BRAD FINSTAD
CEO, Center for Rural Policy Development

Finstad, who is the President/CEO for the Center for Rural Policy and Development, has a wide array of management and leadership experience. Finstad heads the Center which was created in 1997 as Minnesota’s only statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan rural policy research center.

Finstad, retired from the MN Legislature after serving three terms representing a rural MN district. Brad served on the Minnesota House’s agriculture, finance and health and human services committees and for two years served as assistant minority leader. He gained statewide attention in 2006 when he authored and successfully shepherded passage of legislation authorizing public financing of the new Twins ballpark.

He previously served as the Agriculture and Rural Policy Adviser/Liaison for former Congressman Mark Kennedy.

In the private sector, Finstad has held numerous management positions dealing with business development and human resources.

Finstad also has been involved in numerous agricultural and rural organizations, including the Minnesota Corn Growers Association, the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation, the Minnesota Pork Producers, the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association and the Minnesota Association of Cooperatives. Brad is currently serving on the board of education for the New Ulm area catholic schools, MN Twins Community Fund board of directors and the First Choice Pregnancy Services Board.

Finstad, 40, and his wife, Jaclyn, are both Minnesota natives and live in New Ulm with their seven children: Greta, Thomas, Jake, Margo, William, Matthew and Aaron. He received his bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Education from the University of Minnesota.

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BRIAN MCCLUNG
Founding Partner, MZA+Co

Brian McClung is a Founding Partner of MZA+Co, a full-service public relations and public affairs firm based in St. Paul. Brian’s 20-plus years of experience includes work as a TV news reporter, campaign manager, spokesperson, presidential campaign consultant and public relations executive. From 2004 to 2010, he was Press Secretary, Director of Communications and Deputy Chief of Staff to Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty. More
recently, Brian’s work has been recognized with a “Leaders in Public Policy” award. Brian is a regular guest on the state’s most-watched public affairs programs – TPT’s “Almanac” and KSTP-TV’s “At Issue with Tom Hauser.” He is a graduate of Washington & Lee University with a B.A. in Journalism & Mass Communications.

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KATHARINE TINUCCI
Senior Vice President, MZA+Co

Katharine Tinucci is Senior Vice President at MZA+Co Katharine served as Governor Mark Dayton's Campaign Manager during his successful re-election in 2014, overseeing all aspects of his campaign. Prior to the re-election campaign, Katharine was Press Secretary to Governor Dayton during his first term, where she planned and executed communications strategy for advancing the Administration's agenda and acted as spokesperson for the governor. Katharine also played a key role during Dayton's 2010 campaign for governor, serving as Deputy Campaign Manager for Communications. She is a frequent contributor to TPT's "Almanac" and WCCO radio. Katharine earned a B.A. in Theatre and Theology from Loyola University Chicago and a J.D. from the University of St. Thomas School of Law.

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JOHN KIRCHNER
Executive Director, Congressional and Public Affairs – Midwest Region, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

John Kirchner serves the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as Executive Director, Congressional and Public Affairs for the Midwest Region. In his current role, John helps develop and implement the Chamber’s grassroots legislative and political activities in the Midwest Region. Prior to joining the Chamber, John spent eight years as Public Relations Manager at Marvin Windows and Doors. In that role, he led Marvin’s public relations, public affairs, and corporate communications efforts. John also spent five years as the Political Director for the Minnesota Republican Party prior to his time at Marvin.

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DOUG LOON
President, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

Douglas B. Loon is president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, a position he has held since September 8, 2015. The Minnesota Chamber represents more than 2,300 Minnesota companies, 130 local chambers and 65 business trade associations at the Minnesota Legislature on a variety of issues that impact Minnesota’s economy.

Prior to assuming leadership of the Minnesota Chamber, he spent 20 years at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 17 of those in Minnesota. As the vice president for regional affairs and advocacy, he managed the seven regional offices that provide political and grassroots outreach across the nation. He also managed the U.S. Chamber’s Midwest Region that includes Minnesota. He was intimately involved in supporting state and local chambers and businesses to move public policy in a direction that helps them be successful.

Previously, Loon served as director of congressional and public affairs at U.S. Chamber headquarters in Washington, D.C. There, he served as one of the organization’s chief lobbyists before Congress on issues critical to the American business community.

Before joining the U.S. Chamber staff in 1995, Loon was legislative director to Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania. In his 10 years on Capitol Hill, Loon also served as acting staff director for the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and on the Senate Commerce Committee. In addition, he worked for Senator Larry Pressler of South Dakota.

Loon received his bachelor’s degree in government and international affairs from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, S.D. He is a graduate of the Congressional Research Service’s Institute for Legislative Staff as well as the Federal Election Commission’s program on campaign finance laws for incorporated trade associations and membership organizations. He also graduated from Leadership Minnesota, an exclusive program of the Minnesota Chamber addressing the economic and public policy issues of Minnesota businesses. He is past chair of the Eden Prairie Foundation Board of Directors.

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JOHN BECKMANN
Attorney, Hoversten, Johnson, Beckmann & Hovey, LLP

John Beckmann is a partner in the Austin law firm of Hoversten, Johnson, Beckmann and Hovey. Mr. Beckmann is a 1979 graduate of the University of Minnesota law school. He specializes in litigation and has tried to conclusion a number of employment law cases. He is active in product liability defense, personal injury and insurance litigation, and counsels employers with respect to workplace policies, investigations, and procedures. Mr. Beckmann is a mediator on the Minnesota Supreme Court roster of neutrals and has litigated cases outside of Minnesota in a number of state and federal courts. He is the author of several articles on legal issues including a section on non-compete agreements and unfair competition published as part of West’s Civil Practice series.

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KRISTEN OLSON
Community Concierge, Austin Area Chamber of Commerce

Kristen Olson, Austin’s Community Concierge, moved here with her family in January of 2012. Wanting to take an active role in the community, she quickly immersed herself in volunteer activities. Chairperson of Vision 2020’s Community Pride and Spirit Committee, she serves on the Austin Public Library Board and also volunteers with Mower County Humane Society, Mower Refreshed, TedX Talks, The Hormel Institute, and the Paramount Theatre. Kristen has helped put local programs in place for mentoring in the schools (Peer Power Partners) and a community home improvement program (CHIP), and is actively working with strategic partners to address the housing shortage in the area.

Kristen is a graduate of Ripon (WI) College, the University of Denver's Publishing Institute, the Blandin Foundation Community Leadership program and Leadership Austin. She has extensive experience in project management, having held management positions with several Minneapolis publishing companies, in addition to having chamber of commerce and real estate experience.

As a trailing spouse, Kristen is more than familiar with the challenges of moving a family to a new community. She offers strategic, useful counsel to our newcomers on an ongoing basis and strives to help others develop the connections that will truly make Austin their new “home.”

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KYMN ANDERSON
President, Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce

Kymn Anderson has served as President of the Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism since 1999. Kymn has benefited immensely from participation in MCCE. The collective knowledge and camaraderie has boosted her confidence and effectiveness in her tenure as the chamber director in Faribault. The friendships made through MCCE have become powerful resources and confidants aiding her professional development. The Faribault Chamber has a multitude of programs and initiatives thanks to the help and support of other chamber executive who took the time to help a colleague. Kymn says; “One of the best things about chamber work is the outpouring of support and encouragement between execs. Take advantage of it!”

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DELLA SCHMIDT
President and CEO, Winona Area Chamber of Commerce

Della has worked in the Chamber profession for more than 20 years. Her career spans three Chambers; St. Peter, Cloquet and currently Winona. The Winona Area Chamber of Commerce serves a membership of 630 in a community area of 30,000.

During her career, Della has served on the MCCE Board of Directors, the SE Central Workforce Council, and the MN Chamber Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee, and the Grow MN! Advisory Committee. She led the Cloquet Area Chamber of Commerce to receive the MCCE "Step One" Designation, and the Winona Area Chamber of
Commerce to receive the MCCE "Mark of Excellence" designation. In June of 2016, she led the Winona Chamber into a partnership with the MN Chamber as the pilot project for the Business Education Network initiative.

Della is an alumni of the Blandin Leadership program, the US Chamber Institute Program for Organizational Management, has received the MN Certified Chamber Professional (MCCP) designation, and has been awarded the MCCE Public Affairs Award. Her work in agribusiness public policy has been recognized by the awarding of a US Congressional Recognition for her efforts to promote economic development through livestock agriculture in Southern Minnesota. Della completed the Saint Mary’s University Philanthropy and Development program for Creating & Sustaining Effective Boards for Non-Profit Organizations and serves on numerous community boards and committees. In 2014 she was recognized by Congressman Walz for her advocacy work that was instrumental in securing the $170 million dollar Highway 43 Winona Bridge project.

Della has facilitated several chamber board retreats in southern MN and small group sessions at MCCE conferences.

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TIMOTHY FRITZ
Vice President Operations, Hormel Foods

As the vice president of operations for the Grocery Products division at Hormel Foods, Timothy J. Fritz is responsible for the Grocery Products processing plants and co-packer operations.

Fritz joined Hormel Foods in 1984 as a relief supervisor at the Fremont Plant. He held various supervisor, production superintendent and personnel manager roles at the Fremont Plant, Atlanta Plant (Tucker, Ga.) and Austin Plant until being named the corporate manager of industrial relations at the Corporate Office in 2002. Fritz was promoted to director of industrial relations in 2005 then returned to the Austin Plant as the production manager in 2010 and was promoted to plant manager in 2011. He assumed his current role in April 2016.

Originally from Beardstown, Ill., Fritz is a graduate of the University of Illinois with a degree in business administration. He is also a graduate of the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management Executive Program in Minneapolis.

Fritz has served as a board member and chair for the United Way of Mower County, Austin Area Catholic Schools and Austin Youth Basketball. He is the president of the Austin Area Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Rotary Club of Austin.

Fritz and his wife Kathy have two children.

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JAMES SNEE
President and Chief Operating Officer, Hormel Foods

As president and chief operating officer of Hormel Foods, James P. Snee oversees all of the company’s business segments and global operations including Grocery Products, Refrigerated Foods, Specialty Foods, Jennie-O Turkey Store and International & Other.

Snee joined Hormel Foods in 1989 in the foodservice division and served in various positions within the group before being named manager of inventory and distribution for the Refrigerated Foods segment in 1995. He was promoted to
foodservice area manager and foodservice regional sales manager in 1996 and 1998, respectively. Snee was named director of purchasing in 2006 and vice president of affiliated business units in 2008. He was named vice president and senior vice president of Hormel Foods International Corporation at the end of fiscal year 2011. He advanced to group vice president of Hormel Foods and president of Hormel Foods International Corporation in October 2012. He assumed his current position in October 2015.

Snee earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in marketing from New Mexico State University (Las Cruces, N.M.). He received his master’s degree in business administration from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.

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KEVIN MYERS
Senior Vice President - Research and Development, Hormel Foods

As senior vice president of Research and Development at Hormel Foods, Kevin L. Myers oversees product development, packaging, food safety sciences and lab services.

Myers came to Hormel Foods with over a decade of experience in the food industry, holding management positions in food technology, research science, and new product development.

In 2001, he started with the company as a research scientist for fresh and value added meats at research and development. He was promoted to development leader of fresh and processed meats in 2005, and a year later, was promoted to group manager of product development. In 2012, he became the director of product, process, and package development and was promoted to vice president of research and development in October of 2013. He assumed his current role in March 2015.

A native of Mount Ayr, Iowa, Myers received a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education at Iowa State University, where he also earned his master’s and doctorate degrees in Meat Science and Food Science.

Myers is a member of Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton’s Food Safety and Defense Task Force. He is also a member of the American Meat Science Association and the Institute of Food Technologists.

Myers is the lead author of two recently published scientific papers in Meat Science: Effects of high hydrostatic pressure and varying concentrations of sodium nitrite from traditional and vegetable-based sources on the growth of Listeria monocytogenes on ready-to-eat (RTE) sliced ham; and The effect of high hydrostatic pressure, sodium nitrite and salt concentration on the growth of Listeria monocytogenes on RTE ham and turkey.

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