to ruin Father Flynn, whom she accuses of abusing the school's only black student. If you're looking for networking opportunities beyond intermission, consider joining one of the Minnesota Opera's specialty groups. Those who donate more than \$2,500 annually are welcomed into the Camerata Circle. Members can enjoy an exclusive dinner before the show and dessert reception after. For young professionals ages 21 to 39, there's Tempo, with a \$50 annual membership fee. Tempo members are invited to an opening night after-party, which attracts lawyers and corporate professionals, plus members of the opera chorus and orchestra. **7:30 p.m., \$20-\$200, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, St. Paul, 612-333-6669, mnopera.org** Innovate. Deliver

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Art on the Menu

Twin Cities museums offer a colorful change of scenery and an array of dining options. We asked local execs to share their favorite locales and works of art.

By Melinda Nelson

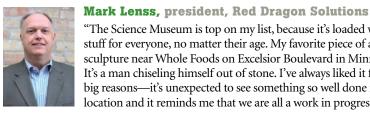




Dean Phillips, chairman, Talenti Gelato

"When I was a kid, Chuck Close's Big Self-Portrait at the Walker was the first piece of art that literally stopped me in my tracks. Its realism continues to amaze me, and now, my own children. While I await the advent of time travel, the Tudor, Charleston, and Hôtel Gaillard period rooms at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts instantly transport

me to remarkable spaces, places, and times. If only the walls could talk. The breadth and quality of the Historical Society's collection at the Minnesota History Center are astounding, but my favorites are the amazingly preserved sites at Fort Snelling and the Alexander Ramsey House, where you can feel and reflect on our state's remarkable history."



"The Science Museum is top on my list, because it's loaded with cool stuff for everyone, no matter their age. My favorite piece of art is a sculpture near Whole Foods on Excelsior Boulevard in Minneapolis. It's a man chiseling himself out of stone. I've always liked it for two big reasons-it's unexpected to see something so well done in that location and it reminds me that we are all a work in progress."



Ann Underbrink Hill, major gifts officer, **Feed My Starving Children**

"I love the Mill City Museum for the way that the exhibits are so perfectly integrated into the original environment. Just down the street, by the federal courthouse, I love the lawnmowing Rockman by sculptor Tom Otterness. There are several of these characters at the courthouse. Each is quirky but easy

to decipher. They're simple, entertaining, and are the antithesis of the heavy business conducted within the walls of the courthouse."

kottke-trucking.com





Robert Kelen, owner, Italy by Web "I've been going to the Walker Art

Center all my life. It's got a great permanent collection and interesting temporary exhibitions. I really like Claes Oldenburg's giant plug and his other larger-than-life pieces not just *Spoonbridge and Cherry*. I'm also partial to the Roy Lichtenstein and Alexander Calder sculptures outside the museum. I've seen these pieces nearly every day for decades. They've become a part of my daily routine, and how I identify life in Minneapolis."



Joe Schmit, sports anchor, KSTP-TV

"My favorite museum is the Minnesota History Center because I go there and feel young. My favorite piece of art is the Herb Brooks statue near Xcel Energy Center, because it reminds me of so many great moments on and off the ice."



Gretchen Buhler Ventura, president and CEO, Technology Project Group

"I love the Minneapolis Institute of Arts for all of its reverence of the ancient and exotic. It takes me places that I include in my dreams. I also love the Deborah Butterfield horse sculpture at the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. It's organic and timeless and majestic."



Where to Lunch

Café Minnesota Minnesota History Center, St. Paul, 651-259-3000, mnhs.org Elements Café Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul, 651-221-9444, smm.org Gather Walker Art Center Minneapolis, 612-253-3410, gatherbydamico.com Mezzanine by D'Amico Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, 612-870-3180, artsmia.org

Mill City Café Mill City Museum Minneapolis, 612-341-7557, mnhs.org



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Spotlight

people and companies to watch

Grayce Belvedere Young (inset below) of the Prouty Project led a team of clients to the Galápagos Islands last year to work on environmental projects. The consultancy runs similar expeditions each year to "stretch" participants physically and spiritually.

Soft Stuff, Hard Truths

The Prouty Project helps guide companies through the evolving realm of business leadership.

Though the topic has never been back-burnered, business leadership seems to have heated up in the past few years, with books, columns, blog posts, and seminars on the subject popping up. Grayce Belvedere Young, president of the Prouty Project, an Eden Prairie–based leadership development consultancy, offers one theory. During the recession, companies trimmed budgets devoted to strengthening their executives' leadership capabilities. With the economy improving (if slowly), "there's been a bit of resurgence in the last year or so," she says.

But there's another factor, too. Businesses seem to be changing the way they lead, or at least seeing that the old ways don't work quite as well as they need to. "You hear a lot of leaders rate the soft stuff lower than the hard stuff in business. But the soft stuff is what rallies people's hearts and minds to want to follow a leader," Belvedere Young says. "And if you as a leader don't have that ability to inspire people, yes, you'll get compliance and they'll do what you ask them to do, they'll do their job. But their discretionary effort won't go much further. They'll do what they need to do.

"Whereas if you think of someone who really captures people's hearts and minds and treats people in a way that's fair, straightforward, and respectful, people follow and they give their all," she adds.

The Prouty Project was founded 25 years ago by Jeff Prouty, who's now the company's chairman. Early on, he consulted on strategic planning for entrepreneurs, and continues to do so today. The company focuses on three main areas: strategic planning, organizational development (which includes leadership and team development), and board director development. The Prouty Project's clients range from nonprofits to small startups to divisions of Fortune 500s, mostly in Minnesota.

Belvedere Young joined the Prouty Project in 2007 from Minnetonkabased UnitedHealth Group, where she was a senior director of leadership systems. Before that, she worked in sales, marketing, and business development at UnitedHealth and at Thomson West Group. She now directs the Prouty Project's organization development practice.

Central to the Prouty Project's modus operandi is what it calls "stretch," which can be defined as moving out of one's comfort zone to stimulate new thinking. The consultancy's techniques include team simulations and other activities intended to help leaders see how they interact with their employees. Some of its customized programs include feedback from a psychologist.

According to Belvedere Young, many companies are looking to rev up their strategic plans. Previous plans may have resulted in satisfactory growth, she says, "but not 'next-curve' type of growth"—that is, looking beyond safe, standard practices such as product-line extensions to new markets and truly new products.

She offers this case study of a local



company that had experienced some changes in leadership and wanted to re-energize its management team. Prouty created a leadership development program for this client based on a cohort model—bringing together 16 to 20 people three times for two to three days at a time. Prouty's topics included creating a value proposition, improving customer experience and employee engagement, and developing emotional intelligence in the managers.

"The results from a revenue perspective have been amazing," Belvedere Young says. "In a couple of regions, they went from a deficit of something like \$500,000 to within a year, they were in a positive \$250,000."

Much of what Prouty teaches its

clients is how to engage employees, which includes providing clear, constructive feedback and acknowledging work well done. "You get work done through people," Belvedere Young notes. "If your people aren't giving that extra effort, it doesn't advance your business."

Seems obvious enough. So why do companies need an outside leadership consultant such as the Prouty Project? Belvedere Young says that its clients often see that what it is teaching is largely common sense, "but it's not common practice." The stress of modern work life is one reason, she says-when people's plates are loaded to overflowing, common courtesy often gets lost. In addition, there are cultural and societal norms in organizations that "prohibit people from being genuine." In short, so-called soft skills aren't valued as much as the "harder" analytical skills. But more and more, leaders need both.

Gayle Hayhurst, vice president of human resources for Bloomington-based Schwan's Home Service, Inc., began working with the Prouty Project in April 2012 for help with strategic planning and building team effectiveness. The business unit's leadership team was a mix of new and longer-tenured employees; it was also looking ahead to a coming brand transformation. Hayhurst touts a "good combination of realistic facilitation and experiential learning." The results so far? An "increase in employee engagement," faster decision making, and improved employee retention.

Belvedere Young sums up the Prouty Project's key selling point this way: "'Your leadership style is impacting the growth and profitability of your organization. Because you directly impact your employees, who directly impact your customers.' When you look at it this way," she adds, "the soft stuff is really the hard stuff." —Gene Rebeck

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A Clear, Cloudy Forecast

Virteva helps IT customers manage their data, wherever it goes.

t the end of the last millennium, Tom Kieffer was one of the leaders of the emerging Twin Cities IT scene. Since then, that scene has changed—and Kieffer has changed his business with it. His St. Louis Parkbased company, Virteva, Inc., is guiding its clientele—midsize businesses, along with a few larger ones—into a world where "IT is getting personal" and decentralized, Kieffer says. More and more essential business data is being moved away from "on-prem" (that is, on-site), servers not only onto the cloud but onto employees' personal devices.

"IT is all part of who each of us is," Kieffer says. What's more, "people want to get to their stuff from wherever they are." But as IT becomes more consumerized through smartphones, laptops, and tablets, and as these devices interconnect with company data systems, security risks grow. Businesses, especially smaller ones with smaller tech departments, have less control over where their data goes. Helping businesses manage those risks is where Kieffer and Virteva have found success.

That success didn't come overnight. Virteva grew out of Agiliti, Inc., the business Kieffer sold in 2005 to VeriCenter (since acquired by Houstonbased SunGard). Agiliti anticipated that business software would increasingly become an as-you-need-it business. Companies could "rent" software over the Internet rather than own it, which would translate into lower IT costs.

"We were, oh, 10 years too early," Kieffer says, "although we ultimately did make a success out of Agiliti out of what I'd now call the legacy hosting model, where we would take people's servers, put them into our data center, and manage them. That was a big step toward where we are today around what we would call cloud IT: the



concept that you can buy what you need more or less on demand."

VeriCenter found that it didn't need Agiliti's IT consulting group and spun it off. That became the genesis of Virteva, which focused on consulting during its first three to four years. Over time, says Kieffer, who became Virteva's CEO in 2009, "there was this steady inflow of people saying, 'I'm having trouble with my tablet, I'm having trouble with my smartphone, my laptop computer, whatever.' It finally occurred to us that they were all defining the same problem."

Kieffer defines the current evolving IT model as "the three clouds." Cloud one—what most people think of as "the cloud"—sits on servers owned by the likes of Google, Amazon, and Rackspace. Cloud two consists of software offered over the Internet as services think of Salesforce.com and Google apps. The third "cloud" is the interconnectivity provided by devices.

These days, about half of Virteva's revenue mix comes from all three clouds. This consists of providing

managed services, where Virteva provides "some type of outsourcing" managing all or part of the customer's IT set-up. The rest comes from IT consulting projects, mostly for midsize to large enterprises.

"We target what we think is a really big gap in the marketplace—a big opporwtunity," Kieffer says. "If you think about the IT services marketplace as an inverted bell curve, on one end you have very small providers serving typically smaller companies ... On the other end, you have the very big—EDS, IBM, Accenture, those kinds of companies—serving the very big. And in the middle, very few providers that are targeted at serving what I'll characterize as being 200 to, say, 3,000 users."

Kieffer terms one of Virteva's key outsourcing offerings "SelectSourcing"—in short, handling just one or two of a company's IT needs. As Kieffer puts it: "Hey, you're tired of taking out the trash? We'll come in and take out the trash." Over time, he adds, "we might wash your dishes and walk your dog." This contrasts with the old outsourcing model, as Kieffer describes it: "If we can't run the whole thing, we can't help you."

Virteva's larger, highprofile customers include Minnetonka-based hospitality and travel giant Carlson and the *Star Tribune*. Among its midsize clients is Eden Prairie– based MakeMusic, Inc., a music technology company whose products include Finale music notation software and Smart-Music interactive software, which has outsourced its email administration to Virteva.

"Our core competency is building software projects, not running email," MakeMusic Chief Technology Officer Paul Carlson says. "I've been trying to move anything that's not a core competency outside to trusted partners." Anything that's more of a "commodity service" gets outsourced, he says. Virteva now also handles MakeMusic's desktop support; Rackspace handles its cloud computing. Virteva, Carlson says, has "been great. We've done a lot of good things together."

Kieffer sees more good things ahead for Virteva. "Frankly, if Virteva were just another IT consulting company, that wouldn't be very interesting to me," he says. "I'm an engineer, I'm an innovator; I like to be able to jump in and help shape things. We have the opportunity to change how IT is delivered in the marketplace." —Gene Rebeck



What does it take to become a **pop star**?

originality + enthusiasm

A decade after Angie and Dan Bastian began popping kettle corn in their Mankato, MN garage, Angie's Kettle Corn has grown from a cottage business into a signature brand distributed in thousands of stores nationwide. What's the secret to their success? Angie says, "a focus on fun, great taste, customer service and smart growth strategy." In 2011, the Bastian's teamed with a private equity fund to develop new products and expand nationwide, and turned to Lindquist & Vennum to lead them through the investment process. As the transaction progressed, Lindquist attorneys leveraged their deep experience in working with private equity investors to guide the Bastians toward a more efficient tax structure, allowing them to realize their growth plans and position Angie's Kettle Corn as one of the snack food industry's brightest brands.

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By Steve Kaplan

Morticians are readying for a surge in deaths as they provide new ways to say goodbye.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT MORE PEOPLE ARE DYING. AND THE FUNERAL BUSINESS NEEDS SOME GOOD NEWS.

From 1986 to 2006, funeral home profit margins declined by almost 50 percent, according to the Federated Funeral Directors of America. Reasons for this include a significant increase in lower-margin cremation services, changing demographics, and the changing mores of the baby boom generation. Yet these last two factors also hold the promise of rejuvenated business that could start beginning next year.

The demographic influences are clear: People are living longer than ever before. The death rate is now 43 percent lower than it was in 1960, with the average American living to 78 years old. In Minnesota, age-adjusted deaths have fallen 11 percent just since 2000, from 754 deaths per thousand to 671 deaths per thousand. That's a lot of clients funeral directors are not getting—yet.

No funeral director wants to appear morbidly joyful about the flood of deaths in the near future, but they all understand that there's a windfall coming soon. Boomers represent almost 30 percent of the population, about 78 million Americans. And when boomers begin their heavenly ascent, they're going to be doing it in numbers rarely seen before in this country.

But they're not going to ascend the way their parents did, and that means that competition has finally arrived in an industry that has never before had to deal with it. While this has complicated the lives of many funeral directors and slashed their bottom lines, it has brought opportunities for a new generation of funeral entrepreneurs.

A LIVELIER WAY TO GO

Larry Willwerscheid is a fourth-generation funeral director. With his cousin Steve, he owns two funeral homes in St. Paul, and one in West St. Paul. John Adam Willwerscheid, their great-grandfather, started the business in 1886 to serve St. Paul's German population. "Thirty years ago," he says, "funerals used to be all the same. Everyone had a limousine, they had one visitation the night before and one at the funeral home the day before," he says. "Today, people do what they want, rather than the standard thing." And that significantly affects the bottom line.

"When my dad was in the business, every



Sue Kruskopf and Nancy Bush run MyWonderfulLife.com, a web-based business that allows you to plan your send-off, from the details of your memorial service to designing your own headstone.

funeral was a traditional one. Back then a fullservice funeral would have cost between \$2,000 and \$3,000 [in 1980s dollars]. But those funerals were expensive and I don't think people today see the value in a \$10,000 funeral [in today's dollars]," Willwerscheid says. One key difference between then and now is that there were few available alternatives to a full funeral. Today, cremation has increasingly become an acceptable, and increasingly popular, lower-cost option.

"People who are looking at cremation are looking for something simpler than a traditional burial," says Kevin Waterston, who, with his brother, owns and operates the Cremation Society of Minnesota. Not least, though, people are looking for something cheaper than a traditional burial, which in Minnesota averages about \$6,500 a shot. The Waterstons charge \$1,395 for the average cremation, a process that eliminates the need for a burial plot, a vault, a casket, a limousine and the other paraphernalia of the traditional funeral. Not that there is any universal funeral ritual these days.

"You'll always need ritual, but the type of ritual is changing as the baby boomers reshape what a ritual means," says Angela Woosley, a teaching specialist at the University of Minnesota's School of Mortuary Science.

More and more, she says, boomers want to create their own funeral rituals, and funeral homes are scrambling to catch up and stay current. On the way out is the funeral where the only speaker is the member of the clergy running the service. Today it's just as common for friends and family to speak at funerals. Rock and roll and other kinds of pop music are replacing dirges and classical music. Video monitors or television sets play memorial videos as attendees enter. And the traditional postfuneral luncheon run by the ladies of the church is being taken over by funeral homes themselves. Willwerscheid, for example, has converted a

DEATH YOUR WAY

Personalization has taken some exotic turns in the memorialization business. A few decades ago, you died, you had a gravestone or a crypt, and that was it. Today, that gravestone can show photos and videos of the deceased, and even have a recording of the deceased's voice you can listen to. You can have your cremated remains mixed with gunpowder and turned into fireworks for a very flashy last show. There are companies that will arrange a burial at sea, and there's at least one that will launch your remains in a rocket, either to orbit the Earth (for \$5,300) or land on the moon (\$12,500). For \$17,000, a suburban Chicago company called LifeGem will compress your remains into a .75-carat diamond or other jewel. Another company mixes the deceased's remains with concrete and plans to use that as building material for Atlantis, a small city it wants to construct under the Pacific Ocean. *—S. K.*



chapel in each of its homes to a gathering place where lunch can be served.

"Funerals have moved closer to a celebration of a person's life than of their death," Woosley says. "There's a personalization that's taking place at funerals. Heavy velvet curtains and candles are out, replaced with a brighter décor. I've heard of an ice cream social reception after the service, and having classic cars from the decedent's collection parked in front of the church. One person who owned a towing company had seven of those huge tow trucks parked outside his funeral. In Forest Lake they held a funeral for a person who loved playing bingo, so at the reception they had little bingo cards and cardstampers as a centerpiece on the table."

This kind of personalization can follow through to the presentation of the deceased themselves. "My first arrangement, we buried the person in Mickey Mouse ears because she was a big Mickey Mouse fan," Woosley says, "I've heard of many people being buried in Vikings or other sports team jackets."

New technologies are moving in to fulfill baby boomer desires. For the ecologically minded who want a "green" funeral, there are several options, including last rites without metal caskets, vaults, or even embalming. Bradford Funeral Home in Stillwater is the second mortuary in the nation to offer alkaline hydrolysis as a body disposition method. That process reduces the body to bones and a sterile liquid that can be disposed of in the wastewater stream. Though that might sound rather macabre, consider these statistics from the Green Burial Council: Traditional U.S. burial disposal methods consume 90,000 tons of metal, 1.6 million tons of concrete, and 800,000 gallons of formaldehyde-based embalming fluids, which are dumped into the environment each year.

Green consciousness isn't the only modern influence on how funerals are conducted. Like almost every other category of business, the death business has been buffeted by the changes wrought by digital technology. "Baby boomers are very savvy consumers, and they use the web to shop around for everything," Woosley says. With that has come plummeting prices for almost everything, from the funeral itself to the cost of caskets and flowers.

But the web has changed more than the way we shop for funerals. Facebook has created a "memorialization" page to keep the loved one's Facebook site online. A service called Eternal Voicemail (evidently we can't escape voicemail, even in heaven) keeps the deceased's last voicemail message on line, and anyone can call in and even leave messages. There are grief recovery webinars, automatic shiva reminders for Jewish mourners, and, for about \$500, a funeral can be streamed live, online, to the other side of the world.

THE DISCOUNTER

>VERLIN STOLL, Crescent Tide Funeral Home, St. Paul

Traditionally, funeral home directors are in the business because it's the family business. This was good, because it allowed funeral homes to maintain longstanding traditions. This was bad, however, because funeral homes maintained high prices attached to those longstanding traditions.

Verlin Stoll saw this as his opening. He decided to become a mortician not because he particularly wanted to help people—though he does—but because he saw it as a beautiful business opportunity: the chance to become the Target of the funeral industry.

"I knew even before I went to college that funeral homes were charging more than they had to," Stoll says. After studying the business of funeral homes at the University of Minnesota's School of Mortuary Science, he was convinced he could successfully introduce a low-cost alternative to the local market. Early this year, he opened Crescent Tide, which offers prices so low it's made him the dartboard photo of other local morticians. For a simple cremation, he charges \$750—about half of that charged by the Cremation Society. For a full funeral?



A business with life (left to right): Bradley Royce and his hand-crafted funerary urns; Larry Willwerscheid of Willwerscheid Funeral Home in the east metro; a \$17,000 LifeGem .75-carat diamond ring containing the compressed remains of some lucky jewelry buff; Lisa and Verlin Stoll of Crescent Tide Funeral Home, one the area's biggest funeral discounters.



"We charge \$1,650, and most other funeral homes charge more like \$4,000 and up," Stoll says.

How does he do it? Not all that differently than any other discount operation. "We don't have the overhead of a big building or a big chapel or offstreet parking," Stoll says. "And our philosophy is different. I figured out how much we needed to charge at the small scale at which we wanted to work, and from there I figured out how much we needed to charge to make it work, not how much we could charge."

Stoll says that during his first three months in business, he averaged about 55 "cases" a month, enough to keep him in the black. And word of mouth is only now starting to build. While all that is making him popular with clients who are happy with a pared-down funeral at a greatly pared-down price, it's not raising his popularity with his fellow Twin Cities funeral professionals.

"We're not actually getting blacklisted," he says. "But I'm just sort of an outcast, I guess." 651-315-8214, CrescentTide.com

THE ARTIST

>BRAD ROYCE, Bradley Royce Funerary Urns Brad Royce has been a fixture on the local art scene for the past few decades. But it wasn't until he started making elaborate flower boxes that he inadvertently became part of the funeral industry.

"I was working on these flower boxes and decided to put feet on them. And after I did that, I decided they were not just boxes, but that they looked like funerary urns," he says. "That was not something I started out to do, but that's how it worked out."

Royce made his first sale to a friend whose father had just died and been cremated. Since then he has been selling the urns at art shows and, especially, online. He hand-carves them and paints them white, which sell for \$450, or in colors, which can go for up to \$3,500.

Royce considers making the urns an important task; the urns are far more than something that just contains the remains of the deceased. "I want to make a symbolic piece," he says, "for both the living and the deceased, which will memorialize the significance of a person's life and its connections to others."

612-362-9190, bradleyroycefuneraryurns.com

THE CARPENTER

>MIKE ZOFF, Affordable Coffins and Artery, St. Paul

Mike Zoff's family ran a funeral home, but Zoff chose to pursue other paths, most recently selling real estate. "But about two and a half years ago," he says, "my sister-in-law died and I was asked to make the arrangements. Even though I was familiar with the subject matter, I was astounded at the increasing costs families must endure to bury their loved ones."

So with the real estate market in the doldrums, Zoff decided to change careers and do something about those high costs. "I made it my mission to provide a sturdy, dignified, and reasonably priced coffin," he says, "for the many people who wonder why they should throw thousands of dollars into something that's just going into the ground." Zoff's basic coffin is made of ¾-inch plywood and sells for \$295. His most expensive design goes for \$425; a commercially available higher-end coffin can sell for several thousands of dollars and up.

"I may sell them inexpensively," he says, "but they're not made cheaply. At this point, I'm a oneman show: I control all my costs, I run my shop, and all the labor to make the coffins is mine."

So far, with virtually no marketing, Zoff is selling two or three caskets a week. With his low overhead, that's enough to keep him in the black. Eventually he'd like to expand his business to a line of metal caskets that he says will appeal to more conventional clients. He plans to open a few more stores in the next year or two. "Low-cost services like mine are a fastgrowing segment of the business."

651-208-6902, affordable coffinsandartery.com

THE VISIONARIES

>SUE KRUSKOPF and NANCY BUSH, MyWonderfulLife.com Sue Kruskopf, a partner in Minneapolis advertising agency Kruskopf Coontz, and her pal Nancy Bush, an ad salesperson, can discourse for hours about funerals and end-of-life rituals. And while that may not make for sparkling cocktail party chatter, that knowledge is vital to their efforts to serve baby boomers looking for a new approach to death.

Kruskopf and Bush run MyWonderfulLife.com, a site that dispenses information about funerals, ranging from the slightly off-the-

wall—a list, for example, of "Our 10 Favorite Funeral Favors," includes such funeral gift-bag suggestions as custom DVDs, wristbands, and recipe books—to the sublime, including research on funeral options from around the country. Mostly, though, the site offers a practical way to organize your post-death wishes. There's a place to leave letters to loved ones; a record of all your important information, such as bank accounts and a will; a place to detail who you want to get your meaningful possessions; and information about how you'd like your funeral to be run, including music, favorite literature, and even the option to design your own headstone.

It all started when Bush lost her husband about six years ago. She wanted a beautiful goodbye service for him, and so she and



*As of 2007 (latest numbers available). Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and National Funeral Directors Association.



Angela Woosley of the University of Minnesota's School of Mortuary Science.

Kruskopf "pulled together an incredible celebration of his life," Bush says. Though they didn't know it then, they were on the leading edge of baby boomer funerals.

"Friends came up to us after the funeral, and told us they thought it was phenomenal, more like a celebration than a funeral," Kruskopf recalls. "And with feedback like that, people telling us 'I want to have a funeral just like that," we started to think we might be onto something."

So they began researching the subject and discovered that while 70 percent of baby boomers say they don't want a traditional funeral, they had no idea of what might be available as an alternative. That was irresistible bait to the entrepreneurs.

The website has been operating since 2008 and has more than 11,000 members. It's free, and part of the fun for the two women has been to figure out how to monetize the enterprise. "Initially we were going to put advertising on it, until we realized it's a little too personal for advertising," Kruskopf says. "So we're looking at partnerships with a number of businesses, including co-branding opportunities for funeral homes. We're working with the insurance industry because people on the site ask how they can pre-pay." **TCB**

Steve Kaplan is a longtime contributor to TCB and former editor of Minnesota Law & Politics.



CREMATION: GROWTH OUT OF ASHES

The growth of cremation in Minnesota can be traced largely to the entrepreneurial vision of the Waterston brothers. In 1980, when Kevin Waterston and his brother took over their father's funeral home, only 8 percent of Minnesotans chose cremation. But the Waterstons saw a change coming. Long before cremations were common, they began widely advertising their cremation business as a funeral option. It started slowly.

"In 1980, our first year in the cremation business, we were doing maybe 10 or 12 cremations a year," Kevin Waterston says. "We thought we could make it simple for people to prepay for their cremation and so we created the Cremation Society of Minnesota. We advertised heavily on radio, TV, and the newspapers, and we still do." It worked better and faster than the Waterstons ever imagined. This year more Minnesotans choose cremation than choose burial. And 20 percent of those that choose cremation opt to do it through the Waterstons' Cremation Society. –*S. K.*



19

S mall-business owners have a taste for adventure. They have to: Pursuing risks that don't guarantee rewards can be something of an extreme sport, capitalist division. That said, the storytellers on the following pages didn't pursue risk for risk's sake. They saw smart opportunities and their risks were calculated—whether the chance taken was starting a business from scratch, expanding a product line, improving processes and work flow, grasping an idea that no one else seemed to see, or simply pushing themselves to provide a product or service better than anyone else. They also persevered through countless surprises and setbacks—one faced flood and wind powerful enough to daunt almost anyone. These 10 tales offer lessons learned, and inspiration. Share the adventure.

LOSINNIW

THE HONOREES

Manufacturing: STEINWALL, INC. Specialty Retail: CHUCK & DON'S PET FOOD OUTLET Transportation: KOTTKE TRUCKING, INC. Residential Real Estate: RENTERS WAREHOUSE Brewing: COLD SPRING BREWING COMPANY Health Care IT: VIRTELLIGENCE Brewing: SUMMIT BREWING COMPANY Manufacturing: FELLING TRAILERS, INC. Health Care IT: HEALTHLAND Health Care: WATSON CHIROPRACTIC AND EXCEPTIONAL HOME HEALTH

ABRANCE

Photos by Sara Rubinstein



SUMMIT

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SUMMIT BREWING CO.

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mit Brewing Co., St. Paul, Mis

Twenty-six years ago, Mark Stutrud founded Summit Brewing in a small storefront in St. Paul. It's now one of the nation's top regional breweries—and the forebear of the current craft beer boom in the Twin Cities.

Read his story on page 42

16 CO.



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MANUFACTURING

The Human Element

Injection molding company Steinwall, Inc., uses technology to embrace, not replace, its work force.

anufacturing companies deal with a lot of fixed costs—costs that can weigh heavily upon them in an economic downturn. "The recession brought us to our knees," says Maureen Steinwall, president and CEO of Coon Rapids—based plastic injection molding company Steinwall, Inc. She credits surviving those three years of financial hardship to luck and trust. "A lot of my peers that didn't make it were craftsmen, not businessmen," she notes. In her case, however, bankers trusted her because of her accounting background, customers trusted their relationship, and the "humanistic culture" of the workplace meant that employees trusted her, even during layoffs, to be open about what was going on.

Though she labels the experience painful and scary, the company is now safely on the other side, growing at 25 percent last year and 15 percent this year. The company has 48 injection presses that provide products for market segments including agricultural, electronic, computer, medical, appliance, recreation, and consumer goods. Customers include John Deere, Itron, Frigidaire/Electrolux, and Bosch International.

In fact, Steinwall is even trying to slow the company's growth, since growing too fast often requires "resetting processes and procedures." Typically, in manufacturing, "any time a human action is implemented into an input or output process, that is the point of error," Steinwall explains. While other companies may focus on what she calls "hard technology," such as automated factories with robotics and equipment, it's not always financially feasible for smaller companies unless there are high product volumes. Steinwall also focuses on "soft technology"—namely, the human element.

To help minimize those points of error, Steinwall's company has developed a knowledge management system, educating engineers by presenting tasks in a multimedia fashion to best help people learn. "Years ago, a craftsman took their whole career to learn," Steinwall says. "We don't have that luxury. The goal is to take anybody, regardless of language or intellect, with basic mechanical competence, and get them to become a skilled craftsman in a short period."

One element of this knowledge management system is the multimedia work instructions used in training and installed at most workstations. Dating back to 1998, the company initially used video and original artwork, but the process was slow and expensive. The company jumped on the change to acquire new technology with the introduction of the iPad in January 2010. Now Steinwall, Inc., has 50 iPads equipped with video, photos, and responsive PowerPoint presentations that inform and educate workers about each of the presses. Employees can fast-forward, select specific segments, and stop by any station to refresh their memory. For new employees, the company

also produces video segments called Orient Me, which serve as training tools.

Maureen Steinwall, whose father founded the company, joined as a vice president in 1983 after earning an MBA at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management. She expressed interest in being "on the manufacturing floor," but manufacturing was an unfriendly industry for women. When she assumed the role of president in 1985, many employees and customers quit, citing her gender as a major issue. That didn't faze her, and in the long run, the company wasn't hurt. Almost two decades later, Steinwall continues to grow, bringing in \$19 million in revenue in 2012.

One of the company's long-time customers is Eagan-based Itron, which produces gas, water, and electric meters with wireless solutions for the utility industry. Steinwall has been molding the parts that house the company's electronics for 18 years. "Our relationship with Steinwall has grown over the years because Steinwall brings the technical expertise, innovative solutions, customer support, and competitive pricing that Itron needs," says Kent DeLong, Itron's purchasing manager.

Maureen Steinwall's goal is to reach \$50 million in revenue within 10 years. She eventually hopes to develop an employee stock option plan, as well as increase the growth of compensation per person by as much as 50 percent, while keeping a low headcount.

Steinwall still sees opportunity in manufacturing to improve management: "Job enrichment, community that's what makes people feel wealthy," she says.

Steinwall, Inc. Location: Coon Rapids • Founded: 1965 Employees: 150 • 2012 projected revenue: \$19 million

SPECIALTY RETAIL A Community for Companions

Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlet grew from one to 23 stores in 22 years by selling quality food in a man's-best-friendly retail environment.

huck Anderson and Don Tauer invested \$250 in 1990 to start their pet supply store, Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlet, building upon many years spent owning a kennel and training dogs. The partners' original Eagan shop has grown into a chain of 23 stores in Minnesota and Colorado, grounded in their vision to create a place that makes pets and their humans happy.

Anderson and Tauer, along with President and CEO Robert Hartzell, established a community of animal lovers who enjoy shopping where everyone knows their pet's name. (Tauer retired in 2002.) That means developing well-organized and brightly lit stores-not low-price warehouses-staffed with people who love animals and are given license to spend as much time with customers as they need, answering detailed questions, taking special orders, and pampering customers' pets.

"We have found that the better experience we can give them—if they come to my store and get everything they want and we treat you right-[they] become a customer for life," says Anderson of his Mahtomedi-based company. In keeping with the friendly, local feel, Chuck & Don's stores are "not in the big malls," Anderson adds. "We're in their neighborhoods and we can supply them with what they want."

Hartzell thinks the underlying secret of Chuck & Don's is its mission to be a premium pet store. The leadership team knew their stores couldn't compete on price against the larger chains. Instead, Chuck & Don's concentrates on creating an experience for loyal customers.

Chuck & Don's works to retain its customers through Friends of Chuck, a loyalty program that awards them with Chuck's Bucks rebates based on their spending in the previous quarter. The company also sends out a quarterly newsletter to customers, the Barkin' Mews, which comes loaded with articles, coupons, and "animal community" news. More frequent buyers become a "good" or "best friend" of Chuck and get extra rebates and coupons. "It's been our position that the best customers get the best deal," Anderson says. "If you're going to be a repeat customer, it will be worth your while."

Through these efforts, Chuck & Don's expanded from its first store to 18 throughout the Twin Cities. In 2011 and 2012, the company opened five stores in the Denver metro area. aiming to grow its Colorado market to a network of 20 to 30 stores, says Hartzell, an entrepreneur who joined the company in 1996 and bought out Tauer's portion of the business in 2002. Hartzell attended college in Denver, and family members in Colorado suggested that Chuck & Don's would fly in the pet-loving community.

Chuck & Don's weathered the recession nicely, with high double-digit percentage growth each year. Revenue in 2011 was \$32 million, and it will hit nearly \$40 million in 2012. Part of that success, Anderson says, stems from cultivating customers who understand that high-quality dog food saves them money in the long run because their pets are healthier; regulars also receive rebates and coupons.

"We're the Starbucks of

the industry by providing good-quality products and super service at a good, fair, competitive price," Hartzell says. "We also have a strong loyalty program where 80 percent of the people who come in the store give us their name and address to become Friends of Chuck's."

Rhonda Littlefield, regional sales manager for American Distribution in Cottage Grove, which has been supplying Chuck & Don's since it opened its doors, praises Chuck & Don's employees for their knowledge and service, answering their questions about pet care and placing special orders if there's an item they want that the store doesn't carry. "I think they found really good locations for customers, their customer service is outstanding, and that's why they continue to beat the big guys," she says. "They are really particular about the folks they hire to run those stores, and their stores are just beautiful. They are super-clean and organized and it makes you want to shop there."

Hartzell and Anderson plan to grow Chuck & Don's presence in Minnesota and add more stores in Denver to hit a total of 30 locations by 2015. They're also looking at expanding into other Midwestern cities.

Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlet Location: Mahtomedi Founded: 199 Employees: 250 2012 projected revenue: \$38 million









By Ingrid Case

Keeping Cool

Good values and good service helped food hauler Kottke Trucking, Inc., grow throughout the recession.

I t's not that Kottke Trucking didn't feel the recession. But the Buffalo Lake-based company primarily hauls food, says Senior Vice President Mike Udermann, and "two or three times a day, people eat."

That insulated Kottke from the worst of the downturn. Though it did offer some large and long-term clients reduced prices, Kottke consistently grew throughout the recession. Kottke had 62 trucks and annual revenue near \$10 million in 2006. In 2008, it had 82 trucks and annual revenue of about \$15 million. By 2010, it was running 92 trucks and earning approximately \$13 million. This year, the firm has 110 trucks and annual revenue near \$21 million.

The other reason for the company's growth? "Quite honestly, we're good at what we do," Udermann says.

Founded in 1938, Kottke specializes in shipping foods that need to be kept refrigerated or frozen. It works for large food manufacturers and distributors including Hormel, Otis Spunkmeyer, and Schwan's Ice Cream, many of which have been clients for 20 to 30 years. The firm's trucks deliver in a 30-state core region that includes Ohio, Florida, Kentucky, New Mexico, and the entire Midwest.

Price is important in Kottke's business, but it's not always the top consideration. Kottke's clients, Udermann says, ship goods that require storage temperatures as low as 30 degrees below zero—the proper shipping temperature for ice cream—so it's crucial that they hire shipping companies that run quality, well-maintained equipment. It's disastrous when a truck breaks down on the road, leaving a shipment melting or rotting.

A good shipper also picks up and drops off loads on time. Goods don't sit on loading docks for hours or arrive at facilities that don't have room to stock them.

Kottke understands his company's needs, says Garrett McSwain, director of transportation at Dayton Freight Lines in Dayton, Ohio. Dayton hires Kottke to haul "everything you might see on a Walmart shelf," McSwain says, picking up and dropping off goods at distributors, stores, and shipping hubs that consolidate multiple loads.

Kottke does reliably good work for Dayton, McSwain says. "They understand our operation and can do what we need them to do. I could have 60 upset customers if they fail. We might have a late load here or there, but their service is outstanding."

Good service depends in part on reliable truckers. Kottke has invested in a stable, qualified staff and works to keep them, Udermann says. "Being a longhaul trucker isn't the easiest job in the world," he notes. "We meet with our board of drivers three to four times a year to understand their challenges on the road and find out what we can do to make life easier for them."

Drivers appreciate jobs that let them see their families often,

so Kottke Trucking works to find assignments that send truckers home every night or close to it. The firm's Midwest location also helps keep workers on speaking terms with their families, because it serves as a conveniently located hub for trips that are shorter than they would be if they originated on either coast.

Kottke's dispatch management and on-the-road communications help truckers solve any problems that may come up during shipping or delivery. That helps them stick to their schedules while also keeping customers happy.

Any experienced trucker is a desirable employee, and Kottke Trucking finds that experienced Midwestern truckers are particularly in demand. Its location helps the company hire people "with Midwestern values and upbringing, people who work hard, take care, and value what they're doing," Udermann says.

That has obvious business value, and also appeals to Kottke's owners. The firm will celebrate 75 years as a family business this year. Duane and Connie Kottke ran it until 1996, when they sold it to their three sons. Kurt Kottke is president and CEO, Kory Kottke handles truck and trailer maintenance, and Kyle Kottke oversees financial, insurance, and safety issues.

Members of Kottke's next generation are in high school and college now. Their parents and grandparents hope they'll inherit both the business and the values behind it.

Kottke Trucking, Inc.

Location: Buffalo Lake • Founded: 1938 • Employees: 112 • 2012 projected revenue: \$21 million

By Suzy Frisch



Making the Rent

Renters Warehouse helps property owners profitably manage their leased holdings.

In just five years, Brenton Hayden took his idea to help new real estate investors land renters and turned it into Minnesota's largest residential property-management companies. Age 21 when he started Renters Warehouse, Hayden's company now manages more than 3,600 properties across the country, and he expects continued strong growth as he franchises the business nationwide.

Hayden was a laid-off sales rep for Kellogg's in Minne-

sota when he decided to get into real estate. Working as a broker's agent, he devised a plan to target novice real estate investors, assisting them with finding qualified renters for their properties. There were few businesses offering this service, and Hayden thought he could add a new twist by dumping traditional classified ads for Internet spots.

"The marketplace was catering to real estate investors, and I wanted to cater to everyday property owners—the ones who couldn't sell or who inherited Grandma's house," Hayden says. "I'll help [property owners] lease it."

By placing ads online, handling background checks, and completing showings, Hayden quickly found renters. Just as quickly, he built a network of satisfied customers who began referring others to Hayden. He asked for one month's rent as payment when he landed a tenant. Soon Hayden was leasing 25 to 30 homes each month, bringing in \$50,000 a month. It was time to formally launch Golden Valley–based Renters Warehouse in 2007. Hayden spent \$79 on his Renters Warehouse website, where he listed rental properties. Less than a year into his business, clients started asking Hayden if he also would manage their properties. He figured, "Why not?" The company's management services include collecting rent and maintaining properties.

Hayden has grown Renters Warehouse through innovative offerings for property owners, including a nine-month tenant warranty. If a tenant placed by Renters Warehouse doesn't work out or moves, the company will find a new renter for free. And in contrast with competitors, clients don't pay a retainer fee to Renters Warehouse (they pay on a renter-by-renter basis), and they don't have to sign exclusive agreements.

Before long, Hayden was adding agents to keep up with demand, and the company today has grown to 32 agents. Along with 63 other employees they have helped Renters Warehouse complete \$1.5 billion in real estate transactions. The company landed at 787 on Inc. magazine's list of the 5,000 fastest-growing businesses in the country. Renters Warehouse is on track to bring in \$7 million in 2012. In 2011, the company's revenues were \$4 million; in 2010, \$1.9 million.

Hayden attributes the company's rapid growth to its distinctive selling points for property owner clients, such as \$100,000 in property damage protection and a guaranteed rent program for the first six months of a lease. He also publicized Renters Warehouse by advertising heavily on the radio in areas across the country where the company has franchises. Renters Warehouse market research determined that 70 percent of its customers were white, male conservative Republicans between 34 and 55 years old. To reach that demographic, Hayden lined up Glenn Beck as one of his first spokespeople in 2009. Another spokesman is real estate agent and TV personality Josh Altman from Bravo's *Million Dollar Listing*, who appeals to a younger, hipper audience.

After Renters Warehouse aligned with Beck, the company made \$1 million off of his endorsement. Continually getting out the company's name is critically important because it constantly needs to attract fresh renters and new clients. And once clients opt for Renters Warehouse they generally stick around, to the tune of a 98 percent retention rate, Hayden says.

Reggie Brown, CEO of AllPropertyManagement .com, a property management lead-generation business based in Seattle, says Hayden tapped into demand from property owners who needed help renting their homes after the real estate market crashed. "He saw this opportunity and he executed on it with a number of great ideas that aren't being used in the market," Brown says. "He has a great sense for ideas and opportunities, and more importantly, he developed a way to put them in place more successfully than any of his competitors. He's taken a lot of market share."

The engine for future growth comes from franchising, which Renters Warehouse started in full force this year. The company currently has locations in Arizona, Colorado, Maryland, and Georgia.



Renters Warehouse Location: Golden Valley • Founded: 2007 Employees: 63 • 2012 projected revenue: \$7 million

Fresh Suds

Cold Spring Brewing refreshes its old business with new craft beers.

uring nearly a century and half in business in the small city near St. Cloud whose name it bears, Cold Spring Brewing Company has seen plenty of ups and downs. It's now enjoying a strong upswing, thanks to its recent foray into craft brewing.

In terms of production, Cold Spring is one of Minnesota's largest breweries-the company projected production of more than 100,000 barrels in 2012, which puts it not far behind the state's biggest brewers, Summit and August Schell. Most of what it brews, however, is contract production for other beverage firms. Its own brands make up about one-quarter of its total production. In the past few years it also has seen a growing business in nonalcoholic beverages, including energy drinks and sparkling juices.

A few years ago, Cold Spring saw a new opportunity—craft beer, the one beer category that has seen real growth in the past few years. But to succeed, the company had to position itself to succeed.

A previous effort to strengthen the company was its reintroduction several years back of an old name in Minnesota brewing, Gluek. It wasn't a success. In the words of Doug DeGeest, vice president and general manager, Gluek's beer "was mediocre at best," often tasting grainy and sour. Operating with ancient equipment in dire need of an upgrade, De-Geest and his team approached owner John Lenore to make their case for investing in a new brewing plant.

Lenore, a California-based distributor of beverages and snacks, bought Cold Spring in 2000 to add a brewery to his holdings. Lenore told DeGeest to hop right on the project, ultimately earmarking \$14 million on a new brewhouse. According to DeGeest, Lenore said, "We don't want to produce anything mediocre. We're one of the best in the country on the nonalcoholic side, and I want to be one of the best in the country on the beer side, too."

Cold Spring also decided that it needed to create an entirely new brand, one with no connection to Gluek's or even its long-time eponymous brand. The Cold Spring brand suffered from a bad reputation and has all but disappeared in Minnesota, though it still sells in big cities on both coasts. Cold Spring decided to give the new operation its own brand-Third Street Brewhouse, named after a street that formerly ran through its property. In 2011, Cold Spring tore down an administration building to make way for the 18,000-square-foot brewhouse facility and stocked it with top-of-the-line equipment. DeGeest also recruited as his director of brewing Horace Cunningham, a former brewmaster at Summit.

Third Street started making its three initial beers this summer—a cream ale, a brown ale, and a black India pale ale (IPA), as well as a 75-barrel batch of a seasonal autumn ale. (Other seasonals will be produced.) So far, the results have exceeded Cold Spring's projections. "We've sold more beer in four months and with better margins than we've ever done before in the past 12 years," DeGeest says.

Since July, Cold Spring has sold more than 25,000 cases of Third Street, well on its way to hitting a goal to sell 100,000 cases in its first year. It helps that Cold Spring improved its existing beers by brewing them with better ingredients and in smaller batches, DeGeest notes.

In addition to its craft beer,





part of Third Street's success comes from building excitement through brewery tours, beer festivals, and bar tastings.

Cold Spring can ask forand receive-higher price points for Third Street. Gluek's sold for about \$8.99 for a 24pack, while the new brews sell for roughly \$8.99 a six-pack. Third Street beers are on tap in 50 bars in central Minnesota, compared with zero a year ago for Gluek's and Northern, a lager Cold Spring developed primarily for the Midwestern market when it discontinued Gluek's in 2010. Thanks to Third Street and the capacity Cold Spring added to make the brand's beers, DeGeest projects 2013 production to jump to 170,000 barrels.

Third Street has been an easy sell for Bernick's, a fourth- and fifth-generation distributor based in St. Cloud. Though Bernick's has worked with Cold Spring for years, it particularly likes partnering with the company on its new beers and exceeding their shared sales goals. "They did it right," CEO Dean Bernick says. "They built a first-rate facility and they have the latest in technology."

In the future, Third Street/Cold Spring will reposition its Northern brand as a premium beer; it also will continue to produce contract beer, nonalcoholic drinks, and other beverages.

Cold Spring Brewing Company Location: Cold Spring Founded: 1874 Employees: 200 2012 projected revenue: not provided

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SUCC S T 0 201 TwinCiti

DIGITAL CURE Virtelligence Founder Akhtar Chaudri saw the opportunity in health care IT just after the dot-com bubble burst.



By Fran Howard

Health Care IT Health Forward

Virtelligence is on the cutting edge of health care automation an edge that legislation has sharpened.

ell before the federal government created incentives for health care providers to update their information technology systems, Akhtar Chaudri anticipated rapid growth in the IT health care space—as early as 2003, in fact. Having survived the bursting of the dot-com bubble, Chaudri recognized the need to focus the IT consulting and technology services company he founded in 1998, Virtelligence, on the next growth area-health care, primarily in the area of electronic health records.

"We became an early adopter of investing our time, money, and resources in a sector that was not glamorous," Chaudri says. "An IT department of a hospital is typically somewhere in the basement. Hospital revenues are typically invested in doctors and medical equipment, not IT."

That's changing. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, known more familiarly as the stimulus bill, provides a total of \$19 billion in incentives to health care providers that demonstrate a meaningful use of technology, which basically means adoption of electronic health record technologies. The Affordable Care Act (also known as "Obamacare") will begin providing incentives to health care organizations that can demonstrate positive patient outcomes sometime in the next few years, which will require sophisticated IT systems.

A vast majority of health care systems in the country don't have electronic patient records. X-rays and other images are still stored in large manila envelopes, and doctors and nurses are still using paper charts. While that might work (more or less) for the health care provider, it's not very functional for patients who move among systems as their insurance providers change. Sometimes even within the same system records are not transferred from one specialist to another, leading to wasted time, duplicate tests, and inefficiency, Chaudri says.

Though an early adopter, Virtelligence now has plenty of competition, notably Minnetonkabased United Healthcare. But the market is expanding. According to the federal government's Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information, more than 600 firms offer 1,700 certified electronic health record systems. A recent health IT report produced by Texas-based Mercom Capital notes the U.S. market for electronic health record software deployment in 2010 was \$15.8 billion. By 2014, Mercom Capital's report estimates, the market will grow to \$28.9 billion.

"Our sweet spot is hospitals with preferably over 200 beds," Chaudri notes. So far, Virtelligence has worked with more than 100 health care systems, many of them with more than one hospital. In Minnesota, Virtelligence's clients include Allina Health System, Fairview Health Services, Hennepin County Medical Center, and North Memorial Medical Center.

Virtelligence's 100 full-time salaried and 20 to 30 contract

employees advise their clients on building and implementing health IT solutions. According to Chaudri, Virtelligence consultants are certified in health care IT and have an average of 10 to 15 years of experience in health care and IT. Approximately one-third comes from clinical health backgrounds. Consultants provide a variety of services including project management and strategic guidance, system implementation and upgrades, building and configuration of systems, process redesign and optimization, system integration and reporting, and health IT training and support.

"Virtelligence saw the trends coming and read the tea leaves better than most," says David Miller, vice chancellor and chief information officer for medical sciences at the University of Arkansas. Miller, who has used Virtelligence on two projects, says that Virtelligence has some of the best talent for niche projects. "They are in the top tier of these types of companies," Miller adds.

Named one of the fastestgrowing 5,000 private companies in America in 2009 and 2012 by *Inc.* magazine and one of the top 100 health care IT companies by *Healthcare Informatics* magazine in 2008 and 2009, Virtelligence has shown a compound annual growth rate of more than 50 percent since 2009. The firm's revenues in 2011 topped \$21 million, and Chaudri anticipates annual revenues will soar to \$55 million to \$59 million by 2014.

Virtelligence

Location: Eden Prairie • Founded: 1998 • Employees: 100 full time, 20 to 30 contract 2012 projected revenue: \$27 million



The Brew That Grew

Craft beer's nothing new—Summit Brewing has been bottling and kegging it for a quarter-century.

o, Mark Stutrud didn't envision a brewery with the capacity to produce 240,000 barrels of beer when he started making Summit Extra Pale Ale in a storefront facility on St. Paul's University Avenue in 1986. Back then, the very idea of making a beer that bore little resemblance to Stroh's and Schmidt's, both made in St. Paul back then, was sufficient to qualify as wishful thinking.

"I was preoccupied with survival," Stutrud recalls. "There wasn't time to fantasize." In 1986, "there was no reference point for what we were doing," the North Dakota native says. "We were sodbusters."

Back then, craft beers were predominantly the domain of West Coast brewers, who arose from that region's production of fine wine. In the Midwest, "there wasn't a lot of craft brewing," notes Paul Gatza, director of the Brewers Association, an industry trade association based in Boulder, Colorado. "In a lot of ways, [Summit] was a pioneer in an area where there's a great brewing heritage."

These days, of course, Minnesota is drenched in craft beer, with a new brewery or brewpub seeming to open every month. But Stutrud was the grandfather of this new wave of high-end suds. Summit's longevity is founded in large part by its solid investment backing, and many of those investors remain. Stutrud also evangelized tirelessly to restaurants, bars, stores, and distributors to try his beer and then carry it. "We have three sets of customers that we have to nurture," he says: drinkers, distributors,

and retail outlets. Perhaps most important, he sought to produce beer that was not only distinctive but well-made.

"People will say, 'Oh yeah, Summit, they're really traditional and consistent,'" Stutrud says. "And we say, 'Well, thanks for noticing.' Because we've been busting our butt for 26 years doing exactly that. Because it's really damned hard to do."

His brewery is now considered a major regional operation, but Stutrud still projects a good-natured, down-to-earth camaraderie. Summit has built a large portfolio of craft beer products, all deeper and richer in flavor than the pale, watery coldies that dominate the market. But Stutrud is no snob; he loathes the snarkiness and in-crowd cool prevalent among beer geeks.

"At the end of the day, beer is a beverage for everybody," Stutrud says. Currently, craft beer occupies about 6 percent of the U.S. beer market; but it's the only beer category that has been growing in recent years. "We haven't reached a tipping point yet," he says. "Fifteen percent of total consumption is very reasonable."

Meeting that goal would require wooing drinkers from the massive triumvirate of Budweiser, Miller, and Coors. Stutrud doesn't see brewers of light American lagers as enemies. "It's easy for a little guy to say, 'Don't buy that yellow swill,'" Stutrud says. "But those folks [at Schmidt and Stroh] helped us. When we had a [quality-testing] laboratory the size of a Victorian closet, we were able to take samples of our beer to their labs to do analysis."

That said, he notes, "Our growth is based on effectively competing with the big boys."

Summit "isn't going to grow simply by commanding a larger presence within [craft beer's] 6 percent segment of beer sales," Stutrud says. "Eighty percent of the country's beer drinkers are still drinking light American lagers. That's the stark reality. But it's also an opportunity."

It's an opportunity Stutrud is positioning Summit to more firmly grasp. In 1998, the brewer moved into its shiny new facility just a few miles down West Seventh Street from the once mighty, now shuttered Schmidt plant. The new brewery gave Summit the opportunity to brew 60,000 barrels annually. At the time, the space seemed enormous. It doesn't now: The plant now produces 120,000 barrels a year. And with demand continuing to bubble-Summit has averaged 10 percent annual growth since it opened-the company's bursting at its concrete seams. Noting that his company has been rapidly paying down its mortgage, "I guess it's time to step up and go into debt again," Stutrud says with a hearty laugh. In mid-November,

Summit broke ground on a 7,600-square-foot addition that will double its current capacity. When completed in June, the new space will house 12 new brewing tanks, each of which will be twice the volume of the brewery's existing 24 tanks. There also be room for 12 more tanks, if needed which would give Summit the capability of brewing 360,000 barrels annually.

Stutrud is loath to take most of the credit for this growth. "Truly, this place is a testament to our customers," he says. "They're the folks who built this joint."

Summit Brewing Company Location: St. Paul • Founded: 1986 Employees: 60 full time, 12 part time 2012 projected revenue: more than \$20 million

Hard Times, Investment Times

Felling Trailers, Inc., used the recent downturn to position itself for the recovery.

Helling Trailers, Inc. makes trailers designed to move equipment, so it's not surprising that it was hit hard by 2009's sharp downturn in the construction industry.

As the recession began, the Sauk Centre company had about 100 employees and brought in around \$16 million in annual revenue, selling approximately 2,500 trailers every year. Until the recession, Felling Trailers had enjoyed continuous sales growth since CEO Merle Felling started the company in 1974.

While 2009 brought 38 percent lower sales, 2010 and 2011 rose again, both by about 40 percent. The company ended 2010 with 88 employees; it now has 214. The company projects its revenues to rise another 40 percent this year.

"The construction downturn was very tough for us," says Brenda Jennissen, the company's vice president of public relations and finance. The firm's saving grace, she says, was that it was "a little more diversified" than its competitors, with some trailers going to rentals, the agricultural industry, and utilities.

Rogers-based Scharber & Sons has been one source of diversified sales for Felling. Scharber sells trailers to farmers, contractors, and government agencies that want to haul lawn equipment, skid-steer loaders, and small excavators.

"We started selling their trailers in the mid-1980s, and it's been a happy relationship," the company's Mark Scharber says. "They sell a good product and they stand behind it. It's fun to sell their trailers. They're not the cheapest trailer on the block but the repeat business is good."

Figuring that nonconstruction and custom business could help the company stay afloat, Felling assumed that the economy would recover and set about getting ready to profit from that recovery.

"We wanted to go out and get the business and be ready for the turnaround," says Patrick Jennissen, Felling's vice president of sales and marketing. (Brenda and Patrick Jennissen are Merle Felling's daughter and son-in-law. Another daughter, Bonnie, and her husband, Paul Radjenovich, also work for Felling Trailers, as vice presidents of human resources and operations, respectively; two other Felling children, both sons, are not involved with the company. Merle Felling's wife, Kathy, is a company vice president.)

The company began by hiring three key salespeople as well as some skilled tradesmen and engineers. To pay their salaries, Felling sold three trucks and "a bunch of forklifts," Merle Felling says. "My thinking for years is that you can always buy machinery, but hiring good people is always a challenge. We saw some good people who were getting laid off from other companies and saw a chance in that."

The firm diversified its offerings, adding more and larger commercial semitrailers. "That's a market we competed in a few years ago, but now we've gotten more serious in those markets," Brenda Jennissen says. Felling built perhaps 35 or 40 semitrailers in 2009 and about 100 to 150 in 2012. "That's a real growth segment for us," she adds.

On top of the standard line, Felling has also emphasized its customized offerings. "Someone might need a semitrailer to haul a 30-foot television screen, or a trailer to haul amusement park rides. A guy who needs a custom product is always going to need it," Patrick Jennissen says. Custom business helped sustain Felling through 2009. "It's maybe 5 percent of the business, but it's growing," Patrick Jennissen says. Construction is coming back, he adds, and the company is in a strong position. "We've lost some competitors, plus some aren't in a position to respond to demand," he explains.

With 18 months to build, demand is strong, and Felling now has a sales backlog of six months. To help keep up, in July the company opened a new facility in Litchfield.

"We have a large issue finding qualified welders, machinists, and other skilled people in the trades," Patrick Jennissen says. "We currently can't hire enough; other firms that use welders and machinists were having the same problem. We had to come up with some way to hire these people if we want to keep growing. That meant finding a market at least an hour away with a big enough labor pool.

"Litchfield is three times larger than Sauk Centre and has a longstanding tradition of good machinists and welders. There's lots of agriculture, construction, and manufacturing in that area, plus Bobcat has a facility there but retracted back to Bismarck [North Dakota]," he says, leaving desirable hires looking for work.

Litchfield's real estate market also had the kind of space that Felling needs. Including its new Litchfield facility, the firm now operates about 200,000 total square feet of manufacturing space.

Felling Trailers, Inc. Location: Sauk Centre Founded: 1974 Employees: 214 2012 projected revenue: \$36 million







Automating Rural Hospitals

Rural health care facilities are essential to their communities and Healthland's software is helping them keep up to date.

hen small towns lose their hospitals, the economic fabric of the community suffers. "The hospital is often the largest employer in a rural community," says Angie Franks, president and CEO of Healthland, a St. Louis Park-based software provider that helps rural hospitals become fully automated, primarily through electronic health records and billing. "Without the hospital the town dries up and people move away."

Many rural hospitals today are fighting to remain independent as larger health care firms and hospitals move into rural areas, many hoping to turn these smaller facilities into triage, or feeder, clinics for their urban facilities, a process Healthland is hoping to avert.

"Health care is at the forefront of the national agenda, and automating hospitals is at the forefront of the health care agenda," Franks says. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides billions of dollars to health care providers to buy and adopt electronic health record technologies, and the Affordable Care Act requires hospitals to provide more integrated care, working across departments in order to improve quality of care and reduce waste. "These two pieces of legislation have put pressure on hospitals to implement technology that helps them provide better and more coordinated care," she says.

Founded in Glenwood in 1980 by Steve Klick as Dairyland Healthcare Solutions, Healthland was sold to Francisco Partners, a private equity firm in San Francisco, in 2007 and rebranded as Healthland that year. (Klick is no longer associated with the company.) Since then, Healthland has made two strategic acquisitions. In 2008, Healthland purchased Advanced Professional Software (APS), based in Waco, Texas. "APS had a lot of small hospitals [as clients] in a defined geographical area but offered only a financial product solution," Franks says. The purchase helped Healthland expand geographically and allowed the company to offer its full range of software solutions to APS' clients.

Healthland made its second acquisition, Omaha-based American HealthNet, in 2009. "That company did what Healthland does, but it had a smaller client footprint," Franks notes. Along with American HealthNet's client base, Healthland acquired technology that it has used to build its next-generation product platform.

As Healthland's senior vice president of sales and market development at the time, Franks was responsible for increasing Healthland's sales by 65 percent from 2007 to 2009. She was also instrumental in the firm's rebranding as well as in identifying, selecting, and integrating the acquisitions.

In early 2011, Healthland finished moving its headquarters from Louisville, Kentucky, to St. Louis Park, and Franks, a native of Roseville, took over from interim CEO John Trzeciak, an operating advisor with Francisco Partners.

"This has always been a Minnesota company, but we moved the headquarters back to Minnesota when I became CEO because of access to talent, in both health care and technology," Franks says. "This is a very well-educated metropolitan area." The move brought more than 100 high-paying jobs to the local economy. One-third of the firm's 300 employees office in St. Louis Park, another 100 office in Glenwood, and the remainder are scattered throughout the country in rural communities.

Healthland has already helped 25 percent of the 2,000 rural hospitals with 50 or fewer beds to fully automate. Franks notes that these hospitals see a total of 10 million to 15 million patients a year and provide rural communities with 56,000 jobs.

Healthland's software helps these facilities automate all of their departments, which allows a person's medical history to become a single record. "We offer the only system in the country for rural hospitals to coordinate everything into one record," says Franks. Because these hospitals either have small or nonexistent IT departments, it is critical that the system they choose can be quickly implemented. Franks says her firm can take a rural hospital's systems from paper to paperless within a year.

Some projects are quicker. "The overall transition took 90 days," says Robbie Dewberry, CEO of Mitchell County Hospital in Colorado City, Texas. Mitchell County hospital has 25 beds, a clinic, and a 46-bed nursing home. In 2009, the hospital and clinic went from paper to electronic using Healthland's software, then upgraded in 2011. "We are now 100 percent physician order entry," says Dewberry, who estimates that each doctor saves 30 minutes a day entering data with the new system.

Since 2008, Healthland has enjoyed a compound annual growth rate of 35 percent. "We will continue to grow and expand," Franks says. "We have grown every year at a very healthy clip and there is no reason that we will slow down."

Healthland Location: St. Louis Park • Founded: 1980 Employees: 300 • 2012 projected revenue: \$80 million

From Pain to Gain

Chiropractor Tara Watson has overcome floods, tornadoes, and other disasters to build her businesses.

hiropractor Tara Watson has been through some tough times. But despite seemingly insurmountable challenges, Watson has remained doggedly committed to her two businesses, Watson Chiropractic and Exceptional Home Health. Floodwaters, tornadoes, and questionable actions by the competition have not deterred her. Annual revenues from her two businesses have surpassed the \$1 million mark, and she's opening a third, an Anytime Fitness franchise, which she sees as a good fit with her other health-related operations.

A 2001 graduate of Northwestern College of Chiropractic in Bloomington, Watson found her first chiropractic job at a North Minneapolis clinic. In 2003 Watson's position was terminated, and she found herself with a non-compete agreement and no job.

"I was applying for jobs and looking for a space where I could start my own clinic," Watson says. "People weren't looking for an associate. They were looking for someone to spaceshare, an independent contractor." Watson found the cost of sharing space prohibitive, so she rented space temporarily in South Minneapolis while opening an office on Penn Avenue North, far enough away from her previous employer's clinic that she wouldn't be breaking the non-compete agreement.

"I was pregnant at the time," recalls Watson, a single mother of one. "I'm by myself. I had to do the buildout. I had to figure it out and handle it all." She financed the construction with credit card debt after being been turned down for a small-business loan, and then scheduled her first appointments for December 15, 2003. However, she never saw those clients. Instead she was in North Memorial giving birth to her son-six weeks ahead of schedule. Seven days later she saw her first client at Watson Chiropractic. In 2004,

Watson received an operating loan from Boundary Waters Bank, in Woodbury.

Watson's 2004 revenue reached \$70,000, then more than doubled in 2005 to \$170,000. By 2007, "I decided to branch out, so I started the home care business. I was referring out for this service," says Watson, who financed the expansion with revenue from her practice. Exceptional Home Health offers home care to people with mental and/or physical disabilities who are on Medical Assistance. The business employs 30 to 40, mostly care assistants and nurses.

Watson once again was forced to move in 2008 when a competing chiropractor purchased the building where she practiced. She leased temporary space until she completed the purchase and buildout of a 10,000-square-foot building on West Broadway. "One side was a detail shop," Watson says. "We are talking about a garage warehouse." Watson financed the purchase of the building and construction from revenues generated by both of her businesses. In May 2010 she moved into her new building, hopeful that it would be her final move.

A month later, after two back-to-back days of heavy rainfall, Watson walked into her office one Monday to find two feet of standing water. Because her building is not located in a flood zone, she didn't have flood insurance. "I had to dig into my pockets and get the whole office rebuilt," she recalls. "The home care business wasn't affected and that kept me afloat."

The following year, the devastating tornado that cut a swath of destruction through North Minneapolis in May caused more than \$200,000 in damage to her building, tearing off the roof, blowing out the windows, and leaving three feet of standing water. Watson set up a temporary shop while the building was repaired.

Insurance paid for the damage this time, and during the rehab Watson decided to open North Minneapolis' first Anytime Fitness club in the portion of the building she had been planning to lease. She hopes to offer senior exercise classes, partially funded by Medicare, through her new franchise, slated to open in the beginning of 2013. Through her Exceptional Home Health office, Watson is currently working with the Minnesota Department of Human Services to sign up local residents for Medicaid and Minnesota Care so they can receive discounts on gym memberships.

Becoming a successful business owner often means maneuvering around obstacles, many of them out of your control. "Most people will quit. They will give up," says Cynthia Wilson, a certified career counselor at Hired, a Minneapolisbased provider of job-skills training and employment training, and the owner of her own jewelry business, Designs by Cynthia. "The best way to achieve something is to walk around those who have already achieved it, so that when you run into a challenge you will know how to deal with it."

Along the way, Watson has had many mentors: "Without the people that provided the ladders, I wouldn't have been able to get over the bridges, and I wouldn't be here today."

Watson Chiropractic and Exceptional Home Health Location: Minneapolis Founded: 2003 Employees: 30 to 40 2012 projected revenue: \$1 million







Twin Cities Business recognizes the following Minnesota companies as finalists in the Small Business Success Stories program for their notable achievements.

Pediatric Home Service

The 22-year-old independent pediatric home care company specializes in helping children with complex medical conditions live at home rather than in a hospital or other care facility. The company is active philanthropically and gives to more than 15 nonprofits annually. In the past five years, it increased the number of employees by more than 60 percent.

Rayito Del Sol Spanish Immersion Minneapolis

Peruvian native Luisa Fuentes founded Spanish immersion school Rayito Del Sol in 2001 and now runs the business with her brother Luis. Besides overseeing two school locations, the company works with organizations that promote cultural understanding, such as the Minnesota Peru Baseball Fellowship and Red Fountain. The company is projecting more than \$1.5 million in revenue in 2012.

B&F Fastener Supply Minneapolis

B&F Fastener Supply provides a wide range of hardware, safety equipment, and other products primarily to manufacturing and construction companies. Founded in 1988, B&F has since expanded to 11 locations, including Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and Dubuque, Iowa, in 2012. It currently employs 150 people in five states.

Bridgewater Bank Bloomington

Bridgewater Bank recently broke into the top 25 bank ranking in the Twin Cities, based on asset size. The bank continued to post earnings during the economic downturn, and as of June, its 2012 revenue is projected to exceed \$2.3 million. Bridgewater grew its lending portfolio by 19 percent in 2012.

Code 42 Software, Inc.

Code 42 provides crossplatform, secure backup and recovery software, focusing on data created and stored on endpoint devices such as laptops and desktops. The company was named to the *Inc.* magazine 5,000 list of America's fastestgrowing private companies, and serves more than 4,500 companies and organizations globally, including Google, Adobe, and NASA.

Donnelly Custom Manufacturing Alexandria

Donnelly is a short-run manufacturing company. While the business saw its sales decline 31 percent during the downturn in 2009, investments in sustainable technologies and customer relations have helped it grow since then. Founded 28 years ago, the company is on track to top \$30 million in revenue this year, which will make 2012 its biggest year to date.

Energy Management Collaborative

Energy Management Collaborative focuses on efficient lighting solutions in industrial, retail, and commercial spaces, connecting companies that seek to reduce energy costs with an array of green solutions and expertise. The company projects its revenue will top \$28 million in 2012, with an annual growth rate of 30 percent over the next five years.

Fishbowl Solutions, Inc. Minneapolis

As a software and services company, Fishbowl Solutions assists businesses with content management. Founded by Tim Gruidl in 1999, the company has weathered the recession, grown its staff, and expanded its offerings to include portal and collaboration software. Fishbowl's first million-dollar project was signed in 2010, and as of this year, the company's revenue was \$7.2 million.

Supply Chain Services

In 2010, Chip Emery bought Supply Chain Services, a provider of customized data collection, barcode scanning and printing, and networking solutions for manufacturing and distribution companies. Among other changes that CEO Emery instituted, the 12-year-old company has created new initiatives and strengthened its sales approach. As a result, the company's revenue was up 17 percent in 2010 and increased 43 percent in 2011.

Vomela Group

Family-owned Vomela Group is a collection of companies that specialize in the design, manufacturing, and installation of graphics products and signage seen on trucks, in-store displays, and more. The company's active acquisition strategy has resulted in 19 business locations. In five years, Vomela has more than doubled its staff, from 400 in 2006 to 860 this year.

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fuel for thought

BY DAN HAUGEN | SPARKING DIALOGUE ABOUT MINNESOTA'S ENERGY ECONOMY

NABERS: Australian for Efficiency

Honeywell says Minnesota could boost commercial building efficiency by importing an energy policy from Down Under.

elbourne, Australia's 530 Collins Street is one of the world's most energyefficient office buildings, thanks to a 2009 retrofit by Golden Valley–based Honeywell Building Solutions. The Honeywell unit does what's known as energy performance contracting—a turnkey approach to efficiency retrofits in which the service company evaluates potential savings, plans projects to achieve them, arranges zero-down financing, and even guarantees the energy savings.

Honeywell does similar work in Minnesota, but almost exclusively in government buildings. The commercial retrofit market Honeywell sees in the Twin Cities is nowhere near as robust as in Australia, where the company does millions in annual energy contracts. Why? Honeywell credits Australia's national building rating law that prohibits government agencies from leasing space in lower-rated buildings.

It's "the single best thing I've seen done to get progress made in the commercial sector," says Jeremy Eaton, vice president and general manager of Honeywell Smart Grid Solutions.

The National Australian Built Environment Rating System, or NABERS, requires owners of all buildings of more than 2,000 square meters (about 20,000 square feet) to annually calculate their energy use, which translates into a star rating.

The government, which is Australia's largest office tenant, won't lease space in buildings with less than a 4.5 star rating (out of a maximum six). Instead of mandating a minimum efficiency standard, NABERS makes it a business decision. "If I'm a landlord and I want to be in the market for government tenancies, I've got to have an efficient building. So what am I going to do? I'm going to start hiring contractors like Honeywell to make my buildings more efficient," says Eaton. The challenge Honeywell encounters most often in the Twin Cities is that building owners don't believe they'll benefit from investing in energy efficiency because most of the direct savings accrue to tenants, who typically pay utility bills.

Commercial buildings account for about one-fifth of U.S. energy consumption, mostly for lighting, heating, and cooling. Commercial building energy use grew faster than square footage from 1980 to 2009, according to the Energy Information Administration.

The Twin Cities has several success stories, largely due to Xcel Energy's rebates and conservation programs, which have helped conserve about 2,700 megawatts since 1990, with 90 percent coming from commercial and industrial buildings. Still, many more megawatts of opportunity remain. Minneapolis may soon adopt part of Australia's solution.

Council Member Elizabeth Glidden introduced a proposal in November to create an energy benchmarking and disclosure requirement for large buildings (though it wouldn't restrict city government leasing like Australia's law does). The proposal, which was expected to have its first committee hearing in January, would require owners of commercial buildings of 50,000 square feet and larger to file annual reports on energy consumption, which would be published online by the city.

Think of it as a miles-per-gallon rating for buildings. Tenants could use efficiency scores in leasing decisions, and if that happens, owners of less efficient buildings would have incentive to improve.

Not everyone thinks lack of



incentive is the biggest barrier facing commercial building efficiency. Scott Muldavin, a senior advisor to the Rocky Mountain Institute, who studies landlord-tenant issues involving energy, says the split incentive argument is a myth.

"It's one of those things owners love to bring up," says Muldavin, but in reality they see benefits from efficiency because it's easier to attract and retain tenants. Also, most leases allow owners to pass on costs of energy upgrades to tenants.

Kevin Lewis, executive director of the Building Owners and Managers Association of greater Minneapolis (BOMA), says market forces have been successful at driving efficiency investments, and that he's concerned about the potential for "unintended negative consequences."

Glidden praises Minneapolis BOMA members as leaders in energy efficiency through programs like the Kilowatt Crackdown, but more work needs to be done, she says. "We want to be able to extend some of the really great best practices by these premier office buildings downtown to a broader range of large buildings in Minneapolis," says Glidden.

She doesn't think the requirement will be onerous for building owners. Reporting would require free Energy Star software that's already used by many buildings, and the city has received a state grant to train owners who need assistance.

In New York, which adopted a building benchmarking program in 2009, compliance in 2011 was at 75 percent. Officials were optimistic that relatively high compliance rates would translate into more engagement on efficiency from owners. Other cities implementing building energy benchmarking programs include Austin, Texas; Seattle; San Francisco; and Washington, D.C. But Eaton wonders whether reporting alone will have an impact.

"It's helpful, but is it actually going to meaningfully move anything? Probably not," says Honeywell's Eaton. "The key difference with NABERS is the government led by example." **TCB**





BY SARAH LUTMAN | LOOKING INSIDE THE BUSINESS OF NONPROFITS

Minding the Gap

New partnership sets cradle-to-career goals for all metro students

indicators, including

fourth-grade reading

proficiency, eighth-

graduation rates, and

college enrollment.

coalition of Twin Cities leaders has declared a "state of emergency," based on data that show unacceptably low rates of student achievement in Minnesota and in particular, a wide achievement gap between white children and children of color in our metropolitan schools.

If that sounds dramatic, it's for good reason. According to a recent study, more than 500 programs are already working to close this gap and improve student achievement in one way or another, through early childhood education, tutoring, efforts designed to help youths stay in school and graduate, teacher education, family services, and other forms of support. Together these private sector programs spend approximately \$90 million annually, and that figure does not include public spending on schools.

But despite these efforts, Minnesota continues to have one of the largest achievement gaps in the United States, with extremely low graduation rates for

minorities and deep racial disparities. (For example, 53.8 percent of the metro's 11thgrade white students tested at grade-level proficiency in math in 2012, while only 22.7 percent of students of color met that benchmark.

Among black 11th-graders, just 11.6 percent were grade-level proficient in math.) This is a looming problem for the health of Minnesota's long-term business climate and our reputation as a state with a highly educated workforce.

Is there a better way? That's the question posed by the African American Leadership Forum, which

spearheaded the initial work that led to the new coalition's formation. In studying what we might do better, they reviewed the work of Strive, a community-wide coalition in Cincinnati, which is demonstrating how to "move the needle" on student achievement. The Strive partnership has led to increases of 9 to 24 percent on key indicators, including kindergarten readiness, fourth-grade reading proficiency, eighth-grade math proficiency, graduation rates, and college enrollment. Sharing Cincinnati's success model with Minnesota's civic leaders led to the formation of the Generation Next Partnership.

Generation Next includes an impressive group of civic leaders from across the metro. The coalition includes mayors and city government, school districts, county government, teachers' unions, corporations (3M, General Mills, Target, Cargill, Health-Partners, among others), business leadership groups like the Itasca Project and the Minnesota Chamber of

ing foundations (including Bush, The Strive partnership McKnight, and has led to increases of Northwest Area 9 to 24 percent on key Foundation), and the University of Minnesota, kindergarten readiness, MNSCU, and the Minnesota Private College grade math proficiency, Council. This group has put out an ambitious vision in which "children of all socio-economic

Commerce, lead-

backgrounds are well prepared for success in the 21st century," with a mission "to dramatically accelerate educational achievement of all children from early childhood through early career, through an aligned partnership of community stakeholders."

Generation Next will operate on a set of principles that has been defined as "collective impact." Collective





Closing the Achievement Gap Generation Next is committed to closing the achievement gap among Twin Cities' low-income students and students of color. We are an inprecedented partnership of key educa community, government and business dedicated to accelerating ed

ment for all of our children - from early childhood through early career

By identifying and adopting best practices, we'll help to ensure a more successful and pros

LET'S CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT **GAP. TWIN CITIES**

impact is just what it sounds like: an effort to bring together organizations to develop a common agenda, including a common understanding of a problem and a joint approach to solving it. The framework includes a designated "backbone organization" with a separate, dedicated staff to keep the coalition on track. Equally important: a sense of shared accountability to the public that includes transparency about the work and its results.

For Generation Next, the backbone organization is the Greater Twin Cities United Way. Michael Goar, who most recently was deputy superintendent of the Boston public schools, has been hired to lead Generation Next. Goar grew up in Minneapolis and has worked in the city's school district. He'd been back in town just four weeks when I spoke with him this fall, but said he was attracted to the job for a number of reasons, including the broad cross-section of leaders that came together to form Generation Next, its ultimate aim to be metrowide rather than district-specific, and the significant research and evaluation support in place to help identify and share what's working well and

how others can learn from it.

Minnesotans have known for decades that we have an achievement gap, and many efforts have been directed at improving the performance of students of color. Will Generation Next be different? Skeptics of all stripes can name a dozen reasons why Generation Next could fail: We've tried coalitions before, best practices are already known but there's no consequence to ignoring them, funding lags, the disruptive effects of poverty on students' home lives, among many other reasons. Yet the new effort seems promising. It's an unprecedented coalition—all-in. It has promised transparency with respect to resultshigh stakes. And it's a problem that will define Minnesota's economic future. It's great to see leaders putting their collective feet down about this problem and taking action.

Will it be enough? I'll check back in a year and see what the Generation Next report card tells us. **TCB**

Sarah Lutman is a St. Paul-based independent consultant and writer for clients in the cultural, media, and philanthropic sectors.

TECHNOLOGY INNOVATORS

The Minnesota High Tech Association's 2012 Tekne Awards honor the companies, products, and individuals that are driving innovation locally. **BY MARY CONNOR**



THE MINNESOTA HIGH TECH ASSOCIATION, in partnership with LifeScience Alley and the BioBusiness Alliance of Minnesota, celebrates Minnesota's status as a hub for technology innovation with the 2012 Tekne Awards. The Tekne Awards acknowledge companies and individuals who have demonstrated superior technology advancement and leadership in Minnesota.

Judges selected a winner from the three finalists in each of 15 categories, recognizing the best in development, education, commercialization, and management of technology. Some award categories are separated between small and growing businesses (annual revenue of less than \$50 million) and established companies (annual revenue of \$50 million or more).

Read on to see which Minnesota companies and individuals were judged 2012's best technology innovators.

FLEET MANAGEMENT TUNE-UP PEOPLENET, MINNETONKA

AWARD CATEGORY: Technology Services & Consulting, Established Company

PeopleNet has introduced an open fleet-management platform that integrates with back-office systems, including accounting, dispatch, and maintenance. By interpreting data reports and recommending changes and actions, PeopleNet can reduce costs and improve service and efficiency for its customers. System applications improve safety performance, help fleets meet regulatory requirements, and eliminate heavy violation fines. PeopleNet customers perform 58 percent better than the national average across three major safety indices, including 65 percent fewer moving violations.





CLOUD PURVEYOR AGOSTO, INC., MINNEAPOLIS

>AWARD CATEGORY: Technology Services & Consulting, Small & Growing Company

Agosto's focus is moving its clients to cloud-computing technologies—particularly Google applications—that can provide dramatic savings on information technology expenses. The company manages IT infrastructure, implements applications, and advises on cloud computing for its customers. Agosto promotes cloud computing as a way for companies to be more agile, in addition to saving money. The company also offers custom application development using Google Cloud Platform tools. And as a partner with STEP-UP Achieve Minneapolis—an organization helping Minneapolis youth become career- and college-ready—Agosto employed six summer interns. The young employees worked with local nonprofit organizations to implement cloud technology and pro bono Google Apps.

IMPROVED ALTRUISM GIVEMN, ST. PAUL

AWARD CATEGORY: Technology Excellence in a Nonprofit Organization

Similar to some prominent, national philanthropic efforts such as Kiva.org and DonorsChoose.org, which employ elements of "crowdsourcing" to raise funds for nonprofits, the Minnesota Community Foundation launched GiveMN.org and the annual "Give to the Max Day" event in 2009. The goal was to increase overall giving in Minnesota and move more of it online. The site features every Minnesota nonprofit and offers new ways for donors to support causes that they care about. The foundation also provides training to nonprofits on using GiveMN.org for online fundraising, and shares resources and knowledge through social networks and blogs. GiveMN.org and Give to the Max Day have helped raise more than \$66 million for thousands of nonprofits since they were launched.





APPLE AID JAMF SOFTWARE, MINNEAPOLIS

> AWARD CATEGORY: Software, Established Company

JAMF's Casper Suite is the only Mac OS X and iOS management software developed exclusively for the Apple platform. It provides functionality for IT administrators, including settings and license management, software distribution, imaging, and inventory for OS X machines, and inventory, configuration, security management, and app distribution for iOS mobile devices. The platform also provides remote updates and a framework for automated support. While many competitors offer some management options, the Casper Suite offers management for the entire Apple platform, similar to PC management systems.



HEALING BRACE ORTHOCOR MEDICAL, MINNEAPOLIS

> AWARD CATEGORY: Life Sciences, Small & Growing Company

Using a combination of pulsed electromagnetic field (PEMF) stimulation and application of heat or cold, OrthoCor's Active Knee System is approved for temporary relief of joint pain, especially related to arthritis. Radio frequency coils embedded in the brace generate PEMF waves that the company says promote healing and reduce pain and edema. The device has recently received the codes necessary to allow for Medicare and insurancecompany reimbursement, and it's being marketed to orthopedic health care professionals.

FOUR LAYERS OF DATA PROTECTION



Winner of the 2012 Minnesota Tekne Award

Congratulations to the Imation DataGuard[™] Team, recipient of the 2012 Minnesota Tekne Award.

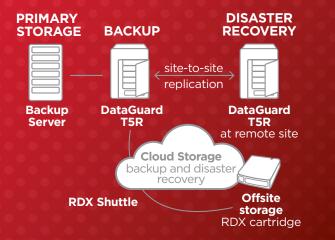
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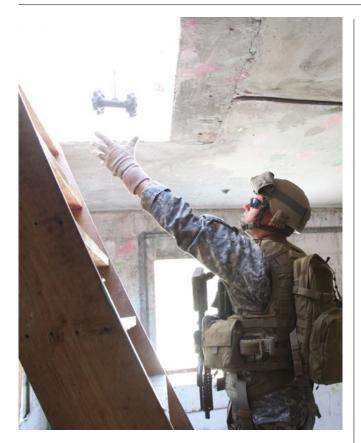
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ROBOT SCOUTS RECONROBOTICS, INC., EDINA

> AWARD CATEGORY: Robotics & Automation

Recon's Scout and Throwbot micro-robots are used by the U.S. military and more than 500 law-enforcement agencies worldwide to assess dangerous situations from a distance. The robots weigh 1.2 pounds and are designed to survive repeated throws of up to 120 feet. They are also inexpensive and easy to operate compared with previous robots made for the same purpose. The U.S. military has purchased more than 2,000 of the robots and has contracted for 1,000 more. *Popular Science* magazine called the Recon Scout XT one of the top 100 technology innovations of 2011.



four elements for data protection: hard drives, removable RDX drives, site-to-site replication, and a connection to OpenStackbased cloud storage providers such as Amazon and DropBox. Created for use by small businesses, DataGuard features a simple user interface and technology for predicting potential hard-disk failures. Once it's set up, it's always on and protects data without any human intervention. The device's integrated RDX drive allows for off-line or off-site storage of data on RDX cartridges. Files can be uploaded to the cloud directly from the cartridges to avoid moving them across local-area or wide-area networks.





CLOUD SECURITY SPARKWEAVE, MINNEAPOLIS

AWARD CATEGORY: Start-Up

A virtualized storage and streaming platform created by Sparkweave helps companies take advantage of "private cloud" technologies. The service is targeted to businesses with regulatory compliance and security issues that may be reticent about using public cloud offerings. The Sparkweave platform is designed to simplify infrastructure and control internal use of consumer products, while providing "anywhere" data access and collaboration. Central to the system is a storage environment that Sparkweave says will reduce storage requirements by 50 percent.



MOBILE COMPOSERS MAKEMUSIC, INC., EDEN PRAIRIE

► AWARD CATEGORY: Mobile & Communication Technologies

MakeMusic's Finale software allows music composers to write music and hear it played back to them. The company's new Finale SongBook is a mobile app with which users can access their Finale sheetmusic libraries, view and print files, and play the music for students and collaborators or for an audition.

MakeMusic also acquired two companies in the past year:

- Garritan Corporation, which offers technology for virtual instrument creation.
- Recordare, which creates the MusicXML file format that allows music notation files to be opened in more than one kind of software.

The acquisitions will help MakeMusic develop new mobile apps for musicians.



GROUNDED WIND POWER SHEERWIND, INC., CHASKA

> AWARD CATEGORY: Cleantech & Energy

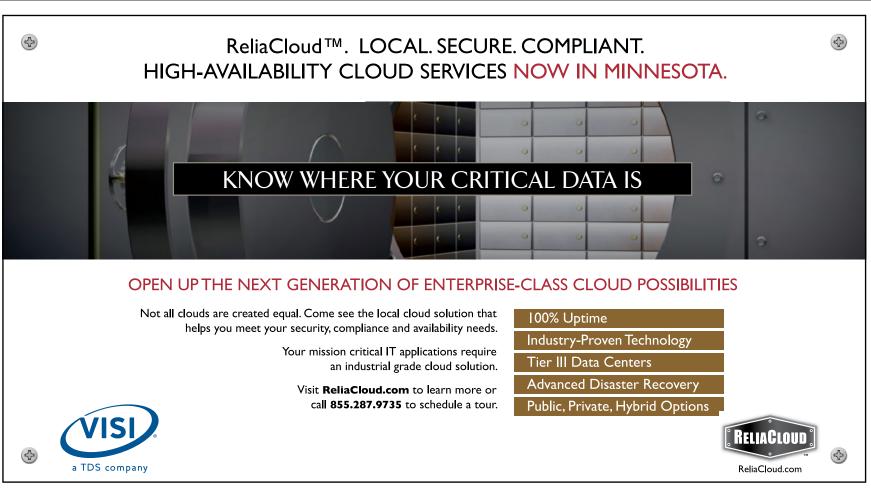
SheerWind's Invelox technology for wind-power generation is a departure from the wind turbine towers most commonly used. The system, about half as tall as the typical tower, captures wind at the top and delivers it to generators on the ground through a funnel that accelerates the wind's speed. Invelox can be used not only on wind farms but also in microapplications for military and consumer products. SheerWind says that Invelox could generate more and cheaper power than current systems, while occupying less space and offering lower operating and maintenance costs.



HANDS-FREE HEARING AID STARKEY HEARING TECHNOLOGIES, EDEN PRAIRIE

> AWARD CATEGORY: Life Sciences, Established Company

Starkey's SurfLink Mobile links directly to both the user's hearing aid and cell phone, and allows for hands-free phone conversations. In addition, it can serve as a microphone to better isolate and pick up the voice of a companion in noisy environments. In conference room or lecture hall environments, the SurfLink can be used as a remote microphone and placed close to the speaker. The device can also stream audio from television and radio programs directly to a user's hearing aid.







ONLINE ADVOCATES BLANDIN FOUNDATION, GRAND RAPIDS

> AWARD CATEGORY: Innovative Collaboration of the Year

In 2010, a \$4.86 million federal grant to the Blandin Foundation enabled 19 rural Minnesota communities to collaborate to try to cross a "digital divide." Many residents and business owners in the state are not yet taking advantage of online technologies. The Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC) initiative funds 70 projects that promote the use of high-speed broadband. MIRC targets rural job seekers, small businesses that haven't yet adopted Internet technologies, local governments, and 11 demonstration communities. Efforts include enhancing access to training and online learning at work force centers, and helping businesses use the Internet more effectively and providing them with technical support. Surveys show that these efforts have resulted in more than 12,300 new broadband subscribers in rural Minnesota.



NANO-PRECISION SEAGATE TECHNOLOGY, BLOOMINGTON

> AWARD CATEGORY: Advanced Manufacturing

The most complex component of a hard drive is its magnetic recording head, the making of which requires atomic-level precision. Seagate manufactures the recording heads for its hard drives in Bloomington. The advanced techniques used in Seagate's recording head fabrication are also used in manufacturing nanotechnology micro-electromechanical devices. Seagate's devices are routinely produced with an expected dimension of 80 nanometers, varying only by plus or minus 6 nanometers—a difference in width of 24 atoms. This level of precision is maintained through 868 manufacturing steps across 274 process tools and 331 operators, in fabrication that takes 72 days. **TCB**

LEARNING INTEGRATION UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA-ROCHESTER

> AWARD CATEGORY: Edtech

The University of Minnesota established a new campus in Rochester in 2006 to focus on health sciences and biotechnology. To be nimble and efficient, the school's flagship bachelor of science in health sciences (BSHS) program has a single academic unit drawn from various disciplines; the BSHS curriculum is linked among subject areas. To manage the collaborative, integrated curriculum, the school developed its Intelligent Systems for Education Assessment and Learning (iSeal) course management system to share and repurpose all curricula, make it available to every student, and collect data on student activity to enable learning analytics.



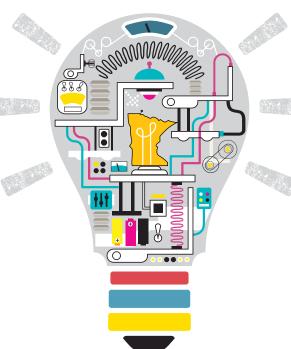


UNIVERSAL BACKUP CODE 42 SOFTWARE, INC., MINNEAPOLIS

> AWARD CATEGORY: Software, Small & Growing Company

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- CrashPlan PROe for the enterprise offers users access to the backed-up files from any computer or mobile device.
- Code 42 now manages more than 150 petabytes of data globally.



the BY AME SWEDBERG State Stress of the source of the sour

Beyond the realm of iconic consumer brands (think Post-its, Wheaties, and Rollerblades), Minnesota has established itself as an innovation leader, with a history of groundbreaking inventions anchored by a cluster of industry giants.

Intellectual property, a common barometer of innovation, abounds in the state, which claimed 3.5 percent of U.S. patents in 2011. It ranks ninth in the nation, edged out by more heavily populated states, according to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

For many, Minnesota is synonymous with med-tech, and its history of invention is often traced to Fridley-based Medtronic. Founder Earl Bakken invented the transistorized, battery-operated pacemaker after a 1957 power outage rendered bulky, wall-plug devices useless. Implantable pacemakers followed in 1960, spawning an industry with Minnesota as its epicenter.

"It's sort of like restaurants," says Tony Zeuli, an IP attorney at Minneapolis law firm Merchant & Gould. "If you get a few really good restaurants, eventually they spawn other restaurants. One of the chefs decides, 'I've worked under this master for a while, so I'm going to start one on my own."

Minneapolis-based medical device firm CVRx, Inc., which was founded in 2000, is one of myriad examples. Founder and Chief Technology Officer Robert Kieval, a Medtronic alum, holds 48 U.S. patents and half a dozen in other countries.

"Being granted a patent is an indication that after very close scrutiny, an observation or idea is deemed to be novel," Kieval says. "In my case, this suggests that my ideas could represent important advancements in patient care that could positively impact the lives of many, many people."

CVRx's implantable device is designed to treat high blood pressure and heart failure by triggering the body's natural blood-flow regulation. Its Barostim Neo product is approved in Europe for treatment of hypertension, and it's now conducting U.S. clinical trials.

"We came up with an idea for a whole new therapeutic category, the treatment of high blood pressure with a medical device," Kieval says, adding that high blood pressure affects about 70 million people in the United States. "We also had come up with a novel way of treating heart failure. Our

One outlet where local inventors convene is the Minnesota Inventors Congress, the oldest continuous annual invention convention in the nation, which has been held each year in Redwood Falls since 1958. Read more about the event in this *Twin Cities Business* feature story: bit.ly/Y3Dw1A ability to protect that with patent filings really helped drive the value creation for the company," which has secured more than \$200 million in financing.

Valuing 'Disruptive' Ideas

Industry experts say that Minnesota's med-tech giants have spawned countless startups through direct spinoffs or by indirect means.

"If you were to get the bio of every med-tech CEO in the state, many, if not most of them, would have worked in some role at the 'big four' in town: Medtronic, 3M, St. Jude, and Boston Scientific/Guidant," says Frank Jaskulke, member services director at LifeScience Alley, a Minnesota trade organization that counts large and small health technology firms among its members.

But those same giants remain on the forefront of innovation today.

"We make our own semiconductors, batteries, and capacitors," says Girma Wolde-Michael, deputy chief patent counsel and head of international IP operations at Medtronic. "That dimension of verticality, if you will, has given us a lot of platforms to be innovative."

About 9,000 of Medtronic's 45,000 employees are directly involved in R&D; another 2,000 or so support it through clinical research and other efforts. Improvements to existing systems are invaluable, but Medtronic urges researchers to explore what Wolde-Michael calls "disruptive technology."

"There are ideas that are kind of way out there," he says. "Some of them are a little bit dreamy, but you have to let your engineers and inventors be dreamers. You want to make sure that someone is thinking about the impossibilities."

For example, when the implantable pacemaker was invented, attaching the lead (an electronic conductive wire) inside the heart was a challenge; if not secured, it was unable to function properly. Medtronic developed tines to attach the lead to tissue inside the heart.

The next disruptive technology may be on the horizon. Medtronic is already developing medical devices that are significantly smaller than existing ones and easier to implant. But Wolde-Michael foresees a day when nanotechnology could be used to make certain devices so tiny they are injectable by syringe.

Nothing to Do but Think of Something New

Med-tech, of course, is but one facet of Minnesota's inventiveness. Consider: The state's top patent acquirers are IBM and 3M.

^aBy no means would I consider medical technology to be the 800-pound gorilla," says Zeuli. "There are so many other companies here that patent or innovate."

So why is Minnesota an inventors' haven? In keeping with the state's



trademark modesty, some wave away the assertion with self-effacing humor.

"It gets so darn cold in the winter, there's nothing to do but sit around and think of something new to make," Matt Scholz says with a laugh; a 3M corporate scientist, he holds more than 120 patents assigned to the Maplewood-based company. "Things are moving fast, so you'd better be innovating or you're going to be left in the dust."

Scholz' best-known invention is Scotchcast Plus Casting Tape, a knitted fiberglass fabric containing a polyurethane resin that is wrapped around limbs to immobilize broken bones. The company's IP has paid off: 3M won a \$129 million judgment after suing Johnson & Johnson for infringement of four patents related to the product.

The Silicon Valley of the North?

While working for a Texas firm, attorney Chaz De La Garza traveled to Minnesota to represent Medtronic in a trade secret case. Despite his distaste for cold, the IP amassed by Minnesota firms soon lured him north, and he later founded his namesake firm in Minneapolis.

"I think anyone who is knowledgeable has to come to the conclusion that [Minnesota is] a hotbed of innovation," he says. "This is the Silicon Valley of the north." Others say Minnesota operates off the radar. This country "has innovation in a lot of places you might not always guess, but there are only a few known for it," says David Abrams, an IP expert and University of Pennsylvania Law School professor. "It presents an opportunity for places to promote themselves" as proponents of innovation.

Research-oriented institutions such as the University of Minnesota and Mayo Clinic bring a mass of creative, skilled people into the mix with scientists from Fortune 500s and startups. "They run into someone in a restaurant who's in a related field and works for another company, and you might end up with new ideas, new companies forming that way," says Abrams. But Minnesota should better incentivize graduates to remain in the state, he adds.

New business incubators and academic-business partnerships would encourage international students to stay after graduation, says Medtronic's Wolde-Michael. An exodus of talent, however, represents a national dilemma: "In the past, people from other countries would come here to be educated and then would stay here for the opportunities. Now it is the other way around: They leave because there are more opportunities elsewhere," he says.

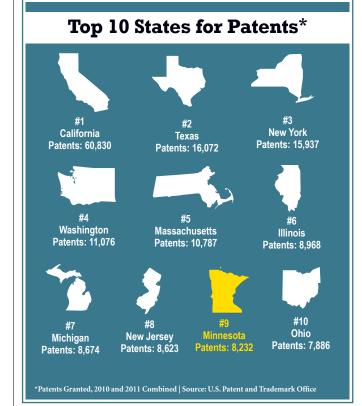
3M and others are looking to ignite the inventors' spark in younger generations. Scholz, for example, recently helped judge the Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge, an annual program that pairs U.S. middle school students with 3M scientists and awards the winner \$25,000.

A Race to the Patent Office

The America Invents Act, signed into law in 2011, is on the minds of many Minnesota inventors. Come mid-March, patent rights will shift from the current "first-to-invent" system to a "first-to-file" methodmeaning, basically, that if you want to own IP rights, be the first to show up at the patent office. Some say the move will whittle down an application backlog and streamline patenting; others fear small inventors will be disadvantaged.

"Our best guess is that this law is going to be worse for individuals relative to companies," says Abrams, who co-authored a study that examined a similar change in Canada. "The intuition is that companies are more likely to have patent lawyers on staff and more experience in turning inventions into patent applications."

The system could result in "gut-wrenching situations" where smaller inventors lose out on due recognition and royalties, says Devan



Padmanabhan, a shareholder and patent litigator at Minneapolis-based Winthrop & Weinstine.

Others expect the change to have little effect. "I think it will cause companies to file earlier in their process," says Zeuli. "I see it as more of a timing issue, really, than anything else."

If nothing else, the law will prompt inventors to assess each new invention's potential as soon as it is conceived, according to CVRx's Kieval.

"We always come up with more ideas than we can patent, because patent prosecution is a costly thing and we have to use our resources judiciously," he says. "We sometimes had the luxury of seeing which way our product development is going to go before we decided what patents to file. Now we don't have that luxury, so that changes our thought process." **TCB**

Jamie Swedberg is a freelance writer and a frequent contributor to Twin Cities Business.

Helping Inventors Prosper

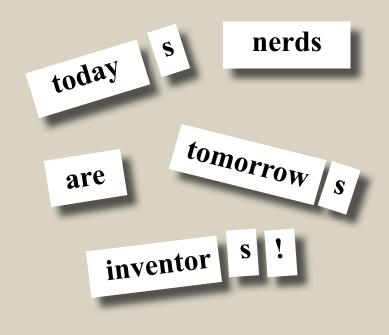
A pro bono legal program in Minnesota serves as a national model.

At a luncheon hosted by Minneapolis law firm Patterson Thuente IP, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Director David Kappos discussed a national need for pro bono programs for inventors—something that had been attempted, unsuccessfully, in the past.

"It's been very well received," says Goodman. "Local patent lawyers are thrilled" to finally have pro bono opportunities within their field of expertise. Marketing the new service to eligible inventors has been the greatest challenge, and the group plans to send attorneys to spread the word to inventor groups and industry associations, she says. To help streamline a national rollout, two of Patterson's colleagues recently published a best practices manual. Five other states have kick-started programs that mirror Minnesota's, and Patterson says five more are expected to launch next year. *—Jake Anderson*

[&]quot;Director, you're in the right place, because Minnesota has a strong history of pro bono," responded James Patterson, the firm's founder. He connected with Candee Goodman, a now-retired pro bono director at Minneapolis-based Lindquist & Vennum, to develop a game plan.

They tapped LegalCorps, a local nonprofit that provides free legal advice to small businesses, to administer the pilot program, dubbed the LegalCorps Inventor Assistance Program. Since its June 2011 launch, 50 local attorneys have been trained to participate, 16 inventors have tapped its services, and two participating inventors have obtained patents. (To be eligible for the program, inventors' income cannot exceed 300 percent of the poverty level.)



Magnetic Poetry[®] invented by Minnesotan Dave Kappell



Schwegman Lundberg & Woessner, P.A. congratulates our clients and their top inventors along with all the Top Minnesota Inventors.

We salute your innovative spirit, creativity, persistence, and drive.





MINNESOTA'S TOP INVENTORS

How the state's 500 leading innovators were selected for inclusion in the Top Inventors list.

n the following pages, you'll find 500 of Minnesota's leading inventors, whose dreaming, tinkering, and old-fashioned hard work have propelled the state to the forefront of innovation. The Top Inventors list was compiled by Patent Buddy, a Minneapolis company founded by attorneys from Minneapolis-based IP firm Schwegman, Lundberg & Woessner, along with help from California-based Gazelle Technologies and Minneapolis-based Contata Solutions, LLC. Patent Buddy extracted data from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and applied a proprietary formula that takes into account several factors. The total number of U.S. patents granted during the past five years, as well as the number of patent applications published, are included in the algorithm; other factors considered include the influence of issued patents as measured by forward citation count and the number of times an individual is listed as "lead inventor" in patent filings.

Inventors are broken down by industry and listed below the company with which they were associated according to USPTO records as of May 31, 2012. Companies with the most Top Inventors are listed first.

Medical Technology

Medtronic, Inc. Bauer, Ryan Burnes, John Cho, Yong Christenson, Steven Cinbis, Can Davis, Ion Denison, Timothy Drake, Ronald Ellingson, Michael Falkner, Phillip Francischelli, David Gerber, Martin Ghanem, Raja Giese, Chad Giftakis, Jonathon Goetz Steven Gunderson, Bruce Heruth, Kenneth Hettrick, Douglas Kalpin, Scott Karamanoglu, Mustafa Kast, John King, Gary Kovalsky, Igor Kuhn, Jonathan Lee, Michael Markowitz, H. Toby Miesel, Keith Nelson, Brian Olsen, James Panken, Eric Rothstein, Paul

Ryan, Timothy Sahasrabudhe, Rajeev Scanlon, David Seifert, Kevin Sharma, Vinod Sheldon, Todd Skelton, Dennis Sommer, John Stadler, Robert Tabor, Charles Torgerson, Nathan Wahlstrand, Carl Waldhauser, Steven Warman, Eduardo Zhang, Shangqian Zhang, Xusheng Zhou, Xiaohong

Cardiac

Pacemakers, Inc. Ameri, Masoud Arcot-Krishnamurthy, Shantha Brockway, Marina Carlson, Gerrard Desai, Shrojalkumar Ding, Jiang Dong, Yanting Foster, Arthur Hartley, Jesse Hatlestad, John Kenknight, Bruce Kramer, Andrew Lee, Kent Linder, William Maile, Keith Manicka, Yatheendhar

Maskara, Barun Mazar, Scott Mccabe, Aaron Patangay, Abhilash Salo, Rodney Shuros, Allan Sieiko, Krzysztof Stahmann, Jeffrey Stubbs, Scott Ternes, David Tockman, Bruce Von Arx, Jeffrey Yu, Yinghong Zarembo, Paul Zhang, Yongxing Zhang, Yunlong

Boston Scientific, Inc.

Arcand, Benjamin Atanasoska, Liliana Brown, Brian Brucker, Gregory Edelman, Peter Foss, Aaron Gregorich, Daniel Hastings, Roger Hill, Jason Holman, Thomas Jenson, Mark Kangas, Steven Kokate, Jaydeep Meyer, Michael Schoenle, Victor Sogard, David Stinson, Jonathan Warner, Robert



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Cinader, David Jr. Dellaria, Joseph Jr. Kangas, Lani Karim, Naimul Kedl, Ross Miller, Richard Mitra, Sumita Nelson, Robert Oxman, Joel Scholz, Matthew Statham, Alexis Wieringa, Jeffrey

St. Jude

Medical, Inc. Alkhatib, Yousef Braido, Peter Kauphusman, James Kirschenman, Mark Paul, Saurav Tegg, Trov Wang, Huisun

CVRx, Inc.

Cates, Adam Keith, Peter Kieval, Robert Rossing, Martin

Basis Science, Inc. Evans, Don Lucke, Lori

Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research Burnett, John Jr. Friedman, Paul Levy, Michael

Surmodics, Inc. Chappa, Ralph Chudzik, Stephen Slager, Joram

TranS1, Inc. Assell, Robert Cragg, Andrew Dickhudt, Eugene

University of Minnesota Krasutsky, Pavel Nelsestuen, Gary Vaughan, Thomas

Wilson Greatbatch, Ltd. Brainard, Scott Fleigle, Jeff Ye, Qingshan (Sam)

AMS Research Corporation Crank, Justin Vancelette, David

Augustine Biomedical + Design Augustine, Ryan Augustine, Scott

Coloplast A/S Deitch, Sarah Morningstar, Randy

Ecolab, Inc. Kilawee, Patrick Tallman, Dan

Mardil, Inc. Girard, Michael Walsh, Robert

Tyco Healthcare Group, LP Adams, Daniel Kusleika, Richard

Zimmer Spine, Inc. Dawson, John Hestad, Hugh

Alexandria Research Technologies, LLC Johnson, Wesley

Apnex Medical, Inc. Bolea, Stephen

Arc Suppression Technologies, LLC Henke, Reinhold

Bacoustics. LLC Babaev, Eilaz

Baxter Healthcare S.A. Wariar, Ramesh

BioQuiddity, Inc. Kriesel, Marshall

Bridgepoint Medical, Inc. Kugler, Chad

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Epitopix, LLC Emery, Daryll

Gambro UF Solutions, Inc. O'Mahony, John

GeoDigm Corporation Marshall, Michael Hon Hai Precision Industry Company, Ltd. Chen, Jun

Inspire Medical Systems, Inc. Ni, Ouan

Intelect Medical, Inc. Swoyer, John

Interrad Medical, Inc. Rosenberg, Michael

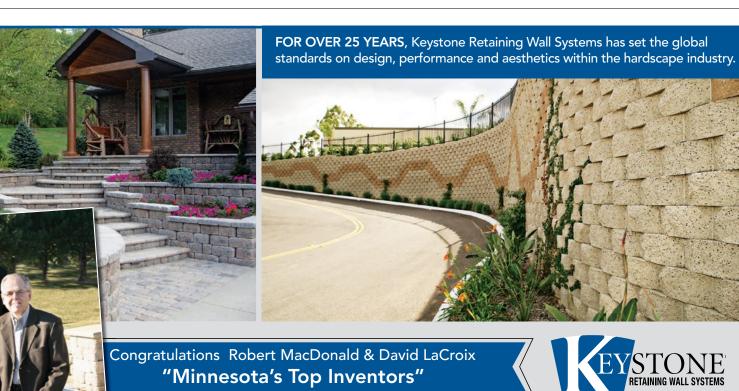
InterValve, Inc. Drasler, William

Ivantis, Inc. Euteneuer, Charles

McNeff Research Consultants, Inc. McNeff, Larry

Medrad. Inc. Bonnette, Michael

MetaModix, Inc. Thompson, Paul



The innovative and resilient spirits of people, such as Robert MacDonald and David LaCroix, have helped make Keystone Retaining Wall Systems an industry leader. Keystone proudly joins the Minnesota business community in acknowledging and celebrating the accomplishments of our "Top Inventors."



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David LaCroix, VP of Business Development Robert MacDonald, Executive VP

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Morgan Stanley Senior Funding, Inc. Hamel, Kory

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SarTec Corporation Mcneff, Clayton

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ADC Telecommunica-

tions, Inc. Beck, Ronald Clark, Gordon Khemakhem, M'Hamed Kowalczyk, Scott Krampotich, Dennis Lu, Yu Puetz, Curtis Smith, Trevor Solheid, James Tinucci, Thomas Vongseng, Soutsada Wayman, Michael Zimmel, Steven

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Demulling, Delight Drew, Michael Howard, William Iyer, Rajesh Mcconnell, Deborah Sarkar, Shantanu Schmidt, Craig Scott, Erik Soykan, Orhan Viavattine, Joseph

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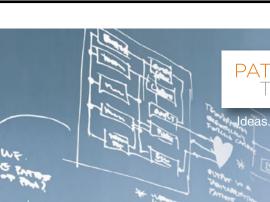
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AGCO Corporation Steffensen, Casey

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Stratasys, Inc. Taatjes, Thomas

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UltiMed, Inc. Erickson, Thomas

Vision Home Products, Inc. Hertaus, Alan

None Affiliated Becker, Brian Becker, Derek

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Company Benson, Karl David, Moses Frey, Matthew Gaddam, Babu Graham, Katherine Haas. Christopher Hebrink, Timothy Kolb, Brant Kshirsagar, Manjiri Lee, Hae-Seung Lewandowski, Kevin Pearson, Scott Rosenflanz, Anatoly Sura, Ravi Venne, Janet Wood, Thomas

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The 'How tos' of Corporate Community Giving Gardens Friday, January 25, 2013, 7:30-9:30 a.m.



Join the conversation with members of the Twin Cities Corporate Community Giving Garden Network as they share best practices in corporate community gardening, provide the how tos of getting started, and wow you with their amazing results and stories about how they are making a real difference in the community- one vegetable at a time. *Stay after the event for an optional ski or snowshoe adventure if time permits.*







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Seagate Technology, LLC Johnson, Michael

Segetis, Inc. Mullen, Brian

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Kuryakyn Holdings, LLC Stahel, Brian

Medtronic, Inc. Olson, David

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OMPANIES ARE ASKING MORE OF EMPLOYEES THAN EVER BEFORE, and will likely need training and development experts to help them boost work force skills. Indeed, employer spending on learning and development is at an all-time high, according to the American Society for

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Administrative

Excellence, Inc. 3936 133rd Ct. W Rosemount, MN 55068 651-322-3678 adminexcellence.com Contact: Erin O'Hara Meyer (owner and president) Effectiveness training and consulting for support staff

The Bailey Group

4800 Olson Memorial Hwy., Ste. 225 Minneapolis, MN 55422 763-545-5997 thebaileygroup.com **Contact:** Leigh Bailey (CEO) *Team and organizational development, talent management, leadership development and executive coaching*

Convenience Learning International

175 Jackson Ave. N, Ste. 412 Hopkins, MN 55343 952-938-3830 clearning.com **Contact:** David Janiszewski (president)

Video-based online interactive courses covering topics such as OSHA compliance, safety, HR, and technical and trade skills; customers can track course completion, make course assignments, and deliver custom content

Dale Carnegie Training 4938 Lincoln Dr. Edina, MN 55436 952-548-5600 minnesota.dalecarnegie.com Contact: Jennifer Huber (director of marketing) *Customized and public training and coaching in sales*

training and coaching in sales strategies, leadership development, presentation skills, employee engagement, and customer service

EngagementWerx

7700 Equitable Dr., Ste. 102 Eden Prairie, MN 55344 952-548-1250 engagementwerx.com **Contact:** Cal Munkvold (president)

Employee engagement and leadership assessments, leadership and management coaching, and training for business improvement and culture change

Insights Learning & Development

684 Excelsior Blvd., Ste. 100 Excelsior, MN 55331 952-223-1147 insights.com **Contact:** Scott Schwefel (managing partner) *Organizational development, sales and leadership training*

Learning Masters, Inc. 6619 Parkwood Lane

Edina, MN 55436 952-938-0239 learningmasters.com **Contact:** Al Frank (president) *Custom training in sales and marketing, HR, and process improvement*

Mateffy & Company

2930 Highland Court Mound, MN 55364 952-472-0820 mateffyco.com **Contact:** Jack Mateffy

Customized leadership development, employee engagement, productivity and communication, and sales and service training; workforce reengagement programs

O.I. Partners-Organizational Innovations, Inc.

5821 E Cedar Lake Road St. Louis Park, MN 55416 952-525-1475 organizational-innovations.com **Contact:** Thomas Bodin (president and CEO)

Human capital and talent management; consultants, trainers, coaches, and recruiters; talent acquisition; talent development; talent transitions; organizational alignment

Resource Training & Solutions

4150 2nd St. S, Ste. 550 St. Cloud, MN 56301 320-255-3236 resourcetraining.com **Contact:** Robert Cavanna, (executive director and CEO) Sales, customer service, supervision, executive leadership, team building, time management, diversity, and Smart Board training; online software, health, and safety training

Service Quality Institute

9201 E Bloomington Fwy. Bloomington, MN 55420 952-884-3311 customer-service.com **Contact:** John Tschohl (president)

Customer service programs, training programs on empowerment and service recovery, customer service certification seminars

Watermark Learning

7301 Ohms Lane, Ste. 360 Edina, MN 55439 800-646-9362 watermarklearning.com **Contact:** Chris Anderson (vice president) Business analysis, project management, and business process management training

Wilson Learning Worldwide

8000 W 78th St., Ste. 200 Edina, MN 55439 952-944-2880 wilsonlearning.com **Contact:** Nancy Brenny (director of marketing) Sales effectiveness, leadership and team building, assessment and measurement, customer service, and work force effectiveness training

Training Companies

--Technology Instruction AppDev Products, LLC/ LearnNow, LLC 10250 Valley View Road, Ste. 120 Eden Prairie, MN 55344 952-943-1363 appdev.com Contact: Craig Jensen (president and CEO) Microsoft Visual Studio, SQL Server, SharePoint, Microsoft Office, cloud computing, Java, mobile development, web development certification

Ascolta

7900 International Dr., Ste. 170 Bloomington, MN 55425 651-244-9230 ascolta.com **Contact:** Julie Gottschalk (manager) *Cisco and Microsoft training*

Benchmark Learning

4510 W 77th St., Ste. 210 Edina, MN 55435 952-896-6800 benchmarklearning.com **Contact:** Eric Garrison (learning solutions director) *Skill assessments, learning consulting, and career guiding; training on Citrix, Cisco, CompTIA, Security, Share-Point, SQL, System Center, PowerShell, Windows Server* 2008, graphic design, web, *ITIL; business analysis and project management*

Dashe & Thomson

401 N 3rd St., Ste. 500 Minneapolis, MN 55401 612-338-4911 dashe.com **Contact:** Luke Powers (project coordinator) *Customized training for largescale business changes, such as enterprise software and process re-engineering*

Easel Solutions, Inc.

23 Empire Dr. St. Paul, MN 55103 651-602-3153 easelsolutions.com Contact: David Schomaker (CEO) Adobe authorized training, consulting, and development

EDI Partners

Act (HIPAA)

7204 Oaklawn Edina, MN 55435 612-839-6890 edipartners.com **Contact:** Dan Petrosky (president and owner) *Seminars and coursework in electronic data interchange and the Health Insurance*

Portability and Accountability

Elert & Associates

140 S 3rd St. Stillwater, MN 55082 651-430-2772 elerttraining.com **Contact:** Kit Elert (director of training) *Microsoft Office Suite*

Microsoft Office Suite training; instructor-led classes delivered on site or in a virtual classroom

Euler Training Center

1660 Hwy. 100 S, Ste. 101 St. Louis Park, MN 55416 952-567-4220 euler.com

Contact: Pam Laulainen Unix/Linux, Oracle, Web-Sphere, Java, web development, C++, and Perl training

FirstTech

2640 Hennepin Ave. S Minneapolis, MN 55408 612-374-8000 firsttech.com **Contact:** Chad Carlson (professional services manager) *Training and integration for Apple, Adobe, iPad, and Filemaker applications*

Fissure

8120 Penn Ave. S, Ste. 454 Bloomington, MN 55431 952-882-0800 fissure.com **Contact:** Jesse Freese (president) *Simulation-powered learning in project management, business analysis, Agile Scrum, leadership, and managing*

Index Computers

organizational change

7447 Eagan Dr., Ste. 100 Savage, MN 55378 952-447-1040 indexcomputers.com **Contact:** Patricia Norris (owner) *Microsoft Office Suite and QuickBooks training*

Interlinx Associates, LLC

7801 E Bush Lake Road, Ste. 230 Bloomington, MN 55439 952-829-0911 interlinxassociates.com **Contact:** Elaine Koyama, (business development) *ACT! Contact Manager, Sage-SalesLogix, Sage CRM, and* Salesforce.com implementation and training; web site and e-marketing consulting

Intertech

1575 Thomas Center Dr. Eagan, MN 55122 651-994-8558 intertech.com **Contact:** Tom Salonek (CEO) .NET, JEE, SQL Server, SharePoint, and open source technology consulting and training

Kaplan Professional Schools

1295 Bandana Blvd., Ste. 245 St. Paul, MN 55108 651-641-1000 kpsminnesota.com **Contact:** Christine Foster (director) *In-person and online com*-

puter and Microsoft Office training

Knowledge Design & Delivery, Inc. 1600 18th Ave. NE, Suite 18396 Minneapolis, MN 55418

612-379-3883 kdsquared.com **Contact:** Polly Johanson (president) *Custom documentation and training in technical writing*

Knowledge Peak

3140 Neil Armstrong Blvd., Ste. 230 Eagan, MN 55121 952-431-2999 kpeak.com **Contact:** Neil Peterson (president)

ITIL, ISO 20000, project management, .NET, Cisco, Microsoft, Oracle, Unix, Linux, and Java training and consulting

Knowledge Transfer Training Center

3140 Neil Armstrong Blvd., Ste. 121 Eagan, MN 55121 651-905-3729 ktcs.biz **Contact:** Sarah Gwaltney (CEO and owner) *Training in Microsoft pro-* gramming, servers, Microsoft Office, SQL server, Java, Unix, Linux, project management, Adobe, ITIL, business analysis, Scrum, Agile, and others

MarketPlace

Innovations, Inc. 7025 Edenvale Blvd. Eden Prairie, MN 55346 612-670-4714 mpii.com Contact: David Sunnarborg ACT!, ACT! for Web, and Sage ACT! training and consulting

New Horizons Computer Learning Center

2915 Commers Dr., Ste. 500 Eagan, MN 55121 651-287-9950 nhtwincities.com **Contact:** Sammy Peterson

(manager)

Microsoft Office and technical courses; Cisco, Citrix, Comp-TIA, Novell, VMWare, Linux, ITIL, WatchGuard, information security, helpdesk, and Adobe courses

Onyx Training Company 1439 Fairway Ct. Chaska, MN 55318 952-443-4694

onyxtraining.com Contact: Ann Kalin (president) Instructor-led, web-based and/or classroom-based corporate IT training for developing software, managing relational databases, data warehouses, and business intelligence reporting, with a focus on Oracle products

Science Museum of Minnesota

120 W Kellogg Blvd. St. Paul, MN 55102 651-221-4722 comped.smm.org **Contact:** Sara Graffunder (director of computer education) Beginning and intermediatelevel classes in Microsoft Office, database management, desktop publishing and digital imaging, information management, social media, and web development and design

Training Companies

--Training Design Adayana, Inc. 4444 W 76th St., Ste. 100 Edina, MN 55435 800-285-8859 adayana.com Contact: Steve McQueen (director of commercial sales) Management consulting, customized e-learning courseware, instructor-led

Allen Interactions, Inc.

training materials

1120 Centre Pointe Dr., Ste. 800 Mendota Heights, MN 55120 651-203-3700 alleninteractions.com **Contact:** Marty Lipshutz (president) *Custom e-learning design and development, learning strategy consulting,*

and ZebraZapps (authoring

and publishing platform)

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5115 41st Ave. S Minneapolis, MN 55417 612-724-5110 brainytraining.com **Contact:** Susan Foster (main brain) *Custom corporate training and development, writing and editing, and ghostwriting*

Computer Training International, Inc.

600 Twelve Oaks Center Dr., Ste. 217 Wayzata, MN 55391 612-378-0665 go-cti.com **Contact:** Ellen Zissler (president)

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Seward, Inc. 2200 E Franklin Ave.

Minneapolis, MN 55404 612-721-4444 sewardinc.com **Contact:** Victoria Frank (president)

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Postgraduate Programs and Business Certification Argosy University

>COLLEGE OF BUSINESS 1515 Central Pkwy. Eagan, MN 55121 651-846-2882 argosy.edu/twincities Contact: Karen Gulliver (program chair)

Programs Offered: MBA; MS in health services management, organizational leadership, and HR; master of public administration and nonprofit management; specialized programs MBA Length: 2 years MBA Tuition: \$542 to \$741 per credit

Augsburg College

2211 Riverside Ave. S, Campus Box 65 Minneapolis, MN 55454 612-330-1101 augsburg.edu/mba

Contact: Nathan Gorr (director of graduate admissions)

Programs Offered: MBA with concentrations and graduate certificates in social entrepreneurship, finance, marketing, and health care management; dual degree MBA-MA in leadership; MA in leadership (hybrid version also available); post-master's certificates in leadership MBA Length: 23 months MBA Tuition: \$556 per credit

Bethel University

3900 Bethel Dr. St. Paul, MN 55112 651-635-8000 bethel.edu **Contact:** Not provided Programs Offered: MBA; MA in organizational leadership and communications MBA Length: 2 to 3 years MBA Tuition: \$645 per credit

Capella University SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

& TECHNOLOGY 225 S 6th St. Minneapolis, MN 55402 866-933-5840 capella.edu Contact: Cheryl Bann (MBA faculty chair)

Programs Offered: MBA with concentrations in accounting, business intelligence, entrepreneurship, finance, global operations and supply chain, marketing, health care management, HR management, IT management, and project management; several MS business degrees, doctoral business degrees, and business certificates MBA Length: 2 years MBA Tuition: \$678 per credit

Cardinal Stritch University

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT 11010 Prairie Lakes Dr., Ste. 300 Eden Prairie, MN 55344 800-347-8822, ext. 8830 stritch.edu Contact: Amie Engels (orrollment manager)

(enrollment manager) Programs Offered: Online and classroom MBA with concentrations in management, health care management, and global business management; MS in management; certificates in HR management, project management, sales and management, and contemporary team management MBA Length: 2 years to 30 months MBA Tuition: \$495 to \$570 per credit

The College of St. Scholastica

>SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY 340 Cedar St., Ste. 50 St. Paul, MN 55101 651-298-1015 css.edu

Contact: Patricia Angulo (management programs coordinator); Randal Zimmermann (graduate programs department chair)

Programs Offered: MBA; MA in management; dual MBA-MA in management; management certificates in business leadership, change leadership, finance, health care leadership, IT leadership, marketing, and public administration MBA Length: 16 months to 2 years MBA Twitian: \$455 and credit

MBA Tuition: \$455 per credit

Concordia University COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL

LEADERSHIP 275 Syndicate St. N St. Paul, MN 55104 651-641-8278 csp.edu Contact: Louise Ehrhart (graduate admission counselor)

Programs Offered: MBA; MBA with emphasis in health care management; MA in leadership and management, and HR management MBA Length: 18 to 22 months MBA Tuition: \$595 per credit

Crown College

8700 College View Dr. 8700 College View Dr. St. Bonifacius, MN 55375 952-446-4100 crown.edu/mba Contact: Maggie Unger (director of enrollment, online, and graduate school) Programs Offered: MBA; MA in organizational leadership, international leadership, ministry leadership, and Christian studies MBA Length: 2 years MBA Tuition: \$450 per credit

DeVry University ►KELLER GRADUATE

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT 7700 France Ave. S, Ste. 575 Edina, MN 55435 952-838-1860 keller.edu Contact: Stephanie Grgurich

(campus director) Programs Offered: MBA; master of accounting and financial management, HR management, project management, public administration, information systems management, network and communications management MBA Length: 2 years MBA Tuition: \$752 per credit

Globe University/ Minnesota School of Business 8089 Globe Dr.

Woodbury, MN 55125 877-303-6060 globeuniversity.edu **Contact:** Kathy Handlos (network dean of business programs)

Programs Offered: MBA with emphases in accounting, finance, HR, legal administration, marketing, public administration, and technology management; MS in management with emphases in health care management, information technology, and managerial leadership; doctor of business administration MBA Length: 18 months MBA Tuition: \$535 per credit

Hamline University >SCHOOL OF BUSINESS 1536 Hewitt Ave. St. Paul, MN 55104 651-523-2284 hamline.edu/business Contact: Jamie McClary Programs Offered: MBA; MA in nonprofit management; MA and doctorate in public administration; dual programs, including some with juris doctor degrees MBA Length: 21 months MBA Tuition: \$606 per credit

Metropolitan State University >COLLEGE OF

MANAGEMENT 1501 Hennepin Ave. Minneapolis, MN 55403 612-659-7290 metrostate.edu/mba **Contact:** Aud Wengronowitz (director of recruitmentgraduate programs) Programs Offered: MBA: MA in public and nonprofit administration; MS in management information systems; certificates in management information systems and project management MBA Length: 2 to 3 years MBA Tuition: \$338 to \$441 per credit

Minnesota State University, Mankato

>COLLEGE OF BUSINESS 122 Taylor Center Mankato, MN 56001 507-389-2967 cob.mnsu.edu/mba/ Contact: Marilyn Fox (MBA director) Programs Offered: MBA MBA Length: 2 years MBA Tuition: \$528 per credit

National American University

>HAROLD D. BUCKINGHAM GRADUATE SCHOOL 7801 Metro Pkwy., Ste. 200 Bloomington, MN 55425 952-356-3600 national.edu

Contact: Not provided

Programs Offered: MBA with emphases in health care administration, HR management, accounting, and international business; master of management; master of management with emphases in health care administration, criminal justice, proprietary higher education management, and HR management MBA Length: 18 months, full time

MBA Tuition: \$450 per credit

St. Catherine University >SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP 2004 Randolph Ave. St. Paul, MN 55105 stkate.edu Contact: Sylvia Alexander-

Sedey (assistant director of admissions)

Programs Offered: Master's program in organizational leadership MBA Length: 12 to 36 months MBA Tuition: \$395 to \$763 per credit

St. Cloud State University >HERBERGER BUSINESS

SCHOOL 720 4th Ave. S St. Cloud, MN 56301 320-308-3212 stcloudstate.edu/mba Contact: Michele Mumm (MBA director)

Programs Offered: MBA; MBA with emphases in HR, information systems, and economics; master of information assurance MBA Length: 15 to 26 months MBA Tuition: \$725 per credit

Saint Mary's University of Minnesota >GRADUATE SCHOOL OF

BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY 2500 Park Ave. Minneapolis, MN 55404 612-728-5198 smumn.edu

Contact: Mike Dahl (admissions recruiter)

Programs Offered: MBA; MA in organizational leadership, arts and cultural management, international business, HR management, human development, and public safety administration; MS in project management and information technology management; certificates in accounting and project management MBA Length: 2 years MBA Tuition: \$440 per credit

University of Minnesota, Duluth

LABOVITZ SCHOOL OF
 BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
 1318 Kirby Dr.
 Duluth, MN 55812
 218-726-8986
 d.umn.edu/goto/mba
 Contact: Not provided

Programs Offered: MBA; also offered through University of Minnesota-Rochester MBA Length: 2 to 7 years MBA Tuition: \$960 per credit

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities CARLSON SCHOOL

OF MANAGEMENT 321 19th Ave. S, Ste. 1-110 Minneapolis, MN 55455 612-625-5555 carlsonschool.umn.edu/mba

Contact: Phil Miller (assistant dean, MBA programs); Mark Kizilos (assistant dean, executive education)

Programs Offered: Full-time and part-time MBA, executive MBA; MA in HR and industrial relations; master of business taxation and accountancy; doctorate in business administration, and HR and industrial relations MBA Length: 1 year to 42 months MBA Tuition: \$1,176 per credit

University of St. Thomas >OPUS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS 1000 LaSalle Ave.

Minneapolis, MN 55403 651-962-4200 stthomas.edu/business **Contact:** Christopher Puto (dean); William Woodson (assistant dean

for MBA programs) Programs Offered: Full-time MBA, evening MBA, executive MBA, health care MBA; master of busi-

ness communication; master of science in accountancy; master of science in real estate MBA Length: 21 months to 6 years MBA Tuition: \$885 per credit

Walden University

>SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT 100 Washington Ave. S, Ste. 900 Minneapolis, MN 55401 866-492-5336 waldenu.edu

Contact: William Schulz (associate dean)

Programs Offered: MBA; MS in accounting, management, accounting and management, HR management, leadership, project management; doctor of business administration; doctorate in management; graduate certificate in project management; post-doctorate bridge certificates MBA Length: 22 months MBA Tuition: \$805 per credit **TCB**

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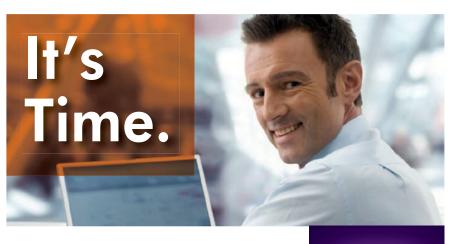
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2013 Twin Cities **Five Star Wealth Managers**

In a consumer study about dynamics between wealth managers and their clients, Five Star Professional polled wealth managers and consumers about communications. Both groups said that connecting three to four times a year is the right communications strategy, but expectations are not aligned in all areas:

- 29 percent of consumers want to be contacted by their wealth manager whenever events require an update; only 7 percent of wealth managers say they contact clients based on the impact of events.
- 63 percent of consumers say they receive the right amount of communication from their wealth manager.

From research conducted by Five Star Professional, April 2011.

Wealth managers, broadly defined, are those individuals who help you manage your financial world and/or implement aspects of your financial strategies. Common examples of wealth managers are financial advisors, financial planners, investment advisors, tax advisors and estate planning attorneys.

How do you find a wealth manager with experience, who has a good base of clients with high retention rates, and who has undergone a regulatory and complaint review? And when you find them, are they accepting new clients?

Twin Cities Business, Mpls.St.Paul Magazine and Five Star Professional partnered to find wealth managers who satisfy 10 objective eligibility and evaluation criteria that are associated with wealth managers who provide quality services to their clients. Among many distinguishing attributes, the average one-year client retention rate for this year's award winners is more than 96 percent.

Con't listen to other people. Investigate for yourself. Be wary of advisers who say they never had a down year."

— Five Star Wealth Manager



The 2013 Five Star Wealth Managers are a select group, representing less than 5 percent of the wealth managers in the Twin Cities area.⁽¹⁾

AWARU Although this list is a useful tool for anyone looking for help in managing their financial world or implementing aspects of their financial strategies, it should not be considered exhaustive. Undoubtedly, there are many excellent wealth managers who, for one reason or another, are not on this year's list.



In order to consider a broad population of high-quality wealth managers, award candidates are identified by one of three sources: firm nomination, peer nomination or pre-qualification based on industry standing. Self-nominations are not accepted. Twin Cities award candidates were identified using internal and external research data, including a survey to more than

6,200 registered financial services professionals and all identified financial service companies in the area that are registered with FINRA or the SEC.

Determination

Award candidates who satisfied 10 objective eligibility and evaluation criteria that are associated with wealth managers who provide quality services were named 2013 Five Star Wealth Managers.⁽²⁾

Eligibility Criteria - Required⁽³⁾

- 1. Credentialed as an investment advisory representative (IAR), a FINRA-registered representative, a CPA or a licensed attorney.
- 2. Actively employed as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of five years.
- 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review.⁽⁴⁾
- 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal firm standards.
- 5. Accepting new clients.

Evaluation Criteria – Considered⁽³⁾

- 6. One-year client retention rate (the average one-year client retention rate of this year's award winners is more than 96 percent).
- 7. Five-year client retention rate.
- 8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered (this year's award winners administer an average of \$98 million in client assets).
- 9. Number of client households served (on average, this year's award winners serve 280 households).
- 10. Education and professional designations.

Research ISCLOSURES

• Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final list of Five Star Wealth Managers.

- The Five Star award is not indicative of the wealth manager's future performance.
- Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their clients' assets.
- The inclusion of a wealth manager on the Five Star Wealth Manager list should not be construed as an endorsement of the wealth manager by Five Star Professional, Twin Cities Business or Mpls. St.Paul Magazine.
- Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager or any wealth manager is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected wealth managers will be awarded this accomplishment by Five Star Professional in the future.
- Five Star Professional is not an advisory firm, and the content of this article should not be considered financial advice. For more information on the Five Star award and the research/ selection methodology, go to www.fivestarprofessional.com.
- (1) 2,151 award candidates in the Twin Cities area were considered for the Five Star Wealth Manager award. 863 (approximately 40 percent of the award candidates) were named 2013 Five Star Wealth Managers.

⁽²⁾ Wealth managers were required to certify that any information they provided was accurate.

- ⁽³⁾ Criteria 4, 8 and 9 do not apply to attorneys or CPAs.
- ⁽⁴⁾ As defined by Five Star Professional, the wealth manager has not:
 Been subject to a regulatory action that resulted in a license being suspended or revoked, or payment of a fine.
- Had more than a total of three customer complaints filed against them (settled or pending) with any regulatory authority or Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process
- Individually contributed to a financial settlement of a customer complaint filed with a regulatory authority.
- Filed for personal bankruptcy.Been convicted of a felony.

Five Star Professional conducts a regulatory review of each nominated wealth manager using the Investment Adviser Public Disclosure (IAPD) website. Five Star Professional also uses multiple supporting processes to help ensure that a favorable regulatory and complaint history exists. Data submitted through these processes was applied per the above criteria:

• Each wealth manager who passes the Five Star Professional regulatory review must attest that they meet the definition of favorable regulatory history, based upon the criteria listed above

- Five Star Professional promotes via local advertising the opportunity for consumers to confidentially submit complaints regarding a wealth manager.
- Five Star Professional contacted approximately 1 in 12 households identified as having a high propensity to use the services of wealth managers in order to provide consumers the opportunity to submit complaints regarding a wealth manager. More than 16,600 households in the Twin Cities area were contacted.

The Five Star Wealth Manager selection criteria was updated for the 2012 award year. 2005 – 2011 Five Star Wealth Managers scored highest in overall satisfaction based on feedback from clients, peers and industry experts. No more than 7 percent of wealth managers receive the award each year. The selection process for the 2005 - 2011 award winners can be found at www.fivestarprofessional.com/2011/wealth_managers_research_overview.php.



The Five Star award goes to less than 7 percent of wealth managers.

Insights from Five Star Wealth Managers

- Wishful thinking is not planning. If you plan for the worst, you will never be unpleasantly surprised."
- Clients don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."
- **6** Only invest in something that you understand."
- What matters most is how you recover from setbacks."

Business Planning

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Wealth Enhancement Group



Left to right: Seated: Three-year winner Kathryn Dangers, five-year winner Jeff Hockert, six-year winners J. Patrick Wolfe and Bruce Santjer, four-year winner Bill Sukup, two-year winner Margaret Beggs-Towle Standing: 2013 winner J. Benjamin Hess, five-year winners Mike Hess, Justin Whiley and Nick Beissel, 2013 winner Chad Essman, five-year winners Ben Schaefer and Rob Burley, 2013 winner Adam Weiland, three-year winner Michael Bishop, six-year winner Steven Hess and three-year winner Brandon Navara; Not pictured: Five-year winner Bruce Helmer



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The Berger Financial Team

Income Tax-Focused Wealth Management



Left to right: Back row: April Bortscheller, Angela Erickson, Shannon Johnshoy; Front row: Jackie Flahaven, 2013 winner Mark Berger, Linda Bergstrom, Larry Berger

Area of Focus: Comprehensive, thoughtful planning for both longand short-term goals

- Income tax planning and preparation fully integrated with financial planning
- Portfolio management that is cost efficient, tax efficient and risk managed
- Personal financial planning for the big picture of financial stability over time

We work together as credentialed professionals, including CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER[™] professionals and tax CPAs, to make a positive difference in the lives of our clients by helping them to make smart financial decisions within the greater field of personal finance. In working this way, we aim to enhance the income, growth and tax-favored treatment for our clients





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Left to right: Andrea Mattson, Financial Advisor; Greg Snider, Financial Advisor; Beth Johnson, Registered Associate; 2013 winner David Olson, Senior Vice President, Financial Advisor; Cathy Olson, Senior Service Associate; Bill Hankerson, Relationship Manager; Jana Holst, Registered Associate

- A private client practice serving the needs of physicians, business owners and corporate executives
- An institutional practice focused on serving endowments and foundations
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The BlackRidge Group and Five Star Wealth Manager David Olson put the focus on you. The common thread among all of our relationships is the consultative approach we take in the development of custom strategies designed to meet the specific goals and objectives of each respective client. We are dedicated to providing the type of service that exceeds client expectations, and we are committed to the hard work required to make that goal a reality each day. Leveraging a

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Left to right: 2012 winner Paul Borchert; four-year winner Kyle Kirsch; two-year Wealth Manager and 2011 Business Insurance Professional John Kuhrmeyer, CFP®, ChFC®, CLU®*; four-year winner Kyle Schiffler, CFP®, ChFC®, CLU®*

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- Customized retirement income protection strategies
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2013 Five Star Wealth Managers

Robert J. Goodmanson

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Left to right: Two-year winner Steven Plant, CFP[®], Financial Planner; Rachel Whitcomb, Registered Sales Assistant; Michael Soshnik, Branch Manager, Registered Principal; 2013 winner Mark Gottlieb, CIMA[®], Investment Consultant

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2013 Five Star Wealth Managers

Royal Jaros

Jaros & Associates — Advising Clients One Dream at a Time



Areas of Focus: Retirement Planning, Wealth Management, Tax and Estate Planning Strategies, Small-Business Consulting

Left to right: Morgan Jaros; Lance Strom, Financial Advisor, Certified Financial Planner™ practitioner; Corina McCurdy; Joe St. Thomas, Financial Advisor, Certified Financial Planner™ practitioner; six-year winner Royal Jaros, Certified Financial PLANNER[™] practitioner, Master of Business Administration*; Tom Manderfeld, Financial Advisor

- More than 22 years of experience* in helping clients plan for their dreams
- 97% client satisfaction rating**; 97% client retention***
- Team practice dedicated to the satisfaction of every client

Jaros & Associates', a private wealth advisory practice of Royal Jaros, Private Wealth Advisor, is the franchise owner of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc., passion is to assist their clients in planning for their dreams, so they can have the peace of mind that comes with having a financial plan in place. They employ a true team approach in this pursuit — when any client has a need, all advisors are on call to help. It's this dedication to service, focus on high-quality advice and experience in helping clients build effective portfolios that's led to a practice-level client satisfaction survey score of 97 percent!

Jaros & Associates. He's consistently ranked among the top advisors at Ameriprise Financial in client satisfaction and retention. His focus in the practice is on retirement planning, tax and estate planning strategies, and investment research, and Royal acts as servicing advisor for a number of business, retirement plan and individual wealth management clients. Financial Advisors Lance Strom, CFP®; Joe St. Thomas, CFP®; and Tom Manderfeld also advise clients directly.



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An Independent Registered Investment Advisor (RIA)



Areas of Focus: Asset Management and **Financial Planning**

Left to right: Three-year winner John W. Foster, Senior Advisor; Stephanie P. Rossi, Senior Advisor; four-year winner Michael N. Bilotta, Senior Advisor; Kim Brown, President; Richard S. Brown, Chairman and CEO; Cärin Viertel, Director of Client Services; four-year winner Patrick D. Moyneur, Senior Advisor

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Shad Ketcher

Superior Service Is Timeless

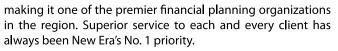


Left to right: Grant Lindaman, three-year winner Shad Ketcher and Don Warner

- Change brings choices
- Choose wisely
- There is a difference

Our lives frequently experience dramatic change whether it be the death of a loved one, retirement, divorce, job loss, marriage, etc. National and global economics also continually change, affecting our investments and strategic planning. During such periods of change, it is invaluable to have a trusted financial advisor with the wisdom and experience to guide you through challenging times.

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Shad Ketcher has been one of the leaders of New Era Financial. Along with Donald Warner and Grant Lindaman, the co-founders of New Era, Shad is able to offer clients comprehensive and independent financial advice. We are committed to helping you manage and build wealth and pass it on efficiently to future generations and/or organizations you want to support.



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Reese J. Lang

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- Retirement and estate planning strategies

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- CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER[™] practitioner

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SilverOak Wealth Management

Financial Advice for Life



Retirement Planning, Executive Counseling, Tax and Estate Planning Strategies

Left to right: Five-year winner Shannon King, CPA, CFP®, PFS, CIMA®, MBT; John Thorvilson, CPA; five-year winner Kim Schwichtenberg, CPA, PFS, CFP®; three-year winner Allen Kaufmann, CPA; 2010 winner Jonathan Scharlau, CFA®, CFP®

- Independent, fee-only registered investment advisory services
- Comprehensive financial planning based on our clients' core values
- Exceptional service provided by an experienced, accredited team

As a premier financial planning and wealth management It is our responsibility to be perfectly aligned with our clients' company, our desire is to build a solid foundation with our clients — a partnership based on understanding their life's goals and expectations. We are committed to keeping our clients first.

SilverOak Wealth Management excels in providing objective, disciplined investment strategies and advice tailored to each client's specific needs. We firmly believe in a comprehensive approach to portfolio management and investment strategies where we focus on integrating estate, financial and tax planning to create long-term successful results.

needs — to explore options, develop customized strategies and provide education and guidance that will enable them to make informed decisions. We work with our clients on a fee-only basis - we are not compensated by any form of commissions.

Our mission is to be our clients' financial partner, their trusted advocate and guide, helping them to achieve greater piece of mind.



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Stiles Financial Services, Inc.

A Team for Today With a Vision for Tomorrow



Informed Choices, Suitable Outcomes

Left to right: Brett Burgau, AIF[®]; Brittney Anderson, AIF[®]; six-year winner Susan Stiles, CFP[®], AIF[®], ChFC[®], MBA; Nancy Hoyos and Suzanne Brophy

- · Corporate retirement plan fiduciary consulting services
- Integrated portfolio management and investment analysis
- Comprehensive wealth management and financial advisement

We have worked hard to position our firm differently from the rest by maintaining our independence in a fluid and changing world. We have earned a reputation for being great listeners, gifted financial strategists and detail-oriented consultants as fiduciary stewards to our clients. The success of your plan is directly linked to the competence of your advisor team. Our conviction is to do what is right for our clients by employing a best-practices process to help achieve desired outcomes.

Philosophy:

Why be average? We uphold a standard of excellence.

Client Approach: Custom solutions to build long-term alliances.

Comparative Differences: Personalized, team-focused approach to service.

Compensation Method: We are a fee-based structured firm.



STILES FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Titus Building, 6550 York Avenue South, Suite 412 • Minneapolis, MN 55435 Office: (952) 988-0452 • Fax: (952) 988-0752 • Toll-free: (866) 401-7374 info@stilesfinancial.com • stilesfinancial.com

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Left to right: **2012 Business Insurance and Benefits Professional Dale Schumacher**, CEBS, RPA; **Buddy Horner**, QKA; **Tiffany Rovaina**, CFP®; **two-year Wealth Manager Bob Cron**, Managing Director

Baker Tilly Investment Advisors, with more than \$1.5 billion in regulatory assets under management*, offers advisory and administration services for individuals and retirement plans. Through in-depth knowledge and experience, our professionals help clarify financial goals and create strategies to meet client objectives. We commit to delivering *exceptional client service* and becoming your valued advisor.

Baker Tilly Investment Advisors Team

Candor. Insight. Results. Independent and Objective

- Retirement readiness and distribution strategies for individuals
- Tailored plan designs and investment consulting for organizations
- Independent, fee-based registered investment advisor since 1997



225 South 6th Street, Suite 2300 Minneapolis, MN 55402

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Left to right: Three-year winner Brad Mayer, CPA; four-year winner Jon Meyer, CFP°; four-year winner Dan Boeckermann, CPA, PFS; Jim Grafstrom, CPA

BGM Wealth Management has been helping professionals manage their finances for more than 15 years. We craft financial solutions so our clients can live the life they want, and we handle the financial details so you have the freedom to focus on the things that are truly important to you. By understanding your lifestyle and goals, addressing concerns and developing a comprehensive financial plan, we help you maintain and increase your wealth.

BGM Wealth Management

Wealth Management for Life

- Improving clients' lives
- Unbiased advice
- Creative problem solving



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www.bgmwealth.com



Left to right: **Two-year winner Robert Bjork**, CFP[®], Managing Partner, Financial Advisor and **Michael Brown**, Managing Partner, Financial Advisor

Birch Cove Group helps you achieve everything that is important in your life. Every client has different values, and we believe decisions should align with the principles that mean the most to you. Working collaboratively, we determine your goals and get insight from a team of experienced professionals. Ultimately, together we help you make decisions with absolute confidence, knowing you are doing everything to keep your assets, your family and your legacy strong.

Birch Cove Group, Ltd.

When Everything Changes, We Understand

- Experienced help during transitions
- Comprehensive financial guidance
- Building stronger relationships



8500 Normandale Lake Boulevard, Suite 2160 Bloomington, MN 55437 Robert: (952) 548-3122 Mike: (952) 960-2600 www.birchcovegroup.com

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Kenneth L. Brown

Trustworthy. Experienced. Objective.

- Comprehensive wealth management
- Consulting to retirement plans
- Since 1980

Left to right: **Paula Lundberg**, Director Client Services; **David Brown**, Client Services Associate; **2013 winner Ken Brown**, Wealth Advisor, Investment Management Consultant; **Andrew Brown**, Director of Communications, Multimedia Design

Your journey is not only about reaching your destination; it is also about remaining there comfortably and confidently. For more than 32 years, we have aligned our 90 family and closely held business clients with high-integrity professionals and service providers to reach their goals. Collaborating with clients' legal and tax advisors, we accomplish the careful investment, management, preservation and transfer of wealth.

Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. 8500 Normandale Lake Boulevard, Suite 2160 Bloomington, MN 55437 Phone: (952) 903-2305 ken.l.brown@raymondjames.com www.raymondjames.com/kennethlbrown

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Left to right: **Six-year winner Mark Cheeley,** Financial Advisor, MBA, CRPC®, CFS®, RFC®; **Katie Pennington**, Client Service Manager

Your goals and future are dependent on your portfolio. That is why it is essential that you meet with a financial advisor who is up-to-date with investment strategies, tax law changes and market trends to help protect your dreams. When you work with Mark, he will make sure you understand the entire financial picture by designing your personalized plan. Saving is a start, now it is time to put a plan in action. Call Mark to schedule your no-obligation consultation.

Mark D. Cheeley

Helping You Be Confident in Your Financial Future

- 15 years of experience
- Exceptional client service
- Personal approach



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CliftonLarsonAllen Wealth Advisors

Guidance on Your Financial Journey

- Personal attention
- Objective advice
- Long-term relationships

Left to right: **Three-year winner Nicholas Houle***, CPA, MBT; **two-year winner Tony Hallada**, AIF*; **three-year winner Michael McConnell**, CPA, CFP*; **two-year winner John Gustavson**, CPA/PFS, CFP*, CFA*

CliftonLarsonAllen Wealth Advisors, LLC serves individuals, families, and privately held businesses and their owners. Our national practice consists of approximately 100 professionals. Clients benefit from working with a unique team comprised of both tax professionals and wealth advisors. With more than 50 years of experience, we provide valuable insights and a close, personal connection to professionals devoted to your success.



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*Nicholas Houle is part of CliftonLarsonAllen LLP. Investment Advisory Services offered through CliftonLarsonAllen Wealth Advisors, LLC, an SEC-Registered Investment Advisor.



Four-year winner Luther Hagen, CFP®, CLU®, ChFC®

Luther Hagen is dedicated to helping clients have the freedom to do what they truly value in life. He designs retirement solutions to support the retirement life you desire.

Luther is affiliated with LPL Financial, the nation's largest independent broker/ dealer (based on total revenues, as reported in *Financial Planning Magazine*, 1996 – 2012). We invite you to learn more by contacting our office.

Luther Hagen

Helping Clients to Grow/Protect Their Wealth

- Retirement income and distribution strategies
- Comprehensive wealth management and independent advice
- Relationships built on trust and integrity since 1988

Area of Focus: Retirement planning for pre-retirees and the recently retired

Hagen Financial Advantage, Inc.

14811 Energy Way Apple Valley, MN 55124 Office: (952) 431-2224 luther@hagenfinancialadvantage.com www.hagenfinancialadvantage.com

Securities and Investment Advisory services offered through LPL Financial a Registered Investment Advisor. Member FINRA/SIPC.



Left to right: Sean Kane, Financial Advisor; 2013 winner Ann Hustad, Vice President, Financial Advisor

We value our clients, knowing that the relationship is the cornerstone of success. Our passion for your financial well-being and our commitment to your future starts with a thorough understanding of your current situation, expectations and goals. Ann's 33 years and Sean's two years of experience with Morgan Stanley Wealth Management will help us develop a comprehensive investment strategy and solidify your retirement plan — a plan that fits both your lifetime and legacy goals. These principles guide Five Star award winner Ann Hustad and Sean Kane.

Hustad/Kane Team at Morgan Stanley

Helping you succeed is Our Commitment to You

- Focused on mutual respect and trust
- Personalized financial planning
- Comprehensive investment strategy

Morgan Stanley

225 South 6th Street Minneapolis, MN 55402 Ann Hustad: (612) 371-8876 Sean Kane: (612) 349-4866

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Left to right: Robyn Jensen, Paraplanner; Jodi Flavin, Office Manager; five-year winners Beth H. Wills, CFP[®], CFS[®], Financial Advisor; Todd J. Johnson, CFP[®], Financial Advisor

As Ameriprise Platinum Financial Services® advisors, Beth and Todd are driven to help clients plan for their financial dreams. Their passion centers on providing comprehensive financial planning and, along with their dedicated staff, administering excellent service to clients. Beth and Todd specialize in ongoing financial planning that includes prudent investment strategies along with risk management, and tax and estate planning strategies to help clients plan for their goals.

Todd Johnson • Beth Wills

Experienced Advisors in Challenging Times

- Proactive, personalized client service
- Long-term client/advisor relationships
- Financial planning and investment advice



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Left to right: **Carol Lee; two-year winner Bill Knapp,** Financial Advisor, Managing Director, CFP®, ChFC®; **Bill Gabrys**, Paraplanner

My approach is simple: understand clients. By understanding your values, needs, goals, dreams and behaviors, I provide a comprehensive approach to financial planning and behavioral advice to support and encourage your financial security. Integrity, concern for order and quality, and teamwork are key competencies I would be honored to share with you.

Bill Knapp

Your Success Is My Goal

- Retirement planning strategies
- Estate planning strategies
- Wealth preservation strategies



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2013 winner Mary B. Kusske, CFP®

Since 1986, Mary B. Kusske has been helping clients achieve financial independence. Financial planning is not just about your money, it's about how you want to live your best life. Her team of CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER[™] practitioners share their personal and professional experience to develop a customized financial program designed to help you achieve your goals. Their strategies are based on competent, independent advice, so you will feel confident in the decisions you make together.

Mary B. Kusske

Simplify Your Life, Plan for Success

- If you want to work for the rest of your life, that's your business; if not, it's our business
- Extensive knowledge with public employee, government and teachers' pension plans
- Specialize in issues related to IRAs, Roth IRAs, 401(k), 403(b) and 457 plans



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Five-year winner Brian Macho, Wealth Advisor, CFP®, ChFC®, CLU®, FIC

After 22 years in the financial services industry, Brian Macho is uniquely prepared to aid his clients in all phases of their financial lives. Whether it is helping clients prepare for retirement, advising clients after the death of a spouse or preparing a financial legacy, Brian's knowledge stems from his own experiences in the death of his parents nearly two decades ago. That knowledge has helped hundreds of Twin Cities families achieve their own financial security.

Brian J. Macho

Financial Security Through Knowledgeable, Caring Advice

- Comprehensive personal financial advice
- Diversified investment solutions
- · Financial security with client values

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Left to right: Jane McKinley, Mary Cravens, Michele Lindell, 2013 winner Scott Maeyaert, CFP®, Financial Advisor

For more than 20 years, our goal has been to offer clients and their families the ultimate financial planning experience. We take great pride in listening to our clients in order to create a meaningful customized financial plan.

We know that wealth brings complexity and responsibility. Our mission is to assist you in making valuable decisions that will allow you to maintain your prosperity, flexibility and authority. We believe financial planning is a continuous, life-long process that will ultimately help lead you to financial freedom.

Scott Maeyaert

Our Process Helps to Simplify Complicated Decisions

- We *care* about you and what you want to accomplish
- We understand how to get you there
- We are *committed* to making it happen



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Left to right: Jennifer Bevington, 2013 winner Nathan Millerbernd, Financial Advisor, AWMA®, ChFEBC; Courtney Olson, Marcia Callender

We are committed to establishing lasting partnerships with our clients by placing a strong emphasis on ethics and values, which are the key to our success. Nate has been utilizing portfolio analysis tools for more than 13 years. We think strategically across all asset classes, utilizing both traditional and alternative investments in designing a personalized portfolio for each client.

Nathan D. Millerbernd

Investment Advice Based on Knowledge, Trust and Integrity

- Retirement and investment planning*
- Honest, unbiased financial advice
- · Helping build and preserve wealth



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www.mwm4wealth.com

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Left to right: Three-year winner Jason Moehring, CFP®, LUTCF, FIC; 2013 winner Joseph Stepanek, FIC

Jason Moehring, and Joe Stepanek, Financial Consultant, has been with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for more than a combined 36 years. Jason is a CFP® professional. Jason and Joe work with clients in the north metro area helping customize financial solutions for people five to 10 years from retirement to well into their retirement years with customized retirement strategies to help manage their retirement savings for a lifetime of income and can have the lifestyle they want.

Jason Moehring Joseph Stepanek

Values-Based Financial Strategies

- Personalized financial strategies around your values and goals
- Customized retirement income planning
- Committed to helping you realize your dreams

Areas of Focus: Pre-Retirement and Retirement Distribution Strategies



11990 Aberdeen Street Northeast, Suite 4 Blaine, MN 55449

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jason.moehring@thrivent.com joseph.stepanek@thrivent.com

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Lisa Guzek Montagné

Clients First • Objective Advice • Exceptional Service

- Highly personalized service
- Financial planning for all stages of life
- Comprehensive wealth management services

Left to right: Polly Bjornson Stéphany, Lindsay Ellison, five-year winner Lisa Guzek Montagné and Brian Carlson

Lisa has been providing clients with financial strategies to achieve their short- and long-term goals for more than 25 years. Along with her highly qualified team of financial professionals, she is able to offer creative strategies to life's complicated issues. She and her team are supported by the objective research of LPL Financial, the nation's leading independent broker/dealer*. LPL Financial does not offer proprietary products, so they are able to truly choose the investment products that best addresss the client's needs. Trust matters when it comes to your finances — and building a relationship of trust means putting the client's needs first. That's what they do every day.



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*As reported in *Financial Planning* magazine, June 1996 – 2012, based on total revenue. Securities offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC. Financial Planning services offered through Guzek Asset Management, a Registered Investment Advisor.



Left to right: Three-year winner Luke Schneider, Financial Consultant, with Nick Taylor, CFP®, Financial Consultant; Keith Berg, CFP®, Wealth Advisor

We are dedicated to serving our clients through a relationship built on trust and integrity. This relationship begins by understanding our clients' core values which helps us tailor the appropriate solutions to meet their needs. We understand the complex challenges confronting our clients now and in the future. Our clients look to us to bring insight, clarity and confidence in knowing they are making an informed financial decision that is in alignment with their goals.

The North Oaks Group

Our Relationship Begins With Your Core Values

- Custom financial planning solutions
- Tax-efficient wealth management
- Strategic wealth protection and transfer

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www.thrivent.com

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Left to right: **Catherine Olson**, Senior Service Associate; **Jana Holst**, Senior Registered Associate; **2013 winner Paul L. Peterman**, CRPC[®], Senior Portfolio Manager, First Vice President, Financial Advisor; **Elizabeth Johnson**, Registered Associate

Paul is a financial services veteran with more than 15 years of experience. As a respected advisor, his experience allows for the development of comprehensive strategies to help meet the specific goals and objectives of his clients. Working closely with families, physicians, corporate executives, business owners and entrepreneurs, along with foundations and endowments, Paul emphasizes long-term relationships built on a foundation of ethics and personal service.

Paul L. Peterman

Intellect, Drive, Integrity — Helping You Go Above and Beyond

- Exceptional, focused, personal service
- Integrity, innovation, experience
- Comprehensive planning, risk management

Morgan Stanley

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Left to right: **Becky K. Parker**, Financial Advisor, CFP[®]; **five-year winner John D. Robinson**, Financial Advisor, CFP[®]; **2013 winner Seth R. Parker**, Financial Advisor

Where smart money management and personalized advice align.

Our approach includes a tailored investment and risk management philosophy, comprehensive financial planning strategies, routine correspondence and meetings, and being better prepared to help meet financial goals and the uncertainty our lives and the markets can present.

John D. Robinson Seth Parker

Imagine ... Life, Work, Retirement and Investing Coming Together

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- Seth R. Parker, (952) 856-8110, seth.r.parker@ampf.com
- Becky K. Parker, CFP[®], (320) 839-3030, becky.k.parker@ampf.com



Parker & Associates, a financial advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.

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Left to right: **Three-year winner Frank Shimkus, Jr.,** Founding Partner of Burns Brothers Financial Group, Inc., CFS[®], CSA^{*}; and **Kelli Meyer**, Associate

We believe we offer a unique and valuable service that enables our clients to enjoy the confidence and peace of mind that comes from having their investment handled prudently, their financial lives organized and simplified, combined with comprehensive tax planning and preparation. Our investment philosophy is to educate our clients to take control of their financial future by using a modern, disciplined and academically proven methodology. This is a structured index approach to investing which is also used by modern institutional investors. We know that our most valuable assets are the relationships we have with our clients. We truly care about our clients and strive to provide them with exceptional service and advice so that they can achieve financial peace of mind.

Frank S. Shimkus, Jr.

Integrity, Trust, Relationship, Experience

We help bring financial and tax expertise to people in major life transitions, such as retirement, divorce, job loss or the loss of a spouse. We do this by helping clients achieve greater peace of mind and financial freedom during this transition.

Focus: Individual Wealth Management and Tax Planning



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Left to right: Two-year winner Ronald Hume, Heidi Hukriede, three-year winner Dennis Hippen, 2013 winner Robert Kincade

Stonebridge specializes in providing customized investment portfolios designed to meet client objectives with individual common stocks, tax-exempt bonds and/ or taxable bonds. Stonebridge portfolio managers work closely with clients and their advisors to meet clearly defined investment objectives. It is our commitment to perform our services with the highest integrity, to manage portfolios through comprehensive analysis and to deliver truly customized services.

Stonebridge Capital Advisors

Customized Money Management

- Separately managed accounts
- Individual stocks and bonds
- Direct contact with portfolio managers

Stonebridge investment performance has been consistently ranked by Lipper since our inception



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Stonebridge Capital Advisors, LLC is an SEC-Registered Investment Advisor.



Four-year winner John K. Thomas, CFP®, Private Wealth Advisor

As a private wealth advisor, I have experience providing multigenerational financial planning, working from grandparents to grandchildren. I am particularly adept at nuances relevant to multigenerational affluent families, including trust utilization, and estate and gift planning strategies. I also work with high-net-worth clients who are seeking to maintain their wealth throughout their retirement years. Successful people often long to fulfill a wide range of aspirations. I understand your vision of retirement is unique, and your financial plan should be, too.

John Thomas

An Ameriprise Private Wealth Advisory Practice

- Ameriprise financial advisor since 1981
- Ameriprise Hall of Fame 1999, Ameriprise Diamond Ring Club 1993

Areas of Focus: Wealth and Income Management Strategies for Pre-Retired and Retired Planning Clients



Thomas, Thomas and Associates, a financial advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. 6500 City West Pkwy., Ste. 400 • Eden Prairie, MN 55344 Phone: (952) 835-8191

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Left to right: Six-year winner Peter Rekstad, CFP®, ChFC®, CLU®, Principal; Karen D'Aloia, CFP®; Travis Gleason; Aimee Hatlestad, CFP®

At TruNorth, we believe life is not only about what you have and what you do, but who you are and why you're here. At TruNorth, we help you on your unique journey of purpose, freeing you to pour your energies into your interests and passions, not just your obligations. We take an active approach with your tax and legal advisors to coordinate your investment management with your tax, estate and charitable plans.

TruNorth

Where Life and Wealth Intersect

- Fiduciary commitment
- Holistic wealth advice
- Coordinated investment management



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Left to right: Chris Root, Financial Advisor, CFP®, CRPC®; six-year winner Michelle Young, Financial Advisor, CFP®, ChFC®, CRPC®, CDFA™; Eric Simonson, Financial Advisor, CRPC®

At Young & Associates, a financial advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc., we believe in a team approach that combines the skill and experience of multiple advisors to create an outstanding client experience specifically designed to help you reach your personal financial goals. We strive to build long-term relationships with clients, advising them on the issues that matter most: a solid education for your children, a retirement and distribution strategy for you, and estate planning ideas for the whole family.

Michelle Young

Personalized, Comprehensive Approach to Financial Planning

- Team approach with tailored solutions
- Customized financial advice
- · Premier client-focused service



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James K. Adams



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John is an accredited wealth manager concentrating on retirement planning, advance investment strategies, charitable giving, insurance solutions and estate planning strategies for individuals, their families and businesses. He will work with you to provide a personalized plan, guidance and then execution of financial and investment strategies. He does this utilizing his group of professionals with an array of expertise in these wealth management planning areas.

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George J. Anastos

Morgan Stanley

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With more than 30 years' experience as a financial advisor, I am fortunate to have established many lasting relationships with the clients who I serve. Building trust starts with taking the time to listen and determine what is truly important to each client. Upon identifying their goals and objectives, I work with my clients using the vast resources available to me to develop wealth management strategies to preserve to grow and to transfer their wealth in a tax-efficient manner.

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Grant I. Beyl

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Joseph E. Klinkhammer

Klinkhammer Financial

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Daniel F. Kuplic



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David A. Olson, Jr.



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Title: Financial Advisor

Credentials: CFP®, CRPC®

As a financial advisor, Mindy works on educating her clients to empower them in their financial life. She strives to make her clients feel confident and assured in their financial decisions.

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Jeffrey Vest

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Attorney at Law

- Wills, elder law, probate, health directives, powers of attorney
- Trusts revocable living, insurance and charitable
- Estate tax planning and minimization

Concentrations: Estate and tax planning for individuals and business owners

Designations: JD, B.B.A. with honors, named "Super Lawyer" by peers Jeff has more than 36 years of estate planning and business planning experience. His practice focuses in the areas of wills, trusts, estate planning, business law and real estate. The goal of his client representation is to determine the needs and objectives of the client, advise the client of planning tools available and prepare the necessary documents to implement the client's plan in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.



Bruce W. Wiessner



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Area of Focus: Retirement Income

- · Help clients clarify and prioritize goals
- Build optimized portfolios
- Stress testing of multiple scenarios

Bruce W. Wiessner, CIMA[®], Senior Financial Advisor,

Senior Vice President – Investments

Our process-driven planning approach helps us understand the goals you most value. Our portfolio construction process helps determine an optimized investment mix designed to achieve your desired goals.

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Title: President – Integrity Financial Group

Credential: Certified Financial Planner™

As a CFP[®] professional, Joe helps pre-retirees and the recently retired develop strategies to achieve their goals. In more than two decades of service, Joe has served generations of families. Joe's son Christopher joined the firm in 2009. Joe and Christopher work to remove the burden of retirement planning and asset management, so clients can enjoy the fruits of their labor in retirement.

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Lawrence Yost

Morgan Stanley

445 Lake St. E, Ste. 320 Wayzata, MN 55391 Phone: (952) 475-4300

Focused on Core Values

- 32 years' financial experience
- Senior investment management consultant
- Retirement income specialist

Titles: Vice President, Senior Portfolio Manager

CPM, CRPS[®], FPS, Wealth Management

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Top five questions that wealth managers want clients to answer:

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- 2. What is your most pressing need right now?
- 3. Where do you see yourself in 5, 10, 15 years?
- 4. Where are all of your assets invested now?
- 5. What is important about money to you?

From research conducted by Five Star Professional, April 2011





Sandra J. Adams Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC 8500 Normandale Lake Blvd., Ste. 1710 Bloomington, MN 55437 Phone: (952) 897-4971 Toll-free: (800) 888-3111

With more than 28 years of experience as an investment professional, I assist clients with investments, retirement and estate strategies to pursue their financial goals.

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John D. Awe Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC Sixth and Marquette Minneapolis, MN 55479 Direct: (612) 667-2764 iohn.d.awe@wellsfargo.com Senior Financial Advisor, Senior Vice President, Investments

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90 S 7th St., 10th Fl. Minneapolis, MN 55402 Phone: (612) 667-3046 ryan.coogan@wellsfargo.com www.wellsfargoadvisors.com Title: Financial Advisor

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Michael Bakalars

Vice President – Investments

More than 30 years assisting clients with their financial needs.

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Amie Burnett



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I believe success should not be measured by just your financial well-being, but by how confident you feel about your future. My mission is to help you reach your financial goals through knowledgeable advice.

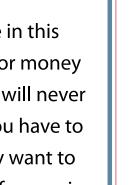
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9555 James Ave. S, Ste. 200 Bloomington, MN 55431 Office: (952) 881-4533, Ext. 109 nnburns@hirep.net www.bbfa.com Investment Planner, Tax Preparer

Natalie provides tailored financial solutions focusing on tax preparation and planning, and wealth management. As an independent investment advisor, she can help you uncover opportunities, navigate hidden risks and achieve success.

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David Daline

601 Carlson Pkwy., Ste. 500 Minnetonka, MN 55305 Direct: (952) 476-3755 Toll-free: (800) 284-2321 david.daline@rbc.com www.davedaline.com Credential: CFP®

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Jonathan J. Dayton Morgan Stanley

8300 Norman Ctr. Dr., Ste. 1150 Bloomington, MN 55437 Direct: (952) 921-1970 jonathan.dayton@morganstanley.com Vice President, Financial Advisor, CFP[®], ChFC[®], CLU[®], Five Star award winner. 2009 – 2013

Jon focuses on comprehensive wealth planning using low-cost strategies to grow and protect wealth.

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Craig Erickson Erickson & Associates P.A.

1300 Godward St. NE, Ste. 1600 Minneapolis, MN 55413 Phone: (612) 465-0080 www.cericksonlaw.com

Mr. Erickson has 35 years of practice experience. As an attorney, he works closely with financial planners, assisting them and their clients with their wealth and estate management needs.

Practice areas: estate and trust administration, charitable planning, business succession planning, guardianship and conservatorships.



Jeff Erpelding USTONE

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Jeff provides comprehensive financial planning and investment advice.

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Rich Fromstein

Morgan Stanley

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Financial Advisor

Richard understands the needs of business owners and works with your CPA and attorneys. He has 15 years of wealth management experience, highly responsive communications and is a former business owner.

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Grant R. Fjosne

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Michael Haverkamp

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As a CFP® professional with more than 25 years of experience in financial services, I am dedicated to providing comprehensive wealth management strategies for individuals, executives and small-business owners.

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Scott D. Kadrlik Meuwissen, Flygare, Kadrlik & Associates 6400 Flying Cloud Dr., Ste. 100 Eden Prairie, MN 55344 Phone: (952) 541-1996, Ext. 209 scott@mfkcpa.com www.mfkcpa.com Certified Public Accountant/ Personal Financial Specialist

Scott D. Kadrlik is the managing partner with the CPA firm of Meuwissen, Flygare, Kadrlik & Associates, P.A., with more than 32 years of experience in public accounting. MFK is a full-service CPA firm offering tax, accounting and financial consulting services.

Paul D. Klein

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Nathan Krampe

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Paul Hoghaug

66 E Thompson Ave. West St. Paul, MN 55118 Phone: (651) 554-3474 paul_hoghaug@anchorlink.com Title: Financial Consultant

Paul has more than 20 years of experience and manages more than \$100 million in advisory and brokerage client assets held with LPL Financial. Five-year award winner.

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Kay Klasse

Ameriprise Financial 8935 Hwy. 5 Lake Elmo, MN 55042 Phone: (651) 747-8200 kay.e.klasse@ampf.com Financial Advisor Certified Financial PLANNER™ practitioner

My conviction for putting my clients' needs first, over my 25-plus years, has resulted in strong, long-term relationships. With this approach, we strive to build and maintain their wealth. I am passionate about my Christian faith and helping others.

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Mark has worked with successful individuals and families for more than 20 years, providing investment advice and solutions tailored to the unique circumstances and goals of each client.

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Chris has been in the financial services industry for more than 30 years and specializes in portfolio management and retirement distribution planning.

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corner office



Learning from the SEAL Mission

Strategy alone is like one hand clapping ... it doesn't work!

Ask yourself:

How committed

is your

organization to

executing its

mission?

t's oddly coincidental that I was beginning to work on this column about the relationship between strategy and execution when I happened to start reading No Easy Day: The Firsthand Account of the Mission That Killed Osama bin Laden by Navy SEAL Mark Owen (a pseudonym).

The mission was extraordinarily difficult. After 10 years of looking for bin Laden, CIA analysts tracked a man they believed to be the terrorist leader to a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, and the SEALs were called in, and ordered to fly into Pakistan under the cover of darkness to kill or capture bin Laden. They achieved their goal, killing the terrorist leader.

Owen's account of the tremendous amount of training the SEALs went through before the raid is impressive in its detail. While still in the U.S., the SEALs conducted nighttime training raids in a model of bin Laden's house, while chief

military officials watched through night-vision goggles. The SEALs were also given extremely detailed intelligence about the compound.

Because of this extensive training, when the raid didn't go exactly as planned, the SEALs made decisions on the spot to adapt to the circumstances. For instance, when the Black Hawk carrying Owen and others went out of control and landed with its tail catching on the compound wall, the SEALs were so familiar with the compound's layout that they were able to instantly adjust and continue with the mission to get bin Laden.

I believe the mission was successful because the goals and strategy were clearly laid out by our military leaders and because the SEALs were given extensive training and empowered to make decisions within certain guidelines.

The SEAL mission underscores what many successful organizations know: that strategy and execution are inseparable. Strategies are built to be executed, and that execution is the key to strategic success. It's like the old "which came first" question about chickens and eggs-you can't have one without the other.

Over the years I've seen many management presentations on strategy with flashy slides and graphs loaded with data. But most of the time, these strategies fail to involve input from the people who are going

> to be called upon to execute them. Employees are treated like mindless, choiceless robot "doers." This can be a huge

stumbling block for an organization, because it tells employees that management doesn't care about their ideas or input. The result: Employees don't care either.

But if we use the Navy SEALs mission as our model, what stands out are the lengths that our military leaders went to to ensure that their subordinates understood the strategy, were trained and equipped with necessary resources, and were given the authority to make decisions within well-communicated rules of engagement. This is the part where too many business leaders fail.

My experience is that successful organizations understand the relationship between strategy and execution. They create an interdependent culture where creating strategy is viewed as making choices, and execution is considered doing. An

organization that understands this "strategy cycle" relationship looks like this:

> Broad, abstract decisions involving large, long-term investments are made by top management after seeking input from all areas of the organization.

► Each level of middle management is empowered to make choices within the broad strategy and understands how their choices affect front-line employees.

> Employees with face-to-face customer interaction are authorized to make decisions and use their best judgment and creative problem-solving skills to serve customers, within the context of the broader strategy and decisions by middle management.

► Feedback from front-line employees about ways to improve the strategy and details about execution is sought by and given to top management.

Execution of strategy is everyone's job; it is not something that management assigns down the line and then waits for results. In order for strategy to be effective, it needs to be pushed to all levels of the organization, and employees need to know what role they play and the importance of their contribution in the execution of the strategy. In successful organizations, business leaders are skilled at anticipating obstacles and paving a smooth

path, at understanding the need to involve many people from many departments in the execution process, and at knowing when it's appropriate to get out of the way to let employees do their jobs with customers and then listen to their employees.

Unfortunately, many companies don't embrace this principle. I've served on and advised too many boards of companies where leaders make compelling presentations about strategy, but when I ask how it will be executed at various levels within the organization, all I get is deer-in-theheadlights stares.

When business leaders ignore this interdependence between strategy and execution, the result is financial disappointment. Maybe we will eat a cheeseburger instead of steak for dinner or pass on buying a new pair of shoes. But when Navy SEALs fail at the strategy/execution cycle, the result can be fatal. So you should ask yourself: How committed is your organization to executing its mission? Would your organization be different if it had the amount of passion, pride, and commitment that the SEALs have in their mission and in making their strategy cycle work? Is your mission a critical one-worth fighting for? TCB

Mark W. Sheffert, chairman and CEO of Manchester Companies, Inc., provides investment banking and corporate renewal/performance advisory services. Contact him at mark@manchester companies.com.



Stand in Line for the Governor A few suggestions for priorities at the capitol.

To: Mark Dayton, Governor

Dear Governor Dayton:

The election last month was a glorious day for you and your party. You must have been pleased until you noticed that very long line in front of your door, down the Capitol steps, and all the way over to the restaurants and bars where the lobbyists hang out. Twenty-two years of pent-up legislative requests and state government demands will produce a throng of supplicants.

SOCIAL ISSUES

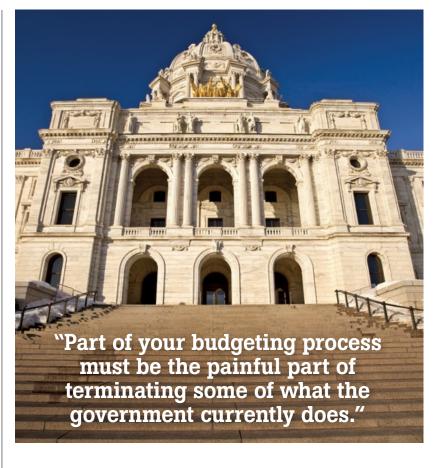
The voters of the state of Minnesota once again showed that this state can be cold on the outside but welcoming on the inside; they rejected amending the state constitution to enshrine a form of intolerance directed toward their fellow citizens. We can be a smart and tolerant people. But we can also be pushed too fast and too soon.

Minnesotans in general were uncomfortable with stopping the potential social evolution of samesex marriage by constitutional amendment. And for that reason, I would urge you not to make it your priority to allow same-sex marriage in this state without further legislative discussion.

The state laws that treat some couples more favorably than others should be changed. For example, a two-sex couple will escape all inheritance tax upon the death of one and transference of marital property to the surviving partner, but a same-sex couple will pay a penalty in the form of an inheritance tax as high as 45 percent. Ideally, marriage in its civil capacity should be equal, but marriage in its religious capacity should be celebrated in accordance with various religious beliefs.

BUDGET

For the 10th time in recent memory, a budget deficit is forecast for the



coming biennium. Current forecasts put the deficit at approximately \$1.1 billion (subject to constant revision) which does not include the approximately \$2.4 billion "borrowed" from K-12 education. Last year, to solve the government shutdown, the state obligated its citizens to spend \$1.2 billion to receive \$700 million from the sale of tobacco payment bonds, and shifted an additional \$700 million from our kids (or as they're called by politicians, "nonvoters") to fund our ongoing operating expenses. To say that this is a bad idea is to champion understatement. Your role should be to establish the state's most important priorities and budget to achieve those priorities with accountable metrics that can be monitored by the taxpayers whose

money is being spent. The priorities you choose could be the defining legacy of the Dayton administration.

Performance-based budgeting, which concentrates resources on announced priorities, also requires that other programs be cut. Any businessperson reading this column will agree that programs (subsidies) must be eliminated because if they are merely cut down in size, they will come back like weeds in your garden. So part of your budgeting process must be the painful part of terminating some of what government currently does. You get to make that call and you are perfectly situated to do so because unlike previous governors, you are not running for a higher office and you will not be taking up residence in Iowa anytime soon.

REVENUE

Your outstanding commissioner of revenue, Myron Frans, has traveled the state and held more than 45 listening sessions discussing taxes with more than 6,000 Minnesotans. It may score political points, but it would be a mistake to increase nominal income tax rates; few people who employ tax advisors actually pay these rates. Higher nominal rates will deter business from coming to this state, and will encourage some individuals to take their money and leave. An increased reliance on property taxes is equally misplaced; the recent vertigoinducing declines in real estate values should underscore the inherent instability of this revenue source.

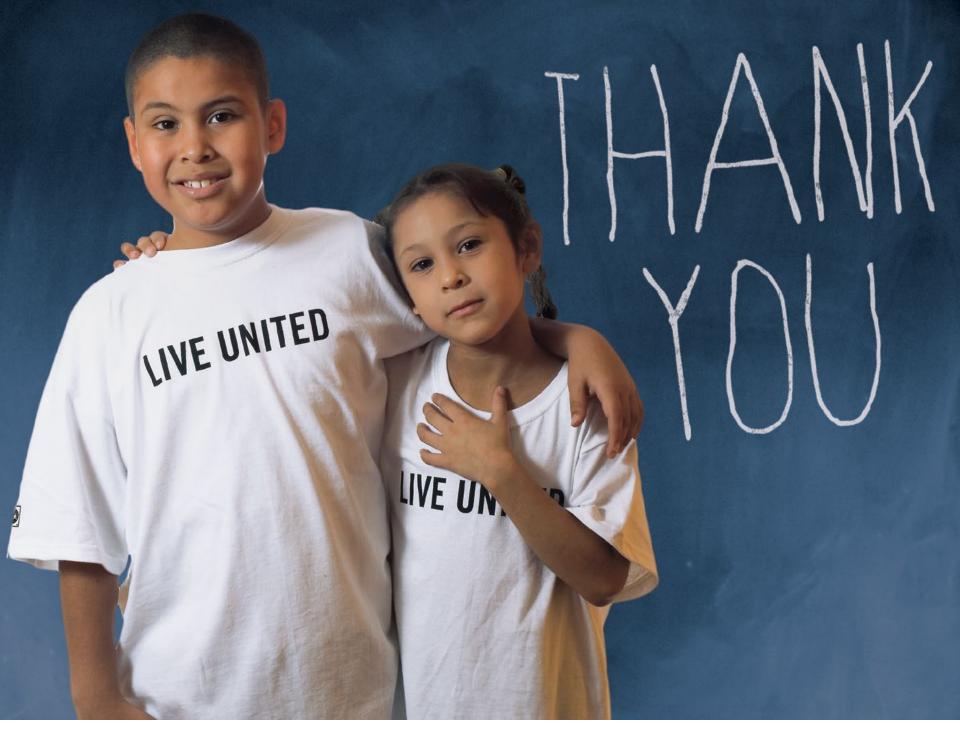
The obvious answer to the "revenue enhancement" problem is to expand the state sales tax to include the purchases of services, clothing, and, specifically, Internetbased transactions. It is just time to frankly recognize that, while most Minnesotans understand the need for increased revenue, they will only support that if it is clearly tied to measurable state priorities.

Governor Perpich had the "brain power" state and you can have the "innovation" or "ideas" state. In truth, that has always set our state apart. We have led innovation in a number of areas, and we will do so again. This is also your opportunity to show that one-party rule can be for the benefit of all.

Many of those people standing in line at your door will likely be disappointed.

Vance K. Opperman At the End of the Line

Vance Opperman (vopperman@ keyinvestment.com) is owner and CEO of MSP Communications, which publishes Twin Cities Business.



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