
Featured Story

Loan to Cambridge Metal and Plastics Helps Retain 74 Jobs

The Initiative Foundation's loan committee recently approved a loan to Cambridge Metal and Plastics (a division of Water Works Manufacturing, LLC).

With additional support from TCF Equipment Finance in Wayzata, MN and BLM Group in Wixom, Michigan, the financing package enabled the company to purchase new equipment while retaining 74 jobs.



The owners of Cambridge Metal and Plastics, all shown here at the loan closing, include (from left to right): Jim Shear, Rob Bass, Mike Glomski & Brian Nichols.

With over 150,000 sq ft of manufacturing space, Cambridge Metal and Plastics (CMP) is a supplier to original equipment manufacturers (OEM) in the automobile and recreational vehicle industries, including companies like Honda and Polaris. CMP also distributes its own line of accessories for recreational vehicle industries

In April 2007, the Initiative Foundation originally approved financing to Water Works for equipment purchases. The company was located in St. Louis Park, MN at the time and planned to relocate and build a new building in the Cambridge area. At approximately the same time, Cambridge Metal and Plastics announced it would be closing its doors and shutting down all operations - eliminating over 100 manufacturing positions. Through a collaborative effort between the Initiative Foundation, and partners in the Cambridge area, a financing package was assembled that enabled Water Works to purchase Cambridge Metal and Plastics and retain 60 of the existing employees.

Significant investment has been made in new equipment and improvements since the ownership change occurred in 2007. The company is now off to a strong start in 2010!

Other Loan Closings

During the second quarter of 2010, the Initiative Foundation, in collaboration with Landmark Community Bank and Central Minnesota Development Company, also provided financing to *Granger Machine Inc., based in Isanti.*

Granger is a specialty machining shop, with expertise in CNC milling and turning for water jet cutting equipment suppliers. The Initiative Foundation Loan Committee approved financing which enabled Granger to acquire a larger building to facilitate its growth. Among Granger's customers are AccuStream (New Brighton), a leading supplier of water jet cutting equipment and Starrett Tru-Stone (Waite Park), a supplier of precision measuring tools and equipment.

Granger currently employs 18 people; this financing is expected to create three full-time and one part-time employee positions. Find them on the web at: www.grangermachine.com.

Workshops & Conferences

DEED to Visit Minnesota Communities

July 13, 2010

1:00 – 4:30PM

Initiative Foundation, Little Falls

It's that time of year again. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is going back on the road this summer to meet with our partners around the state.

DEED Commissioner Dan McElroy and other agency leaders will visit 11 cities over an eight-week period starting in June. Our theme this year is "**New Tools for New Times**," featuring presentations on the Angel Tax Credit and other new initiatives that are designed to encourage economic growth in Minnesota. Commissioner McElroy will also discuss the state of the Minnesota economy and give an overview of the 2010 legislative session.

There will be plenty of time for questions and answers. These sessions should be of special interest to our core partners: economic developers, workforce development professionals, educators, local government officials, business leaders and legislators.

Please register to attend one of our road shows! Go to www.PositivelyMinnesota.com and select calendar of events.

Corporate Education and Outreach Workshops through St. Cloud State University

Common Sense Finance

June 17, June 24 & July 1 (half-day sessions)

How to Conduct a Harassment Investigation

June 22 & 23 (1 ½ days)

Hands on Quickbooks Training

July 22 & 29 (half-day sessions)

Starting a Business

Fall 2010 (10 three-hour sessions)

Saint Cloud State University's Center for Continuing Studies works with businesses, industries and nonprofit organizations to identify the training needs of their workforce. Their training and professional development is then tailored to those needs. More information about these and other trainings offered by the Center for Continuing Studies can be found by visiting:

www.scsutrainng.com.

Breakfast With the B.E.S.T. (Building Excellence through Strategic Thinking)

July 14, August 11, Sept 8 (every second Wednesday of the month)

Registration 7 - 7:30AM and breakfast 7:30 - 8:30AM
Minnesota WorkForce Center: St. Cloud Technical College, St. Cloud

Breakfast With the B.E.S.T. is a monthly training series presented by Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council in partnership with Stearns-Benton Workforce Council.

Cost is \$25 per session. Register by calling Rosie Beager at 320.308.5701 or email at admissions@workforceu.com. More information can be found at: http://www.workforceu.com/pdfs/breakfast_with_the_best.pdf

Upcoming Small Business Development Center Workshops

Growing America Through Entrepreneurship: An Orientation to Starting a Business in Minnesota

- Brainerd: June 21, 2010 (1-3PM) [More info...](#)
- St. Cloud: June 21, 2010 (2-4PM) [More info...](#)
- Cambridge: June 28, 2010 (1-3PM) [More info...](#)
- Brainerd: July 5, 2010 (1-3PM) [More info...](#)
- St. Cloud: July 5, 2010 (2-4PM) [More info...](#)
- Little Falls: July 12, 2010 (2-4PM) [More info...](#)
- Brainerd: July 19, 2010 (1-3PM) [More info...](#)
- St. Cloud: July 19, 2010 (2-4PM) [More info...](#)
- Cambridge: July 26, 2010 (1-3PM) [More info...](#)

Starting a Business: Six Steps to Success

- St. Cloud: June 24, 2010 (6-8:30PM) [More info...](#)
- St. Cloud: July 15, 2010 (9-11:30PM) [More info...](#)

Going into Business for Yourself

- Brainerd: July 15, 2010 (6-9PM) [More info...](#)

There is no cost to attend any of the above workshops. For more information about these and other workshops offered by SBDCs in the area visit: <http://mnsbdc.ecenterdirect.com/Conferences.action>.

Anderson Center Forums

In Anderson Center's forums, skilled Discussion Leaders challenge experienced participants to teach and learn from each other through real-world case studies. Upcoming forums include:

- Negotiation Forum – June 28-30, St. Cloud
- Alumni Forum – July 1
- Marketing Forum – July 12-14
- Alumni Forum – August 5
- Strategy Forum – August 9-11
- Roundtable Forum – September 16-17, Walker

For more information about the forums and other resources provided by the Anderson Center visit: www.acmbd.org or call 320-251-5420.

Things To Know

Rural Energy for America grants - \$51,500,000 available

The Rural Energy for America Program will provide funds for agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements. The grants are awarded on a competitive basis and can be up to 25% of total eligible project costs. Grants are limited to \$500,000 for renewable energy systems and \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements. Grant requests as low as \$2,500 for renewable energy systems and \$1,500 for energy efficiency improvements will be considered. At least 20% of the grant funds awarded must be for grants of \$20,000 or less.

Applications due June 30, 2010. For more information, and to access the Federal Register Notice, visit: <http://tinyurl.com/22u8l3e>. Questions can be directed to Minnesota's Rural Development Energy Coordinator: Lisa L. Noty, USDA Rural Development, Albert Lea, 507/373-7960 Ext. 120, or lisa.noty@mn.usda.gov

USDA Loan Funds Help Foundation Spur Rural Business, Job Growth

The Initiative Foundation will use \$750,000 in recently announced federal funds to boost economic development and job creation in seven central Minnesota counties. > [download news release](#)

Resources

“Past Silos and Smokestacks: Transforming the Rural Economy in the Midwest”

Mark Drabenstott, Director of the Center for Regional Competitiveness at the Rural Policy Research Institute, recently wrote a new report on rural development, entitled *Past Silos and Smokestacks: Transforming the Rural Economy in the Midwest*.

Drabenstott writes about the need for the Midwestern United States to develop a new development strategy to succeed and compete in a global economy. As Drabenstott writes, "The rural Midwest must move past silos and smokestacks. Globalization has changed the field of play, demanding the region find a new playbook."

For the complete report, visit: <http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/>.

Business Valuation Services

Approximately one-third of the Northland's 8,000 privately-held companies are owned and managed by individuals over the age of 55. This presents an opportunity for The Northspan Group to provide technical assistance services for owners/managers who are contemplating retiring and exiting their businesses in the next few years.

Senior business developer Bob Palmquist recently completed education and certification training through the Institute of Business Appraisers (IBA) to conduct business valuations and

appraisals. Pending IBA accreditation, Palmquist will be able to help answer questions such as what is my business worth, how can it be sold and who will operate it?

Business ownership transition and succession planning are at the forefront of this growing need. Northspan services can be utilized in estate planning, Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOP), litigation support, stock valuation for private placements, allocation of purchase price among tangible and intangible assets, business mergers, acquisition and divestitures, institutional financing, marital dissolution, buying out a partner or shareholder, and taxation issues for probate or federal estate taxes.

For more information contact Bob Palmquist at 218.529.7562 or bpalmquist@northspan.org

St. Cloud State University's Microloan Program

In the fall of 2009 SCSU's G.R. Herberger College of Business launched the SCSU Microloan Program (MLP). Microloan programs provide small loans to individuals interested in starting a business but who do not meet the eligibility criteria for a traditional bank loan. In development for over a year, this program remains relatively unique in its focus to involve students with microenterprises to enhance business development. East coast universities such as Yale and Rutgers have similar programs; we believe SCSU's program is the only Midwest program of its kind.

The SCSU MPL was developed to help build business and economic capacity in the local community by providing education and lending services to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs. The program targets individuals considered underserved and who have limited avenues for raising funds to support their microenterprise, including individuals with low incomes, displaced workers and new Americans.

The MLP is a collaborative effort between the university and the local community. A partnership was created between SCSU and the Initiative Foundation for the financial component of the program. The foundation provides the banking services needed for awarding and processing the microloans.

For more information visit www.stcloudstate.edu/osp/documents/Fundamental.pdf or contact Jeremy Newhouse at neje0902@stcloudstate.edu.

Is a Revolving Loan Fund For You?

Should your community (or region) create its own Revolving Loan Fund... a place where local people can make tax-friendly investments or leave gifts from their estate to "do good" right at home? The Initiative Foundation can help! You start a fund with us and we'll handle the administration and paperwork while helping you make loans to grow local jobs and strengthen the local economy. [Learn more on the foundation's website](#) or contact [Curt Hanson](#), Initiative Foundation's VP for Donor Services to talk about the possibilities.

Business Owners Toolkit

The Business Owner's Toolkit™ (www.toolkit.com) offers more than 5,000 pages of free cost-cutting tips, step-by-step checklists, real-life case studies, startup advice, and business templates to small business owners and entrepreneurs. The site also offers a monthly newsletter, up-to-date news topics, and Ask Alice!, a column that closely follows industry trends and provides trusted advice to inquiring site visitors.

Over 70 other great business-related resources can be found on the Initiative Foundation's website by visiting: http://www.ifound.org/business_resources.php.

Small Business Resource Guide

This guide is available in the Spring 2007 issue of *IQ magazine*. Simply visit <http://www.iqmag.org> then click on "Archives" to find this issue or <http://issuu.com/> to download, print or email the guide.

This newsletter is designed to share resources and conferences or training events of common interest for program participants and supporters of the Initiative Foundation. For more information about these and other economic development opportunities, contact [Randy Olson](#), Vice President for Economic Opportunity.

If you wish to be removed, update your email address or change your subscription preferences please contact Sharon at sgottwalt@ifound.org.