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division of economic development & finance

# commerce matters

## Ambassadors program launched at Innovation Growth Day



North Dakota Ambassador Gerald Haman leads the Innovation Growth Day seminar in Fargo on July 10.

Nearly 200 North Dakota business leaders took part in Innovation Growth Day July 10 in Fargo. Towner, N.D., native Gerald Haman facilitated the seminar. His Chicago-based company, SolutionPeople, helps businesses find innovative solutions to business problems.

Haman is among a group of new North Dakota ambassadors helping to market the state's potential to out-of-state business leaders. At a news conference in Fargo during Innovation Growth Day, Gov. John Hoeven and Department of Commerce officials announced the launch of the ambassadors program. "The ambassadors program illustrates the kind of creative thinking and leveraging of resources we are using to bring quality career opportunities and jobs to North Dakota," Hoeven said.

So far, more than 300 people in eight states have signed up to become ambassadors. A student ambassadors program is also underway. Student ambassadors will encourage youth involvement in North Dakota and help students learn about business and career opportunities within North Dakota. ●

## California company relocates to Devils Lake

GP STAR, a leading value-added manufacturer of high-end motorcycles, is relocating its remanufacturing, sales, shipping and administration offices from Los Angeles to Devils Lake. The company intends to be up and running in Devils Lake by Aug. 1. The company looks to immediately make five key hires and expand to 20-25 people in wage ranges of \$20,000 to \$60,000, with full benefit, vacation and bonus incentive packages. "North Dakota officials and the City of Devils Lake economic development agency have worked diligently over the last four months to help us select this community. We view Devils Lake as a long-term partner and a critical part of our growth plans," said Elias McGeeney, GP STAR's president. ●

## N.D. MEP earns No. 1 rankings

North Dakota's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (N.D. MEP) has achieved a No. 1 ranking for customer satisfaction among more than 60 centers nationwide for the first quarter of 2003. N.D. MEP also was ranked first for survey response rate and bottom-line customer impact – an independent, third-party measurement based on how MEP's programs have helped individual North Dakota manufacturing businesses become more competitive and successful. N.D. MEP's investment leverage ratio ranked second in the nation. Since January 2001, N.D. MEP has provided assessment, technical assistance and training services to 160 manufacturers and 2,500 employees in about 75 North Dakota communities. ●

## Nominees requested for Governor's Choice awards

The second annual Governor's Choice for Economic Development awards will be held Tuesday, Oct. 21, in Grand Forks in conjunction with the fall meeting of the Economic Development Association of North Dakota. Nomination forms will be e-mailed to all local professional and volunteer developers in the state. The nomination form can also be downloaded from [www.growingnd.com](http://www.growingnd.com). The deadline to submit

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nominations is Friday, Sept. 26. The Governor's Choice awards program was created in 2002 to recognize the outstanding economic development professional, volunteer and project for the previous year. Gov. Hoeven presented last year's awards to John Phillips, Beulah; the citizens of Forman; and Imation, Wahpeton. ●

### Marketing event receives Silver Quill Awards

The business marketing concept, "Explore Opportunities in North Dakota!," developed by the North Dakota Department of Commerce, was recently awarded two prestigious Silver Quill Awards in a district-wide International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) competition. "Explore Opportunities in North Dakota!" was a Minneapolis-St. Paul event held Nov. 8, 2002, to build relationships with decision-makers interested in doing business in North Dakota. IABC's District 4 Silver Quill awards program showcases the work of professional business communicators in eight states. ●

### Journalists tour North Dakota companies

The North Dakota Department of Commerce recently hosted five national trade journalists. Editors from *Business Facilities*, *Industrial Equipment News*, *Software Development*, *Food Logistics*, and *Baking & Snack/Milling & Baking News* met with company executives in Bismarck, Mandan, Fargo, Wahpeton, Jamestown and Beulah. The purpose of bringing the editors to the state is to showcase our "business stars" and initiate positive stories that help tell the story of North Dakota's strong business climate. ●

### North Dakota makes the News

In the past weeks, North Dakota business development and marketing efforts have received positive mentions in these national media:

- *St. Paul Pioneer Press* (07/09/03) (Twin Cities marketing campaign)
- *Expansion Management* (07/03) (Top 50 metro areas to locate: Fargo, Bismarck and Grand Forks listed)
- *Employment Review* (06/03) (Best places to live and work: Fargo ranked #7) ●

### \$175,000 in marketing grants offered

Local professional economic developers may apply for \$175,000 in Partners in Marketing grants for the 2003-05 biennium. The funds are available for research, marketing and business development activities at the local level. Application forms will be mailed in August. They will also be available online at [www.growingnd.com](http://www.growingnd.com).

In the 2001-03 biennium, \$190,964 was awarded to 30 communities and 18 counties to support web site development, promotional and marketing materials, business visits, regional specialty events and more. For more information about the Partners in Marketing program, contact Tracy Metzger at 701-328-5352 or [tmetzger@state.nd.us](mailto:tmetzger@state.nd.us). ●

### Development Fund annual report available

The North Dakota Development Fund last year invested \$2.5 million in 23 primary sector businesses. The investments made by the Development Fund in 2001 and 2002 contributed to the projected creation of 730 jobs in the primary sector. The information is found in the Development Fund's annual report for the year ending June 30, 2002.

Since its inception in 1991, the Development Fund has invested nearly \$43 million in 266 companies. Those investments have contributed to the projected creation of 7,816 primary sector jobs. The Development Fund is administered by the department's Division of Economic Development & Finance. For a copy of the Development Fund annual report, call 701-328-5300, or write Box 2057, Bismarck, ND 58502-2057. ●