

Volume 4, Issue 3

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division of economic development & finance

commerce matters

Partnership plays role in PepsiAmericas' Choice

PepsiAmericas' announced April 2 that it will add up to 200 jobs in Fargo with a new customer sales and support center. The project is the result of a strong partnership between Fargo Cass County Economic Development, the North Dakota Department of Commerce and the Governor's Office. George W. Haugo, vice president and general manager of PepsiAmericas' Northwest Division, said the aggressive and accommodating efforts of officials in North Dakota as well as the proven work ethic of the people made the decision to add the center in Fargo an easy one. Congratulations Fargo! ●

Business leaders gather in Chicago

More than 120 North Dakota leaders, alumni and business prospects from the Chicago area gathered on March 1 to discuss how business grows and prospers in North Dakota. Four guests indicated they would be interested in expanding their business into North Dakota. Another 11 guests said they would like to become North Dakota Ambassadors. The Department of Commerce thanks the local developers who sponsored and assisted with the event. ●



Guests who attended the North Dakota Business Gathering in Chicago on March 1 enjoyed wooden flute music from two-time Grammy nominee and native North Dakotan Keith Bear.

ND tops list in two independent tax studies

Bismarck, ND, ranked #1 in two 10-year tax analyses conducted by EideBailly for the Department of Commerce. The two projects studied were a manufacturing facility and an ag processing facility. Ten communities were compared to Bismarck, including: Sioux Falls, SD; Des Moines, IA; Omaha, NE; Chicago, IL; Edina, MN; Greeley, CO; Richmond, VA; Great Falls, MT; San Jose, CA; and Eau Claire, WI. The studies include a review of property taxes, workers' compensation insurance, state and local taxes, unemployment insurance and corporate income tax. Executive summaries of the studies are available at www.growingnd.com (see tax study teaser on home page). ●

BREI gets support from Dept. of Commerce

The Department of Commerce signed on as a major sponsor of the Business Retention and Expansion International (BREI) conference to be held June 19-21 in Bismarck. The agency's Division of Community Services will provide \$5,000 in direct conference underwriting and an additional \$5,000 in scholarships. The scholarships will help local economic developers and others in North Dakota involved in economic development cover a portion of their conference registration and expenses. The Economic Development Association of North Dakota has made the BREI conference its summer membership workshop. Visit www.brei.org/ for more conference information and online registration. ●

North Dakota MEP center ranked #1

The North Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NDMEP) was ranked #1 for its overall customer satisfaction score among all MEP centers nationwide for the fourth quarter of 2002. The NDMEP was ranked #4 among MEP centers for

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its bottom line client impact ratio. These accolades follow the recent announcement that the NDMEP has moved from transition status as an MEP center to full MEP center status. Since the center's inception 20 months ago, it has provided assessment, training and technical assistance to nearly 160 companies and 2,500 employees. ●

New surveys forecast growth in our economy

According to Creighton University's Mid-America Business Conditions Survey, North Dakota's overall economic index rose to 60.6 in March, up from 54.1 in February. Indexes above 50 indicate an expanding economy. This was the seventh consecutive month the North Dakota survey of supply managers and business leaders produced an overall index above growth neutral 50. At the same time, the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank released a survey showing North Dakota's manufacturing sector is on the upswing, outpacing growth among six neighboring states in several important categories. This survey indicates North Dakota manufacturers of all sizes expect growth in orders and production in the first half of 2003 compared with the second half of 2002. ●

North Dakota makes national news

The Department of Commerce is aggressively positioning North Dakota on the national stage for positive media coverage. In the past two months, *USA Today* ran Commissioner Lee Peterson's letter to the editor regarding the "shutdown" of New York during a winter storm. The *Chicago Tribune* ran a story in its Sunday, March 2, newspaper about the Business Gathering held there March 1. A wonderful story and picture on ice fishing in Devils Lake ran in the same edition. *Fox News* ran a positive story on the honesty of three Fargo citizens who returned extra cash they received from a malfunctioning ATM there. ●

High-tech mapping tool added to growingnd.com

Business site selectors and local economic developers now have access to a new online tool to help build awareness of North Dakota and possible sites to locate a business. The Department of Commerce added a Commerce Internet

Planning Application (CIMA) to its web site at www.growingnd.com. CIMA provides access to many different layers of North Dakota geographic and economic data. For example, viewers can go in and see North Dakota's transportation networks and where colleges and universities are located. ●

Development Fund approves two projects

Feed Management Systems, Fargo, and Kidco Farms, Inc., Dawson, recently received approval for financing from the North Dakota Development Fund board of directors. The Development Fund is part of the North Dakota Department of Commerce Division of Economic Development & Finance. Feed Management Systems received approval for a \$150,000 equity investment. The company is the world's leading provider of feed management software and services for the livestock industry. Kidco Farms, Inc., received approval for a \$100,000 loan. The company is opening a whole peel onion processing plant in Dawson. Since the fund's inception in 1991, it has invested nearly \$43 million in 266 North Dakota companies. ●

Century Center makes ready for DOC

Century Center, the soon-to-be-home of the North Dakota Department of Commerce, will be ready for tenants late this spring. The Department of Commerce staff is scheduled to move the week of June 16. All DOC phone numbers, fax numbers and email addresses will remain the same. The new street address is 1600 E. Century Avenue, Suite 2, Bismarck, ND 58503. ●



This architect's rendering depicts the main entrance to Century Center and the new home of the Department of Commerce after June 16. Commerce will be located on the first floor when entering the south entrance (pictured above).