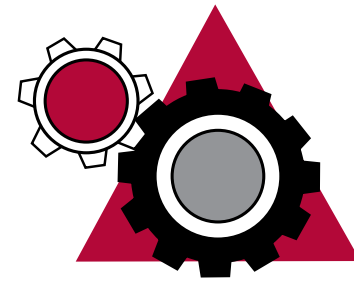


The Network News



Tri-State Manufacturers' Association
Newsletter

January 2012

Company of the Month

IRD Ceramics



Written By: LeeAnn Rostberg

In 1983 an entrepreneur from Litchfield Precision Components started a small company that focused on glass component manufacturing. Located in Litchfield MN, the company was called Industrial Research and Development (IRD). In 1997 Keith Anderson and Dennis Rutledge bought IRD and expanded its capabilities to attract more customers. For more production space the men opened a second facility in Alexandria, MN. Business was booming and Alexandria soon became its own full-time facility focusing on two different business aspects, switches and glass/ceramics.

In 1999 IRD Switches purchased both the Sealed Numeric Keyboard (PX) line and the Rotary Selector Switches (AS & RM) line from Honeywell Sensing and Control in Freeport, Illinois. This allowed IRD the ability to produce switches in house instead of having to buy them from a catalog. The PX Numeric Keyboards are designed for adverse environments and consist of a one-piece elastomer seal that helps keep out oil, grease, water, dust, sand, and chips. The AS/RM switch series features load handling versatility, an excellent feel of switching action, multi-SPDT circuitry on-off, on-on, and off-on switching, along with many other operation friendly features.

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IRD Glass/Ceramics is a state-wide, nation-wide, and international company. The furthest they send their parts is Germany. IRD does lower volume runs and focuses on precision. Many times IRD has been contacted by engineers from around the world who were looking for parts to be made and IRD Ceramics was the only place that could complete the job. This is a niche business, which helps them stand out in the ever changing environment.

IRD Glass creates flat optics, cylindrical optics, prisms, optical lenses, optical coating, medical glass, industrial glass, and float glass. Some industries that IRD Glass creates parts for include: pressure transducer, machine vision, medical, industrial tooling, defense, aerospace, sensors,

Continued on Page 2



TSMA is affiliated with Midwest Manufacturers' Association.

IRD Ceramics

Continued from page 1

homeland security, process control, instrumentation, and research. The Litchfield and Alexandria facilities have a combined 35 plus employees with an average tenure of about seven years. Each part created by IRD has to be 100% correct. Many parts are very small and yet very important for the machine they will be placed in. Lasers are a great example of precision put to work. IRD Glass creates prisms that are used in many laser machines. These prisms filter and focus light.

IRD Ceramics provides parts for the aerospace, industrial, semi-conductor, and metal industries. They create small, complex shapes out of ceramic and high Rockwell hardness materials. Some materials used by IRD include: Aluminum Oxide, BK7, Borofloat, Pyrex, Sapphire, and Zirconium Oxide. IRD Ceramics has CNC mills along with surface grinders and CNC lathes. These machines allow for lapping, tube polishing, fire polishing, ultrasonic milling/drilling, tube grinding, precision sawing, assembly, and sawing/dicing. A tour of the Alexandria plant may feature a grinder with a diamond wheel creating prism parts that are used in John Deere GPS farming equipment. Precision is the key component for the success of this company. Many parts take an hour to machine and are .0008" or tolerance.

IRD Glass/Ceramics and Switches prides itself on responsiveness, problem solving, and dependability. With a limited amount of companies in this market, IRD understands the importance of return customers. They strive to make each and every product the best it can possibly be. For this one reason microscopes are located in a dust-proof environment to inspect each and every part for precision and construction. IRD is ISO 9001:2000 certified and has received recognition for their many areas of expertise. IRD has been awarded the Certified Supplier Award, Partners in Performance Award, Supplier Excellence Award, Supplier of the Year Award, and are listed as one of Enterprise Minnesota's five companies to watch. With a workforce as competent and dedicated as IRD's, every company can feel confident their parts are in good hands.

For more information contact:

John Rutledge

320-759-2216

jdr@irdceramics.com

www.irdglass.com

www.irdceramics.com

www.irdswitches.com





E Says...

Elroy Vesta, TSMAs President
EJ Enterprises, Fergus Falls

Following – It’s a good thing!!

It’s new – January has followed December again – that’s a good thing. The word I have been considering as I prepare for this article is “follow”. The word can be used in a variety of ways. It serves as a verb, preposition, adjective or noun. It means “what comes after.”

We know what comes after December: fatigue – bills – new resolutions – and many other realities. What follows also presents significant opportunity to be more than we were. I want to use the newness of the year to focus on whom and what I want to follow. Some paths just should not be taken. Some ways need to be abandoned. In order to use this ‘new’ opportunity, I need to be certain that the choices I make are best for me, my business, my community and my family. All comprise the set that makes life interesting and full.

In two days the TSMAs board will follow a similar pattern when we gather for the annual board retreat. We will welcome new board members at this event. In a variety of ways we will get acquainted so that we better understand each other and the task we are called upon to undertake – leadership for this great association. We will reflect on what has been done. We will look at the challenges we face. Together we will develop goals that reflect our passion to move TSMAs

forward. We will leave the retreat and then each month review how closely we are following what we committed to be and do this year as an organization.

In order for the plans we make to work, we need to follow them. The board will be inviting each TSMAs member to also join in the journey – following the plans. This will make a great association better. As we follow the ‘right’ things we will all be better. Our lives, businesses and communities will be stronger.

This year we have someone to guide our conversation at the retreat – we will follow the leader. Then together the ‘leaders’ will invite others to take the path with us toward the things that will make us stronger.

Now I am finishing after following. The board retreat is complete for another year, facilitated by Nancy Straw. We followed and together developed a strategy to make a difference. Each board member will be part of a committee. The membership is invited to join in the development of plans for all of us to follow. Our goals may be few (2) but the mission is large, and we will allow these goals to guide our mission and guide our tasks. We will invest in the future of manufacturing. Join us. Let’s follow and accomplish our mission.

Upcoming Events

Date	Location	Event/Speaker/Topic
Jan. 3	Alexandria	TSMAs Annual Meeting
Jan. 13	Fergus Falls	State of Manufacturing Focus Group
Feb. 7	Fergus Falls	TSMAs General Meeting
Mar. 6	Alexandria	TSMAs General Meeting

visit tsma.org



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T SMA Annual Meeting Tuesday, January 3

Alexandria, MN

Holiday Inn
5637 State Highway 29 S.

Schedule of Events

3:00 - 5:00 PM QCI Network Meeting

3:30 - 4:30 PM Tour: Alexandria Industries

5:00 - 5:45 PM Social Time

5:45 - 7:15 PM Dinner and Guest Speaker

Cost: \$15/person

Online meeting payment is now available. Register and pay in one convenient location.

RSVP by Friday, December 30
Register by clicking here!

Meeting Sponsor:



QCI Network

Quality & Continuous Improvement

QCI Network meetings are free and open to any company interested in discussions related to quality in a manufacturing setting.

“ISO 9001: Let’s Dig In”

Presenter: **Ben Bomstad**, ATCC

A Quality Management System built on the ISO 9001 platform is a key ingredient for many successful manufacturers. We will dig into the ISO 9001:2008 standard, the changes that took place from the 2000 to 2008 revision, some of the benefits and roadblocks of ISO implementation and look at examples of how the standard can be implemented in a manufacturing company. The principles of ISO will improve your QMS whether you are a large production manufacturer or a small prototype machine shop.

Tour:



401 County Rd. 22 NW, Alexandria MN 56308

www.alexandriaindustries.com

Alexandria Industries' state of the art aluminum extrusion and fabrication facility, high quality and certified aluminum materials, automated extrusion presses, and Kevlar handling system is the ideal environment to develop precision aluminum extrusions. Their extruded aluminum products have the highest degree of quality and tightest tolerances available in the aluminum extrusion industry.

Alexandria Industries is ISO 9001 registered and were the first aluminum extruder to register to the 2000 revision of the standard. Since 2002, they have integrated Quick Response Manufacturing principles into every facet of their operations, providing the shortest lead-times achievable in today's fast-paced, lean manufacturing environment.

Guest Speaker:

**“Our Ever-Changing Tax Environment:
Taking Advantage of Opportunities and
Looking Towards the Future”**

Presenter: **Brittany Dunn**, Tax Manager, EideBailly

Brittany Dunn, a Tax Manager and CPA from Eide Bailly in Fargo, will be presenting on important tax laws and changes for the current tax year and the future. All manufacturers need to be aware of these tax laws in order to take advantage of the planning opportunities that our government has given us in these trying economic times. Some of the items she will be discussing are bonus depreciation and Section 179 expensing rules for 2011, 2012 and the future. She will also discuss health insurance and new hire credits available as well as the frequently misunderstood Research and Development Credit and the opportunities that credit presents. Many tax rate changes are set to take place in 2013 and tax law change is currently a huge topic of debate. Brittany will also give us an overview of what those changes can mean for us and give us some tax planning items we need to think about.

The T SMA Annual Meeting will include:

2011 Highlights
Financial Recap
Scholarship Award Winners
Introduction of Board/Officers
Announcement of the “2011 Member of the Year”

TSMA Annual Retreat - New Goals for 2012

The annual TSMA Board of Director's Retreat was held at Long Lake Lodge near Brandon on the morning of December 20, 2011. Thank you to Nancy Straw, West Central Initiative, for facilitating the discussion.

The mission statement was approved with no changes: Tri-State Manufacturers' Association assists manufacturing related companies by providing advocacy, education, networking, and programs to enhance the success of members and their communities.

Recap information from 2011 included updates on finances, membership statistics, meeting attendance, and goals.

A 2012 operating budget was approved, showing revenue of \$64,200 and expenses of \$83,300. (The complete budget is printed on Page 7 of this newsletter.) The board continued discussion about spending down some of the organization's reserve funds.

The history and mission of Midwest Manufacturers Association was reviewed, along with a discussion about partnerships with various manufacturing-focused organizations in the region.

Officers were elected to serve in 2012. Board members were assigned to serve on standing committees.

New Goal Statements were developed for 2012, as printed below. Other action included the decision to increase financial support for area high schools that are active with TSMA, host a legislative

forum featuring local legislators, update the TSMA website to include search options, and partner with MN Precision Manufacturers Association to bring the exhibit, "How People Make Things" to the MN Children's Museum in 2012.

GOAL 1. VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP
Enhance the value of membership through program development, educational opportunities, and legislative advocacy.

Obj. 1.1 Increase our knowledge about what members "want" from TSMA using surveys and a roundtable discussion at the March meeting.

Obj. 1.2 Provide legislative education for members and engage local legislators through written communication and face-to-face interaction.

GOAL 2. PROMOTION OF TSMA
Promote TSMA to current and potential members.

Obj. 2.1 Encourage high schools in the region to increase interaction with manufacturers, join TSMA, and/or be represented at TSMA meetings.

Obj. 2.2 Use the manufacturing database to send information to prospective members located in the TSMA service region.

Obj. 2.3 Encourage TSMA members to include a link to the TSMA website on their website.



2011 Membership Statistics

Membership - year end.....	215
New members added	14
Renewal rate	93%
Avg. meeting attendance.....	27 co./36 people

TSMA Elects Officers

Elroy Vesta was recently named 2011 President of Tri-State Manufacturers' Association for the 13th consecutive year. Vesta owns and operates EJ Enterprises, a Fergus Falls-based supplier of printing and promotional products. He has served on the TSMA Board of Directors since 1995.

Evan Westra was named Vice President of the organization. Westra is the co-owner of West Tool & Design, a Fergus Falls manufacturer specializing design engineering, tooling, jigs and fixtures, and stainless steel fabrication. Westra is

a returning TSMA board member, having last served in 2004. **Bob Grove**, President of Cosmos Enterprises, was named to a fifth term as Secretary/Treasurer of the Board. Located in Elbow Lake, Cosmos Enterprises is a precision contract machine shop.

Serving as Directors in 2012 are: **Don Leapaldt**, State Bank & Trust, Fergus Falls; **Tom Mastellar**, Kendeco, St. Cloud; **Kevin Schutz**, OECS, Inc., Alexandria/Golden Valley; **Tyler Wirth**, The Work Connection, Alexandria; and **Dick Young**, Innova Industries, Fergus Falls.

Volunteers Needed to Staff TSMA Committees

Studies show that people who are the most involved in an organization gain the most benefit from their membership. Get involved with Tri-State Manufacturers' Association in 2012! Volunteers are encouraged to serve on one of TSMA's Standing Committees.

Most committee meetings are held electronically or in conjunction with a TSMA general meeting to maximize the use of volunteer time. Call or email Sandy Kashmark at the TSMA office to learn more about the activities and responsibilities of each committee, or contact a committee chairman.

COMMITTEE	CHAIR
Membership	Dick Young
Youth Involvement:	Bob Grove Evan Westra
Government Relations:	Don Leapaldt Tyler Wirth
Programs:	Elroy Vesta
Special Events:	Tom Mastellar Kevin Schutz

CMMA to host Tabletop Tradeshow

In keeping with a new strategy implemented in 2011, the annual Tabletop Trade Show will rotate to a new location in 2012. Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association (CMMA) has agreed to host the event in the St. Cloud region in the fall of 2012. A one-day conference may be offered in conjunction with the Tabletop Show. Details are pending regarding the specific date and venue; watch your email for more information.

Would you like to assist in making this event a valuable opportunity for association members? If so, consider playing an active role on the planning committee. Current planning committee members are: Les Engel, Engel Metallurgical; Harry Larson, Enterprise Minnesota; and Tim Zipoy,

Central MN Jobs & Training. This group would like your help!

As a background reference ... Tri-State Manufacturers' Association hosted an annual Tabletop Trade Show for many, many years - typically at the Holiday Inn, Alexandria. In 2011, the event was hosted by Tri-State's sister organization, AMFA, in Duluth, with the addition of a one-day conference on "energy conservation." The current intention is to continue the rotation amongst the sister organizations, so Minn-Dak Manufacturers Association will be in line to host the 2013 Tabletop Show if they so choose.

Call or email Sandy Kashmark at the office to volunteer to serve on the Tabletop Trade Show / Conference Planning Committee.

“How People Make Things” at the Minnesota Children’s Museum

TSMA is a sponsoring
organization

Minnesota
Children’s
Museum
Smart Play



**Meeting
Update:
\$100 Cash
Drawing, and
Thank You**

The manufacturing industry has an extraordinary opportunity in 2012 to expose thousands of youth and their teachers and families to modern technology and career opportunities. In partnership with the Minnesota Precision Manufacturers Association, the Minnesota Children’s Museum will feature an exhibit called “How People Make Things” from February 18–June 3, 2012. Tri-State Manufacturers’ Association recently signed on as a sponsoring organization, providing funds for general promotion as well as “scholarship funds” to help cover the cost of field trips to the museum for elementary students from west central Minnesota.

The award-winning Minnesota Children’s Museum strives to provide children birth through age ten and their families the opportunity to learn through hands-on activities. Multiple studies have highlighted the importance of “play” as a key component in childhood development. “Play” is how children learn and develop critical thinking, hone their language and social skills and cultivate empathy.

The traveling exhibit, “How People Make Things,” was inspired by Mister Rogers’ Factory Tours. Every object has a story of how it is made; this exhibit tells the story of the people, the manufacturing processes and the technology used to make everyday objects. The exhibit

incorporates hands-on activities in four focus areas: cutting, molding, deforming and assembly. Visitors will view machines like an injection molder, die cutter, vacuum former and 3-axis mill. Raw materials will be on display, with examples of the products they turn into. The video wall features select tours from Mister Roger’s show, such as “How People Make Tennis Shoes” and “How People Make Crayons.” One display will feature products manufactured locally. The role playing area encourages children to dress up like factory workers – safety glasses and all.

In addition to the primary focus of attracting youth, educators and parents to view the exhibit, organizers would like to maximize the exhibit’s time in Minnesota in other ways. MPMA’s 2012 Grand View Summit will be held at the Museum on Thursday, April 26. One Saturday per month, a local manufacturer will bring in a live demonstration that provides a fun, interactive display related to the exhibit’s focus areas. (If your company would like information on being involved, contact the office.) Located in downtown St. Paul, the Children’s Museum provides a convenient location to host a legislative reception at which local legislators can network with industry and learn more about career opportunities in manufacturing. Stay tuned for more information as details continue to come together!

Remember to turn in your business card at each Tri-State meeting for a chance to win \$100 at a future meeting! One business card will be drawn from “the hat” each month; the person named on the card must be present to win.

At the TSMA Holiday Social the name of **Elroy Vesta**, EJ Enterprises, was drawn. Elroy was present and received \$100. During this holiday season there are many families that are not able to provide the many gifts that we take for granted. Elroy decided to donate his winnings to two families that are in need this holiday season. Thank you Elroy for your kind gesture.

Thank You

A special Thank you to everyone who attended the TSMA Holiday Social. Also, thank you to **Ron Lamprecht** and **Jenn Schaal** for providing fun and lively entertainment.



Participants Needed for the Annual "State of Manufacturing" Focus Group

Friday, January 13
2:00 – 3:00 PM

West Central Initiative,
Fergus Falls

Manufacturing members of Tri-State Manufacturers' Association are invited to participate in a one-hour roundtable focus group discussion. This discussion is an important element of Enterprise Minnesota's fourth annual "State of Manufacturing" poll and book.

Enterprise Minnesota will unveil results of the fourth annual State of Manufacturing survey in February. Like surveys of the previous three years, it will again gauge perceptions and opinions of over 400 manufacturers throughout the state about issues that influence manufacturers' ability to do business in the state. It is the premier survey of Minnesota manufacturers because it is statistically meaningful. A national pollster conducts the 40-question telephone survey, representing a proportional cross-section of businesses based on size, business type, and geographic location.

In conjunction with the telephone survey, Enterprise Minnesota will conduct a series of Focus Groups around the state as another means of gathering input from manufacturers. These focus groups are

an important element of the annual State of Manufacturing poll and book. Your participation might give you better insights into how your fellow manufacturers are coping with the current economic issues. But more important, it will help policy makers better appreciate the value and contributions of manufacturers to their local economies, as well as understand the issues that manufacturers must deal with in order to continue to produce well-paying local jobs.

To view last year's poll results and learn more about the State of Manufacturing, we encourage you to visit www.enterpriseminnesota.org/Resources/State-of-Manufacturing.aspx

The TSMA focus group will take place from 2:00 – 3:00 PM at West Central Initiative, Fergus Falls on Friday, January 13, 2012. Please note that due to the nature of a roundtable focus group discussion, attendance will be limited to roughly 12 participants. Manufacturers – call or email the TSMA office to reserve your space today!

Tour of Manufacturing Planned in Fergus Falls and Wahpeton

Dream!t Do!t
Your Future Is Here for the Making

Manufacturers in Fergus Falls and Wahpeton would like to spread the message that manufacturing is NOT a dying industry in the region and in fact, provides rewarding careers for creative and talented people. Despite high unemployment rates, manufacturers still struggle to hire workers with the skills that are needed in today's innovative and often highly automated manufacturing environment. The "Tour of Manufacturing" will provide an opportunity for community members to get a first-hand look at eight manufacturing companies in the region.

Tour of Manufacturing – Fergus Falls/Wahpeton is scheduled from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM on Saturday, April 21, 2012. Students, parents, grandparents, teachers, families, employee family members ... all are welcome and encouraged to participate in this FREE event. You set the schedule and the pace; attend one, two ... or all eight tours! Please tell your friends and family to visit www.tourof-manufacturing.org for specific details about the tour.

Wahpeton will feature tours of: Bobcat, Com Del Innovation/Heartland, WCCO Belting, Wil-Rich Manufacturing ... and the manufacturing department at North Dakota State College of Science. Tour offerings in Fergus Falls include: ShoreMaster, StoneL and Vector (formerly Vinylite Windows). (The fourth tour location will be announced soon.) Mark your calendar!

The Tour of Manufacturing – Fergus Falls/Wahpeton is connected to the West Central Minnesota Dream It. Do It. campaign's ongoing efforts to promote manufacturing in the region. In addition to the above named manufacturers, sponsors include: Fergus Falls Economic Improvement Commission, Wahpeton Economic Development, MState, NDSCS, Lakes Country Service Cooperative, Tri-State Manufacturers' Association, and West Central Initiative. The Fergus Falls Area Chamber and Wahpeton Breckenridge Chamber and MN DEED are providing planning assistance.

Storm Cancellation Policy

The membership will help determine cancellation. Members (or other registered guests) are asked to call the TSMA office by Noon on the day of the meeting to cancel their registration. If 40% of the registered guests call and cancel, the entire meeting will be cancelled. Otherwise, the meeting will be held as scheduled.

With this policy in effect during winter months, it's important for you to pre-register for the meetings. Please phone, fax or e-mail your registration. The board established a cancellation policy rather than a reschedule policy. Attempts will be made to reschedule certain guest speakers or workshops for a later meeting date, but typically, new meeting dates will not be added to the calendar.

TSMA Budget 2012

REVENUE		EXPENSES	
Advertising Income	1,200	Board Meeting Expenses	600
Golf Social	8,000	Dream It! Do It!	1,000
Interest	900	Golf Social Expense	5,000
Member Dues	46,500	High School Program	12,000
Meeting Revenue	4,500	Insurance	1,200
Seminar Revenue	2,500	Labor from MMA	30,000
Miscellaneous Income	600	Marketing Expense	3,000
Total Revenue	64,200	Meeting Expense	4,950
		Miscellaneous Expense	1,200
		MMA Dues	5,400
		Office Expense	2,000
		Scholarship Expense	5,050
		Seminar Expense	2,000
		Sponsorships	7,500
		Travel - Staff	2,400
		Total Expense	83,300
		Excess Revenue (Expense)	<u>19,100</u>



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New Member Corner

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

Welcome!

Fergus Falls Public Schools

601 Randolph Ave
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

Mike Donaghue
Dennis Wutzke
mdonaghue@fergusfalls.k12.mn.us
dwutzke@fergusfalls.k12.mn.us

Public school.

Tri-State offers free membership to High Schools in the region!

Pro Resources

1271 Highway 10 West
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

Larry Boomgaarden
larry@peohrpro.com

www.peohrpro.com

We are a PEO (Professional Employer Organization) and we assist companies with issues related to being an employer. We offer; human resource administration, benefit administration, payroll administration and workers comp./risk management

Dream !t. Do !t.

www.dreamit-doit.com/mn



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Minnesota Business Day at the Capitol

Free registration for
TSMA Members

Minnesota Business Day at the Capitol provides all sizes and types of Minnesota companies the opportunity to see the legislature in action and to influence public policy decisions. Over 800 business leaders gather for a day of education and lobbying at the Capitol.

Tri-State Manufacturers' Association is sponsoring the event with an offering of ten (10) free registrations on a first come, first serve basis (limit one per member company – a \$60 value). If you are interested in attending Minnesota Business Day at the Capitol, scheduled at the Crowne Plaza St. Paul Riverfront

on March 14, 2012, call or email Sandy Kashmark at the TSMA office.

Two sessions are offered on March 14: 7:30 AM – 1:30 PM or 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM. Both sessions will begin with opening remarks addressing the current legislative session followed by the chance to attend briefings by Minnesota Chamber staff on the business community's top priorities. Personal meetings with two or three legislators can be pre-arranged for interested parties. Both sessions join together for a lunch program. For more information about this event, go to www.mnchamber.com.

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.

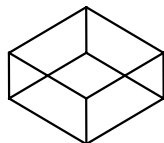
www.tsma.org

COST: \$20/Person
Bring your spouse and enjoy a night out

Please register by Thursday, December

[Click Here to Register](#)

If you have any questions, email or call



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T SMA Financial Reports

Tri-State Manufacturers' Association Balance Sheet November 30, 2011

ASSETS	
Petty Cash	100
Cash	110,384
Investment/CVI	1,212
Accounts Receivable	-3,020
Total Assets	<u>108,676</u>
LIABILITIES	
Liabilities	477
FUND BALANCE	
Fund Balance	90,853
Revenue Over (Under) Exp.	17,346
Total Fund Balance	<u>108,199</u>
Total Liabilities and Fund Bal.	<u>108,676</u>

Tri-State Manufacturers' Association Statement of Activity For The Eleven Months Ending 11/30/2011

REVENUE	
Advertising Income	1,894
Golf Income	7,955
Membership Dues	43,396
Meeting Income	4,570
Misc. Income	6,253
Total Revenue	<u>64,068</u>
EXPENSES	
Golf Expense	4,129
Insurance	1,185
Meeting Expense	3,653
Misc. Expense	1,932
MMA Dues	3,988
Staff Time	22,365
Office Supplies/Postage	640
Sponsorships	2,599
Travel & Training -Staff	1,143
Workforce Dev/Scholarship	5,088
Total Expense	<u>46,721</u>
Revenue Over (Under) Exp	<u>17,346</u>



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Officers Elected to Serve Midwest Manufacturers' Association in 2012

Dick Young was recently named 2012 President of Midwest Manufacturers' Association for the 12th consecutive year. Young owns and operates Innova Industries, Inc., a Fergus-Falls manufacturer and TSMA member specializing in flat laser cutting, 3-dimensional laser cutting and fabrication.

Steve Utech was named Vice President of the association. Utech serves as a Sr. Vice President at Republic Bank, head quartered in Duluth, MN. He has represented AMFA on the board of directors for Midwest Manufacturers' Association since 2001. Lisa Koll, Regional Manager at Doherty Staffing Solutions, a CMMA member, will serve as Secretary of the organization in 2012. The Treasurer position was filled by Ed Bolas, Controller at Dycast Specialties in Starbuck, MN, a TSMA member.

Serving as Directors in 2012 are: **Les Engel**, Engel Metallurgical, Sauk Rapids (CMMA); **Dan Larson**, Hydrosolutions of Duluth (AMFA); **Reza Maleki**, NDSU, Fargo (MDMA); **Dave Sarvela**, ME Elecmetal, Duluth (AMFA); **Elroy Vesta**, EJ Enterprises, Fergus Falls (TSMA); and **Nick Weis**, Custom Caseworks, Sauk Rapids (CMMA).

Located in Elbow Lake, MN, Midwest Manufacturers' Association serves as a "central office" providing benefits and services for trade associations throughout the region. The all-volunteer board is composed of representatives from the four sister organizations. For more information, go to www.midwestmfg.org.

2012 Membership Directory

TSMA members are encouraged to submit updated information for the 2012 MMA Membership Directory, which is scheduled for distribution in May. Current members will receive a mailing in January with instructions about how to submit updated information. All current TSMA members will be listed in the directory at no charge, with the option to increase exposure by purchasing display advertising space. The deadline to submit updated information and request advertising space is March 1, 2012.

The Membership Directory is an annual publication that lists the members of all associations affiliated with Midwest Manufacturers' Association. In 2012, the four affiliated associations are: Arrowhead Manufacturers & Fabricators Association, Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association, Minn-Dak Manufacturers Association, and Tri-State Manufacturers' Association. Over 400 companies will be represented in the 2012 edition. All current members will receive a copy of the directory at no cost when it is distributed in May.

2012 MMA Directory Rates

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Nonmembers</u>
Full Page	\$200	\$500
Half Page	\$115	\$240
Qtr Page	\$60	\$175

Advertising 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

The Network News 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 at the TSMA office for more information:

Phone: 800-654-5773

Email: leeannr@runestone.net



Meadowbrook Insurance Holds Annual Safety Conference

Meadowbrook Insurance conducted their annual Safety Conference on December 1st at the St. Cloud Civic Center. More than 100 people from companies all over the state attended the event, which is complimentary to members of the Trifac Workers Compensation Self-Insurance Fund. Attendees were exposed to a variety of safety-related training topics and presentations designed to help companies improve their safety programs.

In addition to the Meadowbrook staff, special guests included keynote speaker Rob Chvatal from Catalyst for Change, Inc., Sandra Brakstad from Midwest Compliance, Jill Kelby from Kelby Ergo Design, James Krueger from Minnesota

OSHA, and Richard Peterson from the MN Dept. of Commerce, Insurance Fraud Division.

If you are a member of Trifac, be sure to make plans to attend the 2012 Safety Conference scheduled on Thursday, November 29, 2012. The event will return to the St. Cloud Civic Center.

If you haven't already... contact the TSMA office to inquire about the benefits of the Trifac Workers Compensation Fund. Or go to www.trifacworkcomp.com for more information.



OSHA 10-Hour Safety Training held in December



The fifth annual OSHA 10-Hour General Industry Class took place December 15 - 16 at the St. Augusta American Legion near St. Cloud, MN. The class was

conducted by the Loss Control Department of Meadowbrook Insurance and was attended by 11 people from different industries around Minnesota.

The course provided an in-depth look at applicable OSHA regulations for manufacturers. Attendees received OSHA manuals, class notes, and an OSHA course completion certification. The following manufacturers participated in the class: Dakota Automation, Darter Plastics, Metal Craft, Pequot Tool & Mfg., Riteway Mfg., and Thermo Tech Windows.

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Contributed By:
Brad Stevens, Relationship
Manager

The Right Team

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.

As a business owner you are required to be familiar with a wide range of topics related to your business. You currently run a business due to a passion to produce and sell the products that you do. You likely can quote the amount of inputs for the machine time per unit, the amount of inventory used per unit, your profit margin and fixed costs by heart. Over the past few years every business owner has had to expand their expertise to know about tax law, personnel management, finance, environmental regulations as well as product liability. No one can do it all. Many business owners have reached a saturation point, nearing a point of being overwhelmed. That is why astute business owners will form an advisory group that will include their accountant, lawyer and banker, among others.

As the business environment has become more dynamic as well as diverse in its requirements, surrounding yourself with experts in various areas almost becomes a requirement to survive. Gathering a core advisory group will alleviate the risk of making a decision that could be deficient in key information which could be detrimental to your business.

Even if you are not borrowing any money, your banker is a good place to start an advisory group. For one, they do not charge by the hour. Second if they have worked with you for some time, they understand your business pretty well. They can provide a great deal of expertise in seeing how other companies both in your industry and out, utilize their cash flow, debt and other

finance related areas in your company. The resources that they can bring carry a great deal of value.


Your lawyer and accountant likely charge by the hour, so using them under an advisory role will require a bit more consideration. Depending on the cost, you need to decide when, how and what topics are worth putting before the advisory group. While you have a past history of expectations on when and what your lawyer and accountant have assisted you with in the past, the advisory group will likely deal with topics beyond the normal, expanding their role beyond the normal activity. This might include discussions on a major expansion, the impact of a merger or partial sale, adding or dropping a key product line, essentially any major life span decision in your business.

Meetings of your advisory group should be well thought out and planned in advance. An agenda should be prepared that will produce a wide discussion. In many instances you may not know what questions to ask or where even to begin. In cases like this it is best to prep the members before hand with the core topic to discuss. The topic should be descriptive enough to spark some thoughts as well as lead to some prep work for the members before the meeting, but not too specific to lead the members to a preconceived conclusion.

By pulling together a good advisory team to assist your company, you can alleviate some of the burden you now face with the many non-core issues that impact your business.

Link Your Site to TSMA.org

Add www.tsma.org to your website
and become more visible

Adding a link to TSMA can help you stay current on upcoming events by allowing you to easily access the site. Adding a link may also help your ranking on search engines such as .

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

It's Only a Matter of When... Not "If."

Contributed By:
Tyler Wirth,
The Work Connection

To learn more about The Work Connection, visit www.theworkconnection.com

"Exasperation" doesn't even begin to describe the collective feelings of many a business owner with respect to the latest news out of the Department of Labor (not to mention the IRS and the EEOC).

There are a number of things going on that add more edges to the many-sided sword employers face in today's hiring environment. Let's try and wrap our fingers around some of this before we run out of band-aids:

- In December 2010, the Department of Labor launched their "Bridge to Justice" program, which is essentially a government-sponsored "Approved Attorney Referral System," (i.e. quick way for one to get an initial consult with an attorney regarding any sort of wage/hour dispute).
- In 2011, the federal government announced the addition of 270,000 workers – great for "job creation," but the vast majority will be working to help non-government workers record and justify complaints against their employer.
- While the overall Department of Labor spending will be down 5 percent in 2012, worker protection regulating bodies will see their spending increased by about \$1.8 billion (yes, that's "billion" with a "b.") Agencies include: The Wage and Hour Division (WHD), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA), and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP).
- The IRS added about \$600 million to its budget and plans 6,000 audits of worker classifications this year alone.

- Minnesota added a requirement that any discrimination case must participate in the MN Dept. of Human Rights mediation program (simply put, a fast-path to cash for those who file a case).

Needless to say, it's an explosive hiring environment. The possibility of having to answer to an enforcement issue is no longer "if," it's more of a "when." As a business, the biggest thing you can do to spend as little time and effort as possible on this is to protect your company. There are a few ways to do so and it's critical you consider these areas:

- Create Good Policies – without good policies, a lawsuit (with or without merit) will likely be crippling to your business.
- Consistently Enforce – having good policies is one thing, consistently enforcing them will add another layer of critical protection so labor pool predators can't take advantage of you.
- Document Disciplinary Actions – Quite often, this is where a lawsuit can significantly gain, or lose, traction. Poor documentation can shoot your good policies right out of the water.
- Hire the Right Employees – According to hrthatworks.com, the #1 mistake that managers make that can lead to lawsuits is hiring the wrong person. Always make sure you're diligently screening and placing the right people for the job vs. impulsively filling open spots. Also, look at your business and ask: am I in the business of hiring people, or am I in the business of creating xyz product/providing xyz service? If the answer to your question is the latter, take a serious look at outsourcing some of your hiring functions.

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:

Dick Young, Innova Industries

Program Committee, chair:

Elroy Vesta, EJ Enterprises

Special Events Committee, co-chairs:

Tom Mastellar, Kendeco

Kevin Schutz, OECS

Youth Involvement Committee, co-chairs:

Bob Grove, Cosmos Enterprises

Evan Westra, West Tool & Design

Government Relations Committee, co-chairs:

Don Leapaldt, State Bank & Trust

Tyler Wirth, The Work Connection

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.