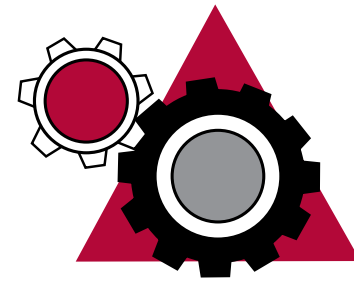


The Network News



Tri-State Manufacturers' Association
Newsletter

September 2011

Company of the Month

FlexTM

INCORPORATED



Written By: LeeAnn Rostberg

Situated in Wahpeton, ND is a company that has been around for 48 years. For 47 years the company was family owned and operated under the name of Ro-Banks Tool and Manufacturing. In January of this year, for the first time in its history, Ro-Banks changed its name and ownership. From one family to another, FlexTM, Inc. is now owned by Brad and Deb Odegard. FlexTM stands for flexible tool and manufacturing, which is the driving force behind this successful organization. Throughout the transition, many employees stayed with the company creating an environment of expertise that can only be achieved through years of experience.

FlexTM specializes in metal fabrication, stamping, forming, CNC machining, tool and die, and welding (manual and robotic) for simple and complex assemblies. The company's foundation is the groundwork that creates long-term value for their customers; this includes safety, communication, values, and people. From the foundation come three pillars: quality, customer service, and product development/value engineering. One example of this is that FlexTM collaborates in the design process to address design for manufacturability. This helps to bring a high quality, cost effective and functional product to market. As Mr. Odegard would say, 2+2=5, meaning the more collaboration, the better the ideas that come forth.

This Issue

- 3 Bus to Bobcat
- 4 MMA Autumn Golf Social
- 6 Tabletop Trade Show - Duluth
- 11 MN Manufacturers Summit
- 13 Call for TSMA Nominees
- 15 10-Hour OSHA Training
- 16 Statewide Tour of Mfg

The plant floor is driven by customer demand. Random parts are not made and left in boxes for months or years; they are made to order, when needed. To accomplish this, set-ups are engineered to increase throughput. One such method is continued development of SMED (single minute exchange of dies). SMED is simply a process of examining the time used to change over to another task and reducing it. This may entail additional dies or fixtures, automation and/or better workflow. All focused on delivering parts when the customer needs it.

Customers of FlexTM find they have a delightful experience. The ability and willingness of FlexTM to respond to customers' changing needs is critical. Should a customer's needs increase on short notice, FlexTM is able to respond quickly

Continued on Page 2



TSMA is affiliated with Midwest Manufacturers' Association.

FlexTM, Inc.

Continued from page 1

due to its expansive equipment capabilities. If this means manufacturing a part and hand delivering it the same day, FlexTM is able to respond to the challenge. "We are here to serve our customers" states Mr. Odegard.

Employees of FlexTM find themselves involved with each part of the company. Communication about safety, production requirements, and quality improvements are all shared with the employees. FlexTM is ISO 9001:2008 certified, which provides a structure that helps employees to troubleshoot and identify the root cause. This means a lot since they sell in excess of 1,000,000 pieces a year consisting of over 1,500 different components. "With the amount of parts we have going through our plant, it is imperative that each employee is empowered to make decisions at the point of manufacture" said Mr. Odegard. Quality fixtures and gauging are located at work cells for employees to verify that parts are in accordance to customer specs.

FlexTM sells all over the world with the majority of their customers residing in the United States. Industries served include agriculture, industrial, recreational, and commercial. FlexTM is a quiet company that surprises people with how much product they ship and the internal structure of the facility. From the outside FlexTM looks to be pretty big, head inside and the facility seems huge. Most of the facility is used for production while a small part is used for offices. Walking around the facility presents an environment that is well maintained by its employees. Parts manufactured at FlexTM can be as small as a quarter to half the size of a standard conference table. The employees are well versed and present years of experience in the work they complete.

Currently there are 45 people working at FlexTM and with growing customer demand, they continue to seek welders and machinists. Employees get the satisfaction of seeing their finished parts being used in everyday environments. They take pride in their work and continue to grow in their positions. FlexTM is not only dedicated to quality and on-time delivery, they are dedicated to their customers. One look at the name says it all; they are flexible to the needs of their customers, day in and day out.

For more information contact:

Brad Odegard

701-642-2671

Brad.odegard@flextm.com



Would you like your company featured as

Company of the Month

in the *Network News*?

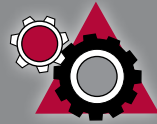
Contact the TSMA office at

800-654-5773 or

midwest@runestone.net



Tuesday, September 13



Bus to Bobcat

Join us for a guided tour of the Bobcat facility in Gwinner, ND!

Schedule:

7:45 AM Board bus – Fergus Falls
 8:20 AM Board bus – Wahpeton
 9:30 AM Tour Bobcat facility
 11:30 AM Bus departs Gwinner
 12:00 PM Bus arrives in Wahpeton
 12:30 PM Bus arrives in Fergus Falls

Bus Locations:

Fergus Falls - South end of Walmart parking lot

Wahpeton - South end of Walmart parking lot.

Cost: \$15

Fee includes bus transportation, box lunch, and tour.

RSVP by Friday, Sept. 9:

LeeAnn Rostberg, leeannr@runestone.net or 800-654-5773

Please let us know where you will board the bus.

Space available for the first 55 association members who register.

* This tour will take the place of the TSMA general meeting, originally scheduled for September 6, 2011.

Regulations and Safety Requirements:

- Closed toe and closed heel shoes (tennis shoes fine)
- Full length pants (no capris or shorts)
- Shirt with at least 3 inch sleeve
- Anyone that has consumed alcohol prior to the tour will not be allowed in the factory
- Must watch safety video prior to tour; approx. 12 minutes (we'll do this on the bus)
- No cameras/recording devices
- Tour duration is approximately 90 minutes
- Walking and step climbing involved
- Must be able to walk through the plant

Please notify us in advance if you have special requirements or needs. Bobcat will make every effort to accommodate you.

Hearing and eye protection provided by Bobcat.

6 Seats Remaining
 Registration now open to members
 and non-members!



MMA Autumn Golf Social



Tuesday, September 20

Whitefish Golf Club
near Pequot Lakes, north of Brainerd
www.whitefishgolf.com

12:30 PM Registration
1:00 PM Shot Gun Start
5:30 PM Social & Dinner

\$55/Person

includes green fees, shared cart and dinner
18 hole 4-person scramble

This is NOT a fundraising event, but rather, an opportunity for members of the "sister associations" to network and develop relationships.

Corporate sponsorships are not available, but donations that can be used as prizes at the event are welcome and encouraged.

This golf social is open to members, friends, and guests of :
Arrowhead Manufacturers & Fabricators Association
Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association
Tri-State Manufacturers' Association.

Come and network with others sharing an interest in manufacturing!

MMA Autumn Golf Social

Name: _____

Company: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

_____ Dinner Only, \$20 enclosed

I prefer to golf with:

All Credit Cards Accepted

Credit Card Holder's Signature

Print Name _____

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Amount _____

Mail registration form by:

~~September 2~~ along with \$55 per person
Still taking reservations!

MMA
PO Box 150
Elbow Lake MN 56531



E Says...

Elroy Vesta, TSMA President
EJ Enterprises, Fergus Falls

Fads and Facts

I've lived long enough to observe some fads. They were things that were popular and widely accepted by many but did not seem to last long. Growing up in a conservative home with fewer resources than many it was my experience that by the time we got to a stage where we could 'afford the fad' it was no longer a fad. Some fads become our lifestyle and even prove to be of value.

Many who read these newsletters are in charge of departments or an entire company. Remember when MBO was the fad. Some estimate that 80% of Fortune 500 companies used MBO. Today it is not so much discussed but some of the basic principles are of significant importance in running a business.

I recently read an article with tips – actually things that should and could become habits. Practicing these will improve one's life and even the relationships that are so critical to being an effective and prosperous company.

Compete with yourself rather than others. It is true that I can seldom

change another but I can set high standards for myself and when I meet or exceed the standards I feel good. I also will grow up and become focused on what I can contribute.

Place value on what you contribute. Only I can do what I do. I am unique (not weird as some are thinking) in the skills and ways in which I work. I have spent a long time to know what I know and that makes a difference for my company. I do know that I learn from others so I am open to their suggestions, however my role is important.

Do what you do in a timely way. This means that I don't dawdle and impede the progress which my colleagues seek to achieve. They should not have to wait for me to get my task done.

Be Polite. Sounds like mom. Say Thank you and please. These are not old hat. This courtesy leads to cooperation. It is always appropriate to be considerate.

Remember that others are important and should be valued.

visit tsma.org




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Tabletop Show Paired With One-Day Conference

Sept., 29
9 AM – 4:30 PM

Tabletop exhibitors and attendees have a unique opportunity this year. Make plans to spend the day in Duluth and join us for a one-day conference entitled, "Energy Conservation for Industry." Spearheaded by Energy Management Solutions, the Energy Conference will feature dozens of tips and techniques that could result in as much as 30% cost savings on the energy bill in your manufacturing facility.

Energy Conservation for Industry is scheduled from 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM at the Holiday Inn, Duluth, on September 29. The conference schedule is packed with a variety of experts sharing information on industry-specific topics, including: compressed air, motors and drives, lighting and boilers. The final session will share tips on obtaining rebates, incentives and financing for projects that make the most sense for your company. See Page 7 for information about speakers and topics.

At a member rate of just \$49/person, manufacturers are almost guaranteed a great return on their investment! Nonmembers are invited to attend the conference at a cost of \$75/person. The conference fee includes lunch and refreshments.

In keeping with the reciprocity agreement between the three sister associations,

AMFA is offering TSMA, CMMA, and MDMA members free exhibit space at the Tabletop Show. The show is scheduled from 2:30 – 4:30 PM at the Holiday Inn, Duluth, on Thursday, September 29, 2011. Eight-foot skirted tables will be provided. Displays can be as informal as arranging a sampling of parts/product/brochures on a table to a more formal free-standing exhibit booth. If your needs are simple and you're interested in sharing a eight-foot table, let us know!

The Tabletop Trade Show will be open to the general public, with efforts made to attract students, teachers, etc. from area high schools and technical programs.

Nonmembers are invited to exhibit at the Tabletop Show for a fee of \$95/table.

Contact the AMFA office at 877-330-2632 or leannr@runestone.net to register for the conference or to request exhibit space – or both.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn, Duluth (218-722-1202) at a rate of \$89/night.

Energy Conservation for Industry is sponsored by: AMFA, Energy Management Solutions, Schwab Vollhaber Lubratt, Inc., Minnesota Power, and Lighting Maintenance Services.

September 29, 2011

Holiday Inn 200 West First Street, Duluth, MN

9:00 AM - 2:30 PM : Energy Conservation

2:30 PM - 4:30 PM : Tabletop Tradeshow

To attend the Energy Conservation conference or to reserve exhibit space contact LeeAnn • leannr@runestone.net • 800-654-5773

Conference Fee: \$50 (AMFA/CMMA/TSMA Members)
\$75 (Non-Members)

Tradeshow Exhibit Fee: FREE (AMFA/CMMA/TSMA Members)
\$95 (Non-Members)

Energy Conservation for industry

Presentation Outline

September 29
9:00 AM - 2:20 PM
Duluth, MN

How to Reduce Energy Costs by 30%

Gary A. Swanson, PE
 Energy Management Solutions, Inc.
Learn 10 strategies for reducing energy costs.

Innovative Solutions for Lighting in a Manufacturing Plant

Brandon Smith, Holophane
High bay fluorescents, outdoor options for induction and LED, and other lights.

Steam and Hot Water – Learn How to Reduce Thermal Loads

John Arvig and Steve Graves
 Campbell-Sevey
Opportunities to conserve energy with steam and hot water systems.

Reduce Energy and Maintenance Costs through New Motor and Drive Technologies

Brian Peterson, Schwab Vollhaber Lubratt
This session will encompass: two factors for energy savings, constant torque energy reductions, savings through process improvement and on board automation capabilities of modern drives

Reduce Compressed Air Losses

Mark C. McCarthy, Ingersoll Rand
Understanding how compressed air storage can reduce your energy costs and increase reliability in your compressed air system by controlling pressure.

Options for Rebates, Incentives and Financing to help pay for Projects

Gary A. Swanson, PE
 Energy Management Solutions, Inc.



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- We assemble to your specifications

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Tri-State Manufacturers' Association

18th Annual GOLF RECAP



Some 60 people enjoyed perfect golfing weather as they gathered for the 18th annual TSMG Golf Social at Pebble Lake Golf Club in Fergus Falls, MN. Held on July 21st, the outing raised nearly \$4,000 in support of the TSMG Scholarship Program.

The tournament got underway with a shotgun start at twelve Noon. Following 18 holes of golf, players enjoyed social time, a pork loin dinner and an awards presentation.

The Golf Committee awarded prizes in a rather arbitrary fashion again this year. Cash awards were disbursed to the teams that came in first, fifth, and tenth. Team scores ranged from a low of 60 to a high of 72. Of interest, no less than four teams came in with a score of 61 – meaning there was a 4-way tie for second place. Using standard tie-breaking methods, the “last” of these four teams was slotted in fifth place – which gained that team a cash award!

Everyone on the team benefited if a teammate won a hole contest. For example, if your teammate won the “longest drive” contest, then everyone on your team won a cash prize (not just the person who hit the drive). Those who secured a prize for their team are listed in the adjacent box.

For the first time in many years, the TSMG golf social did not feature an unusual challenge on the putting green. The putting contest was replaced this year with “Splash for Cash” – an event in which contestants paid for the opportunity to hit a golf ball and attempt to have it land in a kiddie pool of water. Bob Johnson, Productive Alternatives, won the cash prize for this contest. Thank you to Debra Bultnick, a long time friend of the association, for running the Splash for Cash contest.

Several corporate sponsors featured fun contests and give-aways at the event. From marshmallow drives to bocci ball to team photos and free water and promotional items ... there was no shortage of action at the tee boxes

this year. We sincerely appreciate our sponsors' efforts to make the 18th annual event a success! A complete list of sponsors can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Garry Bultnick served as “spotter” for the hole-in-one contest on hole #15, where we'd hoped to give away the Arctic Cat ATV that was on display, sponsored by Frontier PowerSports.

Last but not least - hats off to a terrific 2011 Golf Committee: Don Leapaldt (State Bank & Trust), Evan Westra (West Tool & Design), Dave Nathe (Lavelle Company), Steve Winter (Dawson Insurance), and Tom Mastellar (Kendeco).

Give the TSMG office or a committee member a call if you have input regarding the 2012 Golf Social; additional committee volunteers are certainly welcome!

Longest Drive –

Ross Larson,
Eide Bailly

Longest Putt –

Todd Nelson,
Grant County DAC

Closest to the Pin on #2 –

Matt Dvorsak,
DMH Companies

Shortest Drive –

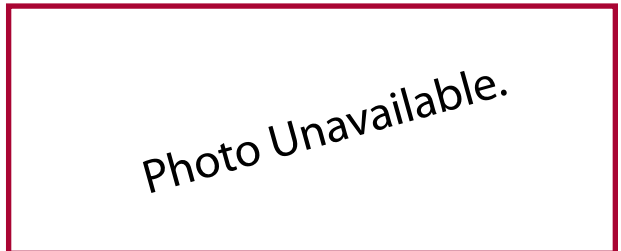
Cindy Pick



Thank You... For another Great year!



1st Place Team: Bradley Pederson, Dave Nathe, Rock Messerschmidt, and Kyle Haugland.



5th Place Team: Ed Bolas, Mitch Smith, Clarence Sitter and Mark Malligen.



10th Place Team: Rod Femrite, Nathan Brown, Tyler Wirth, and Dan Kotek.

2011 TSMA Golf Social Corporate Hole Sponsors

- Alexandria Technical & Community College
- Arvig Communication Systems
- ComDel Innovations
- Cosmos Enterprises
- Douglas Machine
- Eide Bailly LLP
- EJ Enterprises
- Energy Management Solutions
- Frontier PowerSports
- Great River Energy
- Kendeco
- King Solutions
- Meadowbrook Insurance Group
- Miller Architects & Builders
- Pemberton Law Firm
- Productivity, Inc.
- Sentry Insurance
- Solutions Insurance Agencies
- State Bank & Trust
- West Central Initiative
- The Work Connection

Thank You!

Visit the New and Improved TSMA Website!

www.tsma.org

The TSMA website has been redesigned to provide a fresh look and make the site more user friendly. Use the website to get up-to-date information on TSMA events and meetings. Access the newsletter archive, rules and regulations pertaining to the scholarship program, details about the TriFac program, and more. Members - post your job openings on the TSMA website at no cost!

All TSMA members are listed on the site, including hot links to each members' email and website address. Please note, the "member capability" section is still in development.

Is there something you think the website is missing? Let us know.

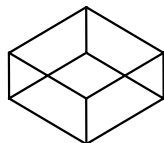
Visit www.tsma.org today!



TSMA Website Offers Online Meeting Payments

The TSMA website contains a link for online payment for meetings and events. Register and pay for your meeting 100% online. You will find the link located on the events page. Payments are processed using PayPal.

www.tsma.org



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Minnesota Manufacturers Summit:

Minnesota Manufacturers in a World Economy: What does it take to compete?

**FREE tickets
available!**

**TSMA is a Silver Sponsor
of this event!**

Minnesota Manufacturers Summit

October 26, 2011

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Doubletree Bloomington - Minneapolis South

Join business and industry leaders from across Minnesota in a salute to the contributions of manufacturers! The eighth annual Minnesota Manufacturers Summit, brought to you by the Minnesota Manufacturers Coalition, will feature leaders from manufacturing, higher education, and government. Jay Timmons, president/CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers, is confirmed as a keynote speaker.

The Summit will also feature practical, hands on breakout sessions on topics of interest to manufacturers. Complete details about the summit, including an itinerary and registration information, will be available soon.

FREE Tickets Available to TSMA Members!

As an event sponsor, Tri-State Manufacturers' Association has ten complimentary tickets available to the membership on a first-come, first-serve basis. Limit one free ticket per company. Call or email the office to make your request.

For information pertaining to featured speakers, registration information, and more - watch your e-mail or go to www.mnchamber.com.

TSMA Financial Reports

Tri-State Manufacturers' Association Balance Sheet August 31, 2011

ASSETS	
Petty Cash	100
Cash	97,322
Investment/CVI	1,000
Accounts Receivable	-35
Total Assets	<u>98,387</u>
LIABILITIES	
Liabilities	189
FUND BALANCE	
Fund Balance	93,728
Revenue Over (Under) Exp.	<u>4,470</u>
Total Fund Balance	<u>98,197</u>
Total Liabilities and Fund Bal.	<u>98,387</u>

Tri-State Manufacturers' Association Statement of Activity For The Eight Months Ending 8/31/2011

REVENUE	
Advertising Income	1,724
Golf Income	7,885
Membership Dues	26,750
Meeting Income	2,481
Misc. Income	-25
Total Revenue	<u>38,815</u>
EXPENSES	
Golf Expense	4,129
Insurance	1,185
Meeting Expense	1,731
Misc. Expense	1,475
MMA Dues	2,663
Staff Time	16,193
Office Supplies/Postage	775
Sponsorships	500
Travel & Training -Staff	682
Workforce Dev/Scholarship	<u>5,013</u>
Total Expense	<u>34,345</u>
Revenue Over (Under) Exp	<u>4,470</u>

Upcoming Events

Date	Location	Event/Speaker/Topic
Sept. 13	Gwinner, ND	Tour of Bobcat
Sept. 20	Pequot Lakes	MMA Autumn Golf Social
Sept. 22-23	Litchfield	10-Hour OSHA Training
Sept. 29	Duluth	AMFA Tabletop Tradeshow
Oct. 4	Alexandria	TSMA General Meeting
Oct. 26	Bloomington	MN Manufacturers Summit
Oct. 29	Statewide	Tour of Manufacturing
Nov. 1	Fergus Falls	TSMA General Meeting
Dec. 5	Elbow Lake	TSMA Holiday Celebration

New Member Corner

A welcome is extended to the newest members of Tri-State Manufacturers' Association...

Welcome!

J & M Printing
1111 Westrac Dr. #104
Fargo, ND 58103

Rob McCleery, Account Executive
rmccleery@jmcompanies.com

www.jmcompanies.com



360° offers access to more than 60 specialized programs to equip individuals for the emerging needs of the manufacturing industry

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A member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System

Scholarship Opportunity



Deadline:
November 18

\$2,000
Could be awarded to you!

TSMA Scholarship Program

Nov. 18 Deadline

All TSMA members should have received an email notification about the 2012 scholarship application process. The email included a poster that can be printed and displayed in your employee lunch room, etc.

Upon recommendation from the TSMA Youth Committee, the TSMA board of directors adopted a new policy regarding the association's Scholarship Program. TSMA scholarship funds will now be used to assist only those students who are enrolled in a manufacturing-related program.

A second change to the program provides a contingency option in the event that the application process doesn't draw a qualified pool of applicants. In any given year, all or a portion of the budgeted program amount may be disbursed to students enrolled in

designated manufacturing programs at member schools (currently, Alexandria Technical & Community College, MState, and North Dakota State College of Science). Unlike the award winners garnered from the application process, the college-generated award winners are not likely to have a direct association with a member of Tri-State Manufacturers' Association.

A deadline of November 18, 2011, has been implemented for the next round of scholarship applications. The awards will be disbursed in January 2012 to assist with Spring Semester 2012 tuition. Again this year, TSMA has committed \$5,000 towards the Scholarship Program; proceeds from the Golf Social help support this program each year.

TSMA Board of Director Positions Available

Nominations
Requested for
Annual Election

Nominations are being accepted for director positions on the Tri-State Manufacturers' Association Boards of Directors. Nominations will be accepted through Friday, October 7, 2011.

The Tri-State Board has four two-year positions up for election. The terms of Bob Grove (Cosmos Enterprises), Todd Peterson (3M), Mike Westergard (StoneL) and Dick Young (Innova Industries) will expire in December of 2011.

Please consider nominating yourself, one of your employees, or a fellow Tri-State member to serve as a director. All owners and employees of TSMA member companies are eligible to serve on

the Board. Board meetings are typically held monthly in a location convenient to the existing directors. Nominations will be accepted through October 7th and ballots will be distributed to all Tri-State members in October.

Email or call the office at 800-654-5773 to make a nomination(s) or to simply inquire about the responsibilities of serving as a director for Tri-State Manufacturers' Association. You'll find that membership in the Association provides more value to your company when you get involved!

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Highlights of the TSMA August Board Meeting

The Tri-State Manufacturers' Association Board of Directors met on August 24, 2011, at Perkin's Restaurant, Fergus Falls.

The consent agenda was approved, including June meeting minutes, July financial reports, and updates on: Dream It. Do It., TSMA golf social, Tabletop Trade Show, Tour of Manufacturing and MinnDak Manufacturers Association.

Todd Peterson was named Chair of the Membership Committee for the remainder of 2011.

The Program Committee reported on the upcoming meeting schedule. Response to the September 13 "Bus to Bobcat" tour has been strong. The itinerary was confirmed for the "tour day" on October 4th. It was agreed to incorporate a tour of Innova Industries in conjunction with the November 1st meeting. The date of the Holiday Party was changed from December 6 to December 5th to accommodate staff scheduling conflicts.

Discussion was heard regarding the purchase of a 2012 Minnesota Manufacturers Directory on CD-ROM.

Comments were received regarding the revamped TSMA website, which is approved to go live. The board requested additional research regarding the ability to search the member database according to "capabilities."

A request from GLASH for a trade in membership was declined, with interest

expressed to invite the organization to do a presentation at a general meeting. The board approved Focus Group sponsorship for the Enterprise Minnesota State of Manufacturing survey.

The board approved sponsorship of the Minnesota Manufacturers Summit, scheduled on October 26th in Bloomington. In addition, TSMA will cover the cost of registration for up to ten members interested in attending the summit- first come, first serve. (One free registration allowed per member.)

The board approved sponsorship of "student tour days" hosted by Alexandria Technical and Community College.

Discussion was heard regarding the potential for TSMA members to ride a charter bus to the FabTech Expo in Chicago in November, based on decisions yet to be made by AMFA.

Results of the August membership survey were reviewed. The survey solicited input about the QCI Network and ICeBerG.

Discussion was heard regarding terms of office for the upcoming board of director election. Four terms are up for election this fall: Dick Young, Todd Peterson, Bob Grove and Mike Westergard.

The next board meeting will be scheduled in mid-September. Board meetings are open to the membership.

TSMA 2011 Holiday Celebration

Monday, December 5

5:30 Social Hour

6:30 Dinner

Note: New Date!

Knotty Pine

Elbow Lake, MN

Watch your email for more information.



10-Hour OSHA General Industry Course

September 22 & 23 in Litchfield

About the Course

Employees at every level in a manufacturing company, from production staff to management, will benefit from this comprehensive introductory course. Learn about the scope and application of OSHA standards to workplace safety and health. Emphasis is placed on using the 29 CFR Part 1910 general industry standards to identify and recommend abatement for the greatest safety and health hazards. Special emphasis will be placed on recognizing Minnesota-specific regulations. Participants have an opportunity to increase hazard awareness and avoidance using OSHA standard as a guideline, and **earn a general industry OSHA 10-Hour Course Completion Card.**

About the Presenter

Scott Huberty, Loss Control Supervisor

Meadowbrook Insurance Group provides a variety of traditional and alternative risk management and insurance services. In Minnesota, Meadowbrook serves as the TPA (Third Party Administrator) for self-insurance groups, including the Trifac Workers Compensation Fund, which is available to members of: Arrowhead Manufacturers & Fabricators Association, Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association, and Tri-State Manufacturers' Association.

Scott Huberty, Loss Control Supervisor for the organization, is an authorized outreach trainer qualified to lead the 10-hour OSHA General Industry Course. TSMA members have appreciated Scott's relaxed yet informative training style at past workshops.



Ten hours of training offered in a one and one-half day format.

Day One: September 22, 2011

10:30 - 11:00 AM Registration

11:00 - 12:00 PM Morning Session

Noon - 12:30 PM Lunch Onsite

12:30 - 5:00 PM Afternoon Session

Day Two: September 23, 2011

7:30 - 8:00 AM Full Breakfast

8:00 - 12:30 PM Training Session

Location

Custom Products of Litchfield

1715 South Sibley Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355

Cost

AMFA/CMMA/TSMA Members: \$125/person

NonMembers: \$175/person

Price includes: Training manual, lunch, and refreshments on day one. Full breakfast and refreshments on day two.

Registration

Class size limited to 30 people.

Registration Deadline: September 16, 2011

Contact TSMA Office for Registration information.

TSMA

PO Box 150

Elbow Lake, MN 56531

800-654-5773 • 218-685-5397 (Fax)

leeannr@runestone.net

Sponsored By:



State-wide Tour of Manufacturing

Saturday,
October 29
9 AM – 3 PM
(alternate times possible)

Calling All Manufacturers!

New this year, Minnesota will host a state-wide Tour of Manufacturing event to round out a full week of celebration during Minnesota Manufacturers Week 2011 (October 23-29). Any and all manufacturers are invited to participate in the state-wide promotional effort at no cost.

How does it work? Modeled after the "Parade of Homes" concept, manufacturers are encouraged to open their facility to public tours. Students, parents, neighbors, employee family members, the general public --- all are encouraged to come and see first-hand what goes on in the high-tech world of manufacturing today. The goal of the event is to change perceptions about the industry and increase awareness of the high skill, high wage jobs available in manufacturing.

Certain regions in Minnesota, including St. Cloud/Monticello and Mankato, are undertaking specific efforts to stage a coordinated Tour of Manufacturing event in

their respective communities. Kudos to these regions! The state-wide event is envisioned as a project that allows any manufacturer in any community the opportunity to provide a public tour – whether or not there is a coordinated local effort underway. To date, more than a dozen companies have agreed to open their facility to the public on October 29.

Midwest Manufacturers' Association, representing AMFA, CMMMA, MDMA, and TSMA, has teamed up with the Minnesota Precision Mfg. Association (MPMA) to foster the state-wide project. The public can access www.tourofmanufacturingmn.com to learn about all manufacturing tours available on October 29, 2011. Manufacturers - call the MMA office at 800-654-5773 for information about how to participate in the state-wide Tour of Manufacturing. Help influence your future workforce!

www.tourofmanufacturingmn.com

Advertising Rates

TSMA Member Rates

	one month	six months	twelve months
1/8 page	\$20	\$100	\$180
1/4 page	\$35	\$175	\$315
1/2 page	\$60	\$300	\$540
Full page	\$100	\$500	\$900

Contact LeeAnn Rostberg at the TSMA office for more information:
Phone: 800-654-5773
Email: leeannr@runestone.net



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Minn-Dak Manufacturers Association Joins MMA!



Midwest Manufacturers' Association, MMA, was officially launched in January 2001 with a mission to foster the creation, growth and success of its members. Membership in MMA is open to industry associations and trade groups sharing MMA's vision to enhance the manufacturing environment in the Midwest region. MMA's member associations are referred to as "affiliates."

We are pleased to announce the addition of a new MMA member – Minn-Dak Manufacturers Association! MDMA has a long history serving the manufacturing community in the Fargo/Moorhead region. MDMA general meetings and plant tours are held at Noon on the third Tuesday of the month. To learn more about MDMA, go to

www.minndakmanufacturers.com.

With the addition of MDMA, MMA is now affiliated with four manufacturers associations around the region whose combined membership includes some 425 companies. The other affiliates include: Arrowhead Mfg. & Fabricators Association (Duluth/Superior/Iron Range

region), Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association (St. Cloud region), and Tri-State Manufacturers' Association (west central MN and eastern ND).

The reciprocity agreement that exists between MMA's affiliates will now be extended to MDMA functions, so if you are member of CMMA, for example, you are welcome at MDMA meetings and events at the member rate. MMA's annual membership directory, produced each spring, will now expand to include the memberships of all four affiliate organizations.

MMA was created to serve as a "shared office" for existing and yet-to-be-formed manufacturers groups. By joining forces with one central hub, the manufacturing industry in the Midwest region has, for the first time, a way to express its collective voice ... to government, to suppliers of common goods and services, and to each other. Thank you, Minn-Dak Manufacturers Association, for helping to strengthen our collective voice!

TSMA Survey Feedback

August 2011

Thank you to the seventeen people who responded to TSMA's online survey in August. The survey gathered information specific to two of the association's "special interest" groups: QCI Network and ICeBerG. Members were asked to share their insight regarding the structure of and impediments to attending QCI Network meetings. In addition, to aid the planning committee in scheduling upcoming meetings, respondents were able to rank various topics related to quality/continuous and being greener.

We learned that:

- Respondents are interested in a QCI Network meeting format that features a guest speaker, although topic-focused discussion and open forum discussion are also encouraged.
- Respondents expressed limited interest in developing a peer-audit process to enhance quality control efforts.
- The highest rated QCI Network topics include Lean Manufacturing, Supplier Quality Management, the Challenge of Employee Engagement, and CAPA (Corrective and Preventive Action Processes).

- The primary impediment for attending a QCI Network meeting is "commitments at work."
- The highest rated ICeBerG topics include Engaging Employees in Becoming Greener, Enhanced Recycling Options, and Increased Energy Efficiency – drives/motors and lighting options.

Complete results of the July/August survey are available from the TSMA office, as are results of the January/February survey (which asked about the newsletter and general meetings), the March/April survey (which explored concepts related to the MMA Shared Office), and the June/July survey (which explored legislative issues).

Please take the time to share your input "education/industry collaboration" when the September survey arrives in your inbox. If you do not receive an invitation to complete the survey via an online link, please contact the office so we can check our distribution list. Help us add value to your membership in Tri-State Manufacturers' Association by providing your voice via the surveys we are conducting this year!



Contributed By:
Brad Stevens, Relationship
Manager

The Problem with Growth

Brad Stevens is a Relationship Manager with Alerus Financial, a full service commercial bank serving in your best interest. With over twenty years experience, Brad works closely with business owners to provide advice and financial solutions amongst the ever-changing market cycles. Contact Brad at 651.746.6153 to discuss fresh, innovative financial strategies for your business.

We have all heard the stories from hurricane survivors; the ominous dark clouds, the fury of the storm front, the storm surge hitting before the front wall of the storm comes ashore. Then the storm abates, everything is calm, collected, even sunny as the eye of the storm passes over, only to give way to another blast as the back wall of the storm hits. With proper planning as well as the right shelter people do make it through hurricanes, however, many are not so fortunate. Having a plan is crucial.

Navigating your business over the past four years has not been all that different from surviving a hurricane. The initial storm built from 2007 through late 2008. Steady declines in sales buffeted most manufacturing companies. 2009 was probably the most brutal year. It was not unheard of to have experienced a sales decrease of 50% or more. Owners who did not react swiftly to the storm were left with balance sheets bloated with debt. In an attempt to survive, any bit of cash was used to cover losses leaving the debt at increasingly detrimental levels. Each of you that survived that first portion of the storm can point to a number of former competitors that are no longer around. The storm of the recession drained them of resources, sapped them of equity and left them to close and liquidate.

2010 and most of 2011 have been the eye of the storm. The phones began ringing, sales have picked up, commodity

prices have somewhat stabilized. Profits for most have returned due to maintaining strict cost controls and low overhead. Anything that might have been extravagant is long gone in most businesses.

The trailing wall of the storm may be on its way. This time the unexpected damage could come from a very odd set of circumstances. Most small manufactures are experiencing up to a 33% growth rate over last year. This growth is the outcrop of a slight increase in the economy as well as the lack of competitors to absorb the demand. Whereas you prayed for sales two years ago, now they could be the final blow, pushing many more firms under.

Uncontrolled sales growth is as deadly to a business as sales declines. Sales growth will inflate the balance sheet, requiring deeper investments in inventory. Accounts receivable totals will increase even if the days it takes to collect that receivable remain the same. Payables will grow with the inventory as well as other inputs increase. Cash will disappear to a point where bills cannot be met in a timely basis.

Now is the time for a good plan to survive during the other side of the storm. Do your best to conserve cash. Discuss with your banker the anticipated need for a line of credit or a larger line of credit that will provide the short term liquidity needed to fund the asset side of the balance sheet. Do it now before the other side of the storm hits.



Contributed By:
Vaughn Kavlie,
President, CMPS
Advisornet Mortgage

Standard & Poor's Downgrades U.S. Credit Rating. What does this mean to you?

On Friday, August 5, credit rating agency Standard & Poor's (S&P) downgraded the United States' credit rating one notch from AAA to AA+. Though this was an historic decision, as the United States had held it's AAA rating from S&P since 1941, it wasn't a surprising one.

S&P had previously said it would lower the rating if Congress did not reduce the federal deficit by \$4 Trillion over 10 years (the Debt Ceiling/Deficit Reduction Bill passed on August 2 only called for a deficit reduction of \$2.4 Trillion over the next 10 years). In addition, S&P also downgraded certain entities linked to US debt, including Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

So what does this mean...both for our economy and home loan rates? Maintaining our AAA credit rating reinforces the United States' role as the

reserve currency of the world or a place where investors will place their money as the ultra safe haven. This is a key factor for our continued economic recovery.

But it's important to keep in mind that S&P is currently the only credit rating agency that has downgraded the United States. Both credit rating agencies Moody's and Fitch have maintained the United States' AAA rating. Also, with the ongoing credit crisis in Greece and other parts of Europe, most of the world still sees the United States as a safe place to invest their money. This bodes well for our economy and also our Bond Market, including Mortgage Bonds, to which home loan rates are tied. The bottom line is that home loan rates remain near their historic best levels, but about the only thing that is certain in the markets right now is the volatility.

ICeBerG to launch on November 1 in Fergus Falls

ICeBerG serves as a forum through which TSMA members share resources and best practices to facilitate efforts aimed at providing a positive impact on Profits, People and the Planet in our journey of becoming greener.



FREE Manufacturing Prep Course Introduced at ATCC

Practical solutions for business that impact the Triple bottom line

*Presented by: Kathy Hodges, President,
Jack's Family Recycling*

Join us for an exciting introduction to ICeBerG – TSMA's new resource for "being greener!" At the November 1, 2011 dinner meeting in Fergus Falls, attendees will:

- Hear interesting recycling facts.
- Calculate the energy equivalent saved on a particular recycling decision.
- Learn how to save money by reducing your "trash" output.
- Consider starting a "green team" in your company. Hear about the benefits others have realized.
- Understand the savings start with recycling and then expand to impact other line items in your business.

Presenter Kathy Hodges has been involved with recycling from an early age. Her grandfather was a "junk man," then her dad took over the family scrap business. Kathy assumed control of the family operation in 2003 and has expanded the recycling business to include: electronics, plastic, paper, glass and textiles. She has extensive experience in Project Management and puts that background to good use in the recycling industry.

Jack's Family Recycling Center is a certified e-Stewards and R2 electronics recycling company serving Western and Central MN as well as Eastern ND and SD. They recycle metals - appliances, vehicles, presses, farm equipment, etc. A recently added service is business recycling for office paper, catalogs, magazines, cardboard, shrinkwrap, etc. The company works with local businesses to determine if their scrap material is recyclable. The ISO 14001:2004 certified company believes in Responsible Recycling - No Exceptions.

TSMA members may want to make their employees aware of a new grant-supported training opportunity in Machine Tool, Mechanical Drafting or another manufacturing program at Alexandria Technical and Community College (ATCC). Students who successfully complete the Manufacturing Prep Course will earn six college credits at ATCC during the 2012 spring semester at no cost to them as the tuition and book costs will be covered by grant funds. These six credits earned for successful completion of ATCC's Intro to Computer Course and Basic Machining Processes Course during the ATCC 2012 spring semester can be transferred into ATCC's Machine Tool or Mechanical Drafting programs upon successful future enrollment into these programs. Classes for both of these two credit-bearing courses covered by the grant will be created and offered in a flexible format that will be convenient for adult learners.

Through District 206 Community Education, the Alexandria Area Adult Basic Education (ABE) Consortium is partnering with ATCC and the Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (RMCEP) to offer a new, free Manufacturing Prep Course at ATCC this fall. Since this 8-week course

is being offered at no cost to the first 20 qualified applicants, early registration is recommended. The registration deadline is September 30, 2011.

Classes will be held at ATCC on Mondays and Wednesdays beginning October 17 and ending December 7. The classes will be held from 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM.

The Manufacturing Prep curriculum jointly developed by ATCC and ABE is meant to be a preparation course for the manufacturing programs at ATCC. The Manufacturing Prep Course will focus on basic computer skills. It will prepare students for success in ATCC's Intro to Computer Course. In addition, basic college writing skills will be covered, preparing students for future college coursework. This course will also help students update workforce computer and writing skills. Information on college manufacturing programs and manufacturing career options will be presented during the course.

To register for the Manufacturing Prep Course or to get more information, contact Sandy Schroeppfer, Alexandria ABE Coordinator at (320)762-3312 or sschroep@alexandria.k12.mn.us by September 30.

TSMA Board of Directors

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TSMA Core Values

1. Tri-State Manufacturers' Association is committed to developing people and companies by providing opportunities for members to acquire industry relevant knowledge or skills.
2. Integrity and trust are guiding principals for Tri-State Manufacturers' Association.
3. Tri-State Manufacturers' Association believes that open, accurate and timely communication is important to accomplishing its mission.

TSMA Standing Committees

Tri-State members are invited to join a committee at any point throughout the year. Contact the TSMA office or the committee chair directly.

Membership Committee, chair:
Todd Peterson, TS&L Properties / 3M

Program Committee, co-chairs:
Kevin Schutz, OECS, Inc.
Elroy Vesta, EJ Enterprises

Special Events Committee, chair:
Don Leapaldt, State Bank & Trust

Youth Involvement Committee, co-chairs:
Bob Grove, Cosmos Enterprises
Todd Peterson, TS&L Properties / 3M

Government Relations Committee, co-chairs:
Don Leapaldt, State Bank & Trust
Mike Westergard, StoneL Corporation

TSMA Membership Dues

The TSMA Membership Dues Structure is identical for manufacturing and associate members. Dues are based on number of employees.

No. of Employees	Annual Dues
1 person shop.....	\$ 75
2 to 5.....	\$ 125
6 to 15.....	\$ 175
16 to 30.....	\$ 200
31 to 50.....	\$ 250
51 to 99.....	\$ 275
100 to 199.....	\$ 325
200 or more.....	\$ 350

TSMA Mission Statement

Tri-State Manufacturers' Association assists manufacturing related companies by providing advocacy, education, networking, and programs to enhance the success of members and their communities.



Membership Plaques are presented to current members at TSMA networking events. Several TSMA members collaborated with the Machine Technology students at North Dakota State College of Science to produce the plaques.