

North Dakota

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division of economic development & finance

commerce matters

Commerce Unveils New Logo

The North Dakota Department of Commerce through its four divisions is helping create a positive image for the whole state. Specifically the Division of Tourism has had resounding success with its "Legendary" campaign to build a state brand. Several agencies and programs have already adopted the North Dakota stylized logo into their materials.



To become more unified with the growing brand of North Dakota, Commerce has developed a new logo that is pictured above. It will soon be visible on all the department's materials! ●

Governor's Choice Award Winners Announced

Five successful projects or individuals who are helping to improve the quality of life in North Dakota were recognized Dec. 5 with a Governor's Choice for Economic Development Award. Sponsored by the North Dakota Department of Commerce, the awards were presented at a banquet held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Economic Development Association of North Dakota.

The winners are as follows. **Innovator of the Year** – Al Christianson; **Project of the Year** – Blue Flint Ethanol; **Ambassador of the Year** – Hal Gershman; **Volunteer Developer of the Year** – Randy Hauck; and **Professional Developer of the Year** – Gene Veeder. A special award, Visionary of the Year, was given to Elaine Fremling who is a charter member of the North Dakota Economic Development Foundation.



Blue Flint Ethanol was honored with the Project of the Year award. Pictured L to R: (Back row) Paul Lucy, Commerce; John Weeda, Great River Energy, Jeff Zueger, Blue Flint Ethanol; Al Christianson, Great River Energy. (Front row) Rachel Retterath and Diane Cottingham, McLean County Growth Coalition, and Shane Goettle, Commerce.

"North Dakota is realizing a lot of new opportunities made possible by people like this who are building our state's economy and communities one project at a time," Commerce Commissioner Shane Goettle said. "This is an excellent opportunity to shine a spotlight on some of the people who are making North Dakota a better place to live, work and play."

Nominees in five categories included:

Innovator of the Year: Al Christianson, Washburn; and Steve Burian, Grand Forks;

Project of the Year: Northern Plains Commerce Centre, Bismarck; LM Glasfiber, Grand Forks; Blue Flint Ethanol, Washburn/Underwood; and Champ Industries, Jamestown;

Ambassador of the Year: Ryan McClelland, Jamestown; and Hal Gershman, Grand Forks;

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Volunteer Developer of the Year: Randy Hauck, Velva; Walt Nieland, Jamestown; and Robert Wurl, Hankinson; and **Professional Developer of the Year:** Marcy Douglas, Northwood; Jennifer Feist, Valley City; and Gene Veeder, Watford City.

Along with the award, the local economic development organization that nominated each winner received a \$1,000 grant. ●



Hal Gershman of Grand Forks accepts his award for Ambassador of the Year from Commissioner Shane Goettle (background) during the Governor's Choice for Economic Development Awards Banquet. Hal has been involved in many economic development projects in Grand Forks and is currently on the Grand Forks City Council, Grand Forks Growth Fund (JDA) board of directors, Grand Forks EDC board of directors.

Dakota MEP Hosts Successful Conference

Members of the manufacturing industry across the region are calling the first annual *Where Manufacturing Matters* conference held in Fargo, ND, on Nov. 20-21, a success.

The event, hosted and presented by Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Dakota MEP), attracted over 230 attendees. Participants gathered for the two-day conference to participate in opportunities to improve their companies, to network with other manufacturers and to promote the

importance of the manufacturing industry throughout the region. The largest percentage of participants, nearly 80 percent, was upper level management representing 87 manufacturing companies from Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio and South Dakota. Gov. John Hoeven also attended the conference to show his support of and confidence in the industry and its economic impacts on the region.

Randy Schwartz, director of Dakota MEP said, "Manufacturing has been the driver behind much of the economic diversity and growth in the Dakotas in the past 15 years. The industry's 1,800 firms employ 68,000 people. New wealth generated by these companies directly represents 10 percent of the Dakotas' gross state products with another 14 percent of the economy dependent on the contribution manufacturing makes. This conference is a small way of providing partnering companies in North and South Dakota with opportunities to help grow the industry."

General session presenter Norman Bodek, "the father of Lean," delivered a message encouraging companies to proactively seek suggestions from employees on how to improve products, processes and customer satisfaction. John Brandt, founder and CEO of the MPI Group, presented a keynote session describing how to build a performance dashboard to help manufacturers develop world-class performance.

Planning has already begun for the 2007 *Where Manufacturing Matters* conference scheduled for Oct. 3-4, at the Sheraton Hotel & Convention Center in Sioux Falls, SD. Registration will soon be available in future Dakota MEP newsletters and at www.dakotamep.com for those interested in attending or becoming a sponsor for next year's event. You can reach Dakota MEP at 701-328-5476 for further information on the conference or to sign up as a member. ●

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Julie Rostberg from Job Service North Dakota speaks with a Minnesota job seeker who was drawn to the Experience ND event in St. Paul, MN. Companies taking part in the event took home many resumes and were pleased with the turnout.

Experience North Dakota Gathers Large Crowd

Commerce hosted its first job fair to recruit native North Dakotans home plus showcase sites, sounds and experiences of the state.

Experience North Dakota was held, Saturday, Nov. 18, at the St. Paul Hotel in downtown St. Paul, MN. Twenty-eight businesses, organizations and communities were represented at the event, which also included North Dakota entertainment, art and foods. Special events were held for children so parents could job hunt.

"Like the rest of the country, North Dakota companies need highly skilled workers to grow their organizations. We believe we are one of the first states to proactively reach out to our former North Dakotans and show them opportunities that exist today that might lead them back home," Goettle said. "What better workforce to recruit than people who grew up here and have the same set of values we've come to expect from ourselves?"

More than 430 people attended the event -- many were young families with children in tow. Dozens of people echoed the same sentiment, "We would really love to come home to North Dakota."

Participating companies and organizations included: the Energy and Environmental Research Center, Phoenix International, Choice Financial Group, Otter Tail Power, KLJ Solutions, Nexus Innovations, CrossCountry Courier, Inc., TMI Systems Design, NISC – National Information Solutions Cooperative, Great River Energy, Preference Personnel, Ulteig Engineers, Eagle Creek Software Services, LM Glasfiber; Job Service North Dakota, Dickinson State University Entrepreneurial Center, Jamestown Stutsman Development Corporation, Bismarck-Mandan Development Association, North Dakota Tourism, North Dakota Council of the Arts, Stark Development Corporation, Devils Lake Region Partnership, Williston Area Development Foundation, Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation, Kenmare Community Development Corporation, and the Fort Abraham Lincoln Foundation. ●



John and Angie Ibarra, who participated in Experience North Dakota under the North Dakota Ambassador program, volunteered their time to help job seekers network with companies advertising open positions. Angie is originally from Strasburg, ND.

Focus on Economic Development with Paul Lucy



Paul Lucy
ED&F Director

During a recent Economic Development Association of North Dakota gathering in early December, we had an opportunity to present the Governor's Choice Awards for Economic Development. In the words of Gov. Hoeven, "*The Governor's Choice awards program was created to recognize individual commitments, entrepreneurial spirit and ambitious economic*

development projects that are changing the face of business within the state." The nominees and recipients of these awards did not earn these awards by accident or default. They earned this recognition because of their dedication and perseverance toward success, driven by a conviction to protect and enhance a positive future for their community.

In the previous issue of *Commerce Matters* I addressed the need to recognize the diversity across North Dakota and the need for Commerce and the Division of ED&F to address the distinctiveness of the communities and regions in our efforts to support our partners. Along with this diversity we have seen an evolution of our state's economy and the elements which influence economic development strategies. Those elements include workforce, housing, infrastructure, emerging industries, global economics, new technologies and many more.

If you look at the nominees and winners of the Governor's Choice awards, it is evident that the communities, individuals and companies recognized have all comprehended and accepted the changing dynamics around them and have imparted creativity and innovation to bring success to their communities. ED&F recognizes new ideas need to be investigated and incorporated into future business development strategies and initiatives.

Later this month and early into next year the staff will begin a process to help set the direction for our division's future efforts. ED&F staff will be canvassing the state to visit with local economic development representatives, with companies, and others to provide our division with information relative to local development strategies, regional target industries, workforce strategies, business capabilities for linkages with in-state and out-of-state companies, etc. This information will be one of the ingredients that will help formulate the future business development efforts of the Division of ED&F.

Unfortunately we will not be able to visit every community in the state, however, we will make every effort to include the local economic development professionals in regional conversations when visits to their communities cannot be scheduled. As I have mentioned before, our door is always open in Bismarck if you can not participate in a meeting while the ED&F staff are in your area.

The ED&F Division's ability to support the needs of our partners across North Dakota will be enhanced as we expand our understanding of what your needs and capabilities are. We want to strengthen our capacity to help you be more successful in your efforts. I look forward to seeing an increase in the number of nominees for next year's Governor's Choice Awards for Economic Development, and an increase in awards and rewards to you and your community. ●

*Commerce Wishes you
a Wonderful
Holiday Season with
Family and Friends.*

