

Business Resources online, at your fingertips

By Doug Loon

The Minnesota Chamber's premier business assistance program, Grow Minnesota, is pleased to announce the launch of our [Business Resources](#). We view the online site as an important tool to our mission of retaining Minnesota businesses and encouraging them to expand here.

Grow Minnesota! works in partnership with nearly 80 local chambers and economic development entities throughout Minnesota to regularly visit face-to-face with company leadership. Our primary purpose is to thank the business owner or manager for investing in our state and employing Minnesotans. We learn as much as we can about the business, and ask if we can assist the company to stay and grow in our state. Finally, we ask what policymakers can do to improve our state's overall business environment.

The statistics underscore the scope and success of our efforts. In our 13<sup>th</sup> year, we have conducted more than 10,000 visits to more than 6,500 businesses of all sizes and types across the state. Since we started tracking in 2009, we have protected more than 18,000 jobs.

Our visits have also revealed a common frustration among businesses: the difficulty in locating relevant resources and all too often, connecting with the right person at a federal, state or local government agency in order to answer an everyday business question. This recurring complaint spawned the development and launch of Business Resources.

Businesses can navigate the pages to identify and access state and regional resources in seven categories: business financing; entrepreneurship; environmental and energy; exporting/importing; research and data tools; start and manage a business; workforce development.

What are the criteria for accessing money from the state's angel loan fund? What is current employment law for issues that commonly surface at the workplace? Who can assist in developing a strategy to enter the export market? Who can help guide a business through the process of environmental permitting? Answers to these and many more questions are a click away.

There's no better way to develop and grow Minnesota's home-grown economy than by connecting Minnesota businesses. Particularly useful on our Business Resources site is a link to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's manufacturers supply chain database. It's intended to help Minnesota manufacturers buy materials, components and finished products from each other instead of out-of-state or foreign suppliers. It's a win-win for all Minnesotans.

Our Grow Minnesota! network connects one-on-one with between 800 and 1,000 companies a year. That's a small fraction of Minnesota's business population. There are tens of thousands of Minnesota businesses that have not yet received a face-to-face Grow Minnesota! visit, but may need some form of assistance. Business Resources is their 24/7 tool to get pointed in the right direction. And if that doesn't work, Business Resources offers direct access to one of our professional staff and/or one of our local chamber partners.

For more information on Grow Minnesota! contact Kathi Schaff, director of Grow Minnesota! 651.292.4667 or [kschaff@mnchamber.com](mailto:kschaff@mnchamber.com), or a [Grow Minnesota! partner](#) in your community.

Working together, we will make Minnesota ready for the future – ready for change and ready to grow.

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