

Doug Loon well positioned to lead statewide business community

By Bill Blazar

We're pleased and excited to welcome Doug Loon as the new president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the state's premier business advocacy organization. Loon is currently the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's vice president for regional affairs and advocacy. In that role, he manages the seven regional offices that provide political and grassroots outreach across the nation. In addition, he manages the U.S. Chamber's Midwest Region that includes Minnesota. He will assume his duties Sept. 8.

The selection culminates a months-long search to replace the vacancy left by our longtime leader David Olson, who passed away last July. Loon's professional and personal background makes him a perfect fit to lead the statewide business community and take our organization to the next level.

He has the experience. His focus and responsibility at the U.S. Chamber has been supporting state and local chambers and businesses to move public policy in a direction that helps them be successful. That's exactly what the Minnesota Chamber does. The specific issues are different, but the process for success is remarkably similar.

Loon's 28 years in advocacy and public policy, one of the most important skill sets for this position, was a key factor in his selection. He will oversee the Minnesota Chamber's public policy development process while also building and leading even stronger coalitions among local chambers, trade associations and business organizations.

The Minnesota Chamber has distinguished itself among statewide business organizations through its strong alignment with local chambers of commerce. Our overall advocacy is bolstered by the Minnesota Chamber Federation – nearly 40 local chamber of commerce partners that adopt and advocate with us on our top legislative priorities. Loon is well known and well respected by Chamber executives and business leaders all across the state. He brings a very strong set of relationships with key stakeholders, elected officials and other leaders.

Loon knows the issues. He has lived in Minnesota for almost 17 years and been active with local chambers throughout Minnesota.

"The Minnesota Chamber, much like the U.S. Chamber, stands at the crossroads of economic opportunity, government engagement and the private marketplace," Loon says. "It is the one organization that can bring together the various interests of the business community behind a common agenda aimed at the development and growth of Minnesota's economy."

On a personal level, Loon worked closely with former Chamber President Olson and considered him a friend and mentor. He brings a similar passion for promoting business and advancing policies that ensure Minnesota businesses can compete in a changing and global economy.

“David created a highly respected and collaborative organization,” Loon says. “He and his team offered solid advice and solutions on state issues of consequence to Minnesota businesses. They established productive relationships with our state’s policy-makers, local chambers and trade associations, and I plan to build on that legacy.”

Loon is taking the reins of the Chamber at an opportune time. Thanks to the engagement of each and every member, as well as our network of local chamber partners, we are stronger than ever. We pride ourselves on this fact: “When the Minnesota Chamber speaks, policy-makers listen.” Our successes at the State Capitol are unmatched among Minnesota business organizations.

Loon understands the needs for a vibrant, statewide economy for businesses large and small, rural and metro, and the role that local chambers play. Our Minnesota Chamber Federation will grow in both size and effectiveness under his leadership.

Bill Blazar is interim president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce – www.mnchamber.com.