



Volume VIII, Issue 5
May 2009

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For any questions you may have about The Partnership or "Around the County", please contact us.

Wright County Economic Development Shirts available for Sale ~ \$35

(Call Jeanene if your interested 763.477.3000 ext. 3470)

Around the County

by
Noel LaBine
Executive Director



This certainly has been a time of rapid change.

Recently, I listened to Ed Engoron, a national consultant for the retail industry, give a presentation on who the retail leaders are now and what changes have occurred in that industry. The food industry has \$1.4 trillion a year business, and it continues to grow with close to a 3% growth last year. Although the profile has moved to 51% for grocers and 48.7% for restaurants, which is the opposite of what it was a few months ago, there have been other changes as well. People are making different choices about where they spend their food dollar. There is a long list of successful businesses in that industry, and some companies that used to be the rising star are now struggling for market share.

Recent economic reports have been more upbeat. For one thing, Ben Bernanke cited ... “several signs that the recession may be losing its grip: The housing market has shown some signs of bottoming, and consumer spending, which collapsed in the second half of last year, came back to life in the first quarter.” (Star Tribune May 6, 2009).

Other industries are preparing for growth as well. During this last month, I had the honor of being asked to help a major recycler of electronic waste find resources to help them develop a new high-technology recycling technique. If this company with a vision has their way they will revolutionize the way electronic waste is recycled and stop a lot of the polluting associated with that problem.

Like other resourceful industries, it is happening right here in Wright County.

Please try to attend our May 13th event and learn more about industries that are growing and what you can do to gain more market share.

Noel LaBine
Executive Director

Years ago a group of brilliant young men at the University of Wisconsin seemed to have amazing creative literary talent. They were would-be poets, novelists and essayists. Their skills were extraordinary. These promising young men met regularly to read and critique each other's work. And critique it they did! These men dissected the most minute literary expression into a hundred pieces. They were heartless, tough, and even mean in their criticism. The sessions became so merciless that the members of this exclusive club called themselves the "Stranglers."

Not to be outdone, the women of literary talent in the university started a club of their own, calling themselves the "Wranglers." They, too, read their works to each other. But there was one great difference. The criticism was much softer, more positive, more encouraging. Sometimes, there was almost no criticism at all. Every effort was encouraged.

Twenty years later, an alumnus of the university was doing an exhaustive study of his classmates' careers when he noticed a vast difference in the literary accomplishments of the Stranglers as opposed to the Wranglers. Of all the bright young men in the Stranglers, not one had made a significant literary accomplishment of any kind. From the Wranglers had come six or more successful writers, some of national renown such as Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, who wrote "The Yearling."

Comparative talent between the two? Probably the same. Level of education? Not much difference. But the Stranglers strangled, while the Wranglers were determined to give each other a lift. The Stranglers promoted an atmosphere of contention and self doubt. The Wranglers highlighted the best, not the worst. These are good examples of how to kill morale, as well as how to improve it.

This lesson applies to keeping your business alive and healthy. Plain and simple, if employees are disgruntled, unhappy or feel like they aren't important to the operation, business will suffer. Perhaps in challenging times, workers will put up with more dissatisfaction for fear of not finding another job, but they won't be doing your company any favors.

There are plenty of ways in which managers strangle morale, like lying to employees, playing favorites, arrogance, disrespect, not admitting to mistakes, failing to recognize a job well-done. Managers also hurt morale by:

- **Ignoring what's important to workers.** We make it our business to know our employees at Mackay Mitchell Envelope Company, which is why I created the Mackay 33 for Managers. It's all about making our managers aware of the attitudes and concerns of our employees. The complete Mackay 33 is available free on my website, www.harveymackay.com.
- **Overloading workers.** Some people don't know when to say no, or are afraid to say no lest they be considered uncooperative. Give realistic responsibilities. Avoid meaningless tasks.
- **Stifling initiative.** Let your people solve their own problems, if they are willing and able. Nothing builds morale as fast as experiencing success.
- **Wasting employees' time** by imposing phony deadlines for projects, scheduling long and meaningless meetings, and failing to solicit their input on the best ways to accomplish goals.
- **Intimidation**, such as looking over their shoulder, distrusting workers without cause, practicing petty office politics, publicly humiliating employees for making mistakes, promoting gossip and bullying.
- **Not supplying a good physical environment**, including adequate lighting, workspace, storage, computer and office supplies.

Ouch! These are all signs of a company in trouble. If you noticed, most of these issues can be resolved without cost. If you are serious about improving employee morale, try these simple things:

1. Smile. Be positive. Your attitude should set the example.
2. Celebrate even small achievements. Try an impromptu root beer float party, potluck or an employee-of-the-week recognition. Make it fun.
3. Encourage continuing education or learning new skills.
4. Promote teamwork, including after work activities.
5. Listen to your employees with both ears. Tune in to their ideas, concerns and suggestions.

None of these require a big capital outlay or even a lot of work. But the payoff is significant.

Thomas J. Watson, former IBM chairman, hit the nail on the head: "I believe the real difference between success and failure in a corporation can very often be traced to the question of how well the organization brings out the great energies and talents of its people."

Mackay's Moral: Strangle morale and you'll strangle your business.

This was reprinted with permission from nationally syndicated columnist Harvey Mackay, author of the New York Times #1 bestseller "Swim with the sharks without being eaten alive".

Strength in adversity

I have never met a successful person who hasn't had to overcome a little—or a lot—of adversity. Adversity is the prevailing theme of the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, which bears the name of the renowned author Horatio Alger, Jr. His tales of overcoming adversity captivated the public in the late 19th century. The association honors dedicated community leaders who demonstrate individual initiative and a commitment to excellence; as exemplified by remarkable achievements accomplished through honesty, hard work, self-reliance and perseverance over adversity.

In early April, I once again attended the 2009 Horatio Alger Awards in Washington, D.C., as I have every year since I was inducted in 2004. The association, a nonprofit educational organization that awards more than \$10 million in scholarships annually, was established in 1947 to dispel the mounting belief among the nation's youth that the American Dream was no longer attainable. The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans is dedicated to the simple but powerful belief that hard work, honesty and determination can conquer all obstacles.

Oprah Winfrey, a Horatio Alger member, experienced much abuse and adversity as a young child. She learned that if you want to not only stay alive, but also make something of yourself, you have to overcome obstacles. She said: "Always continue the climb. It is possible for you to do whatever you choose, if you first get to know who you are and are willing to work with a power that is greater than ourselves to do it."

Retailing magnate, J.C. Penney, another member, added: "I would never have amounted to anything were it not for adversity. I was forced to come up the hard way."

Why do some of us have what it takes to pick ourselves up off the canvas when others are ready to throw in the towel? I don't know the answer, but if I did I'd bottle it. I do know this: It isn't all that rare. The human species comes equipped with built-in mental toughness. Some of us just don't know it's there. Take it from an old peddler: The hardest sale you'll ever make is to yourself. But once you're convinced you can do it, you can.

Adversity is the grindstone of life. Intended to polish you up, adversity also has the ability to grind you down. The impact and ultimate result depend on what you do with the difficulties that come your way. Consider the phenomenal achievements of these people who experienced extreme cases of adversity.

- Beethoven composed his greatest works after becoming deaf.
- Thomas Edison had an IQ of less than 100, almost died of scarlet fever and was nearly deaf, yet he became one of the greatest inventors in history.
- If Columbus had turned back, no one could have blamed him, considering the constant adversity he endured. Of course, no one would have remembered him either.
- Abraham Lincoln became one of our greatest U.S. presidents, despite dropping out of grade school, going broke, having a son die at a young age and running for political office and losing four times.
- Carol Burnett, another Horatio Alger member, was raised by her grandmother because both her parents suffered from alcoholism. She lived in an impoverished area, was divorced twice, yet went on to great success and her variety show won 23 Emmy Awards.
- Glen Cunningham was seven years old when he was so badly burned in a schoolhouse fire that his doctor said, "I doubt if he'll be able to walk again." Yet he went on to become the outstanding miler of his time.

Nature is full of wonderful examples of how adversity fosters strength.

Botanists say that trees need the powerful March winds to flex their trunks and main branches, so that the sap is drawn up to nourish the budding leaves.

Pearls form inside the shell of certain mollusks (are created) as a defense mechanism to a potentially threatening irritant such as a parasite inside its shell. The mollusk creates a pearl to seal off the irritation.

And it was Ralph Waldo Emerson who pointed out, "When it is dark enough, you can see the stars."

I don't like adversity any more than the next guy, but I welcome it. It has made me stronger, more fearless, and ultimately, more successful. Stare down adversity and watch it blink.

Mackay's Moral: A smooth sea never made a skillful sailor.

This was reprinted with permission from nationally syndicated columnist Harvey Mackay, author of the New York Times #1 bestseller "Swim with the sharks without being eaten alive".

Press Release – Green Energy Recap

The Wright County Economic Development Partnership held their monthly noon luncheon seminar at the River City Lanes Extreme Entertainment Center in Monticello on April 15th. There were about 47 people at this event.

Wayne Bauernschmitt, Lane Wilson and Bob Miller of Wright Hennepin Electric Co-operative shared information about programs that would save their customers money. They told stories of successful cost-savings through their energy-efficiency programs. In one case replacing halogen lighting with new fluorescent lamps reduced commercial customer warehouse energy from 20,000 kilowatts in one month to 12,000 kilowatts in the same month a year later.

Ryan Bruers of Excel Energy had a few cost savings case studies to share with the audience. For instance, replacing the lighting in a Caterpillar Plant had a Return on Investment (ROI) of only 1.4 years. Replacing welders at another plant had a ROI of only 3 years. Carol Craft updated their air compression system including fixing leaks and had a ROI of only 2.37 years.

PALO Companies, a distributor and installer of energy-efficient geo-thermal energy, was the main sponsor of this event.

Press Release – Marketing in a recession event preview

The Wright County Economic Development Partnership will hold their monthly noon luncheon seminar at the River Inn & Conference Center on May 13th. There will be a buffet lunch that will be served at 11:30a.m. The cost to attend this event is \$25 for members and \$40 for non-members. Registration begins at 11:15a.m. and the program will start at noon.

Chris Shultz of the Herald Journal will talk on Marketing during a Recession & How to Grow Your Business during these challenging times. William McCarthy of Northern Environmental will present on the growing alternative energy industry and what marketing and networking tactics have worked for him.

Upcoming Events



June 17, 2009
State of the Cities

Date: June 17, 2009
Location: Albertville City Hall
Presenting: I-94 Cities & Buffalo
Time: 11:15 a.m.- 1:15 p.m.
Cost: \$25 Members / \$40 Non-members

Sponsorship is available



July 9, 2009
Legislative Updates –
Federal & State

Date: July 9, 2009
Location: Huikko's Bowling Alley, Buffalo
Presenters: State & Federal Representatives
Time: 11:15 a.m.- 1:15 p.m.
Cost: \$25 Members / \$40 Non-members

Sponsorship is available



July 14, 2009
Money Breakfast

Date: July 14, 2009
Location: Monticello Comm Center
Presenters: Barry Kirchoff, SBDC
Paul Dornfield, USDA &
Mike Mulrooney, CMDC @ SBA
Time: 7:15 a.m.- 9:15 a.m.
Cost: \$15 Members/\$20 Non-members
\$25 at the door
Booth - \$100 (includes 3 people)

Sponsorship is available

* Register on our website at www.wrightpartnership.org

* Please complete and return this form by **fax:** (763) 477 - 3054

*** or mail:** Wright County EDP
PO Box 525; 6800 Electric Dr
Rockford, MN 55373

* Please call Jeanene with any questions (763) 477 - 3000 ext. 3470

Sponsorship is available – If interested please contact Noel at 763.477.3086

All members are invited to our monthly Board of Directors meetings.

Registration

State of the Cities – June 17, 2009

Name(s):

Organization:

Cost:

_____ Members \$25

_____ Non-Members \$40

_____ Free Coupon (only for those who have never attended one of our events before)

Legislative Updates – July 9, 2009

Name(s):

Organization:

Cost:

_____ Members \$25

_____ Non-Members \$40

_____ Free Coupon (only for those who have never attended one of our events before)

Money Breakfast – July 14, 2009

Name(s):

Organization:

Cost:

_____ Members \$15

_____ Non-Members \$20

_____ Booth \$100 (includes 3 people)

_____ At the door \$25

MONEY BREAKFAST on July 14th

At the Monticello Community Center

From 7:00 a.m. until 9:30 a.m.

Learn More about Business Resources and Financial Programs

FEATURING

Presenters from government sources:

SBA, SBDC, USDA, and local government programs
& Private Sources

OPPORTUNITY

For finding new financing sources

Learning more about stimulus program packages

Networking with other business development professionals

\$20 non-member fee if pre-register at www.wrightpartnership.org or call 763-477-3086

\$25 walk-in fee and \$15 fee for Partnership members.

A hearty buffet breakfast will be provided.

PROMOTE

Your business with a booth or Table-top display: \$100

(Allows you to bring two extra guests)



Members Helping Members

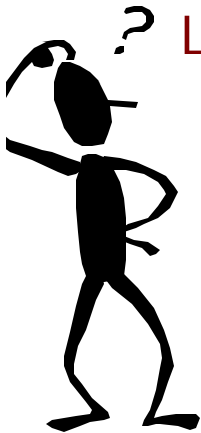
We continue to include this format with our monthly newsletter, because there are many of our members, who have been impacted negatively by the recession. Members who have been laid-off or who have closed down their company can continue to take advantage of our information and attend our events at the member rate.

Please let us know of your change in contact info.

Also, if you are looking for work, please send us a brief paragraph describing your job skills, experience, and type of work you are looking for. We will list that info here, also.

Job Seekers:

- Jennifer Jordan, an eager, friendly and energetic Sales Manager with experience in both entertainment and industrial sales. Call 612-281-1979.
- Kate Roden has BA in Business Administration. Speaks Spanish as a second language. Experience with sales and worked for City of Monticello as city representative. Excellent attitude. Self-motivated and self-starter. Please contact 612-867-3073
- Laura Servaty, a graduate of Winona University with experience in office administration, marketing, and freelance graphic designer. 763.226.9916.



Looking for Qualified Workers or Employment?

Post your Job Openings or Skills here!



Membership

The Wright County Partnership's events are a great place to network with community leaders from Wright County and get first-hand information about various development activities.

The networking participation at these events has been very valuable to developers, city representatives, and others.

For more information on these events or others like them please contact Noel or Jeanene at the Partnership at 763-477-3086 or nlabine@whe.org or jstrum@whe.org.

There are lots of reasons to belong to the Partnership

"We found the information that you had supplied to us, to be very beneficial towards accomplishing our goal." --Jack Clark of Notable Options in Buffalo

"It's impressive as to how well you run the organization" -- Peter Dugan, CB Richard Ellis

"Wright County Economic Development Partnership continues to be an excellent organization to be involved with. The Partnership continues to provide not only business opportunities, but also is a great resource for networking with other businesses as it relates to day to day operations & services we can draw upon in Wright County." -- Mike Bauer of Bauer Design Build, LLC

"Wright County has a great program. In any other market you would be considered great, because counties usually don't do as good a program as you do." -- Whitney Peyton, CB Richard Ellis.

"These are the movers and shakers of what's happening in Wright County! We should be part of this organization." -- Rick Borden, Larson Allen

Consider this:

- Network with community and contractors, developers, and realtors from Wright County and those interested in doing business in Wright County.
- Promote your business to other businesses. All members will be listed in our new Directory, which will be distributed throughout Wright County. Members only can purchase additional advertising in the Directory.
- Attend events and receive a membership discount. This discount will be \$15 per event.
- Stay in touch with development news in Wright County. Our monthly newsletter features stories about industry and development in Wright County.
- Reach out to thousands through our webpage, www.wrightpartnership.org and get a link from our site to your site.

Consider Joining!!

Our newest member ~ Buffalo Hospital

Current Members

<p><u>Banks/ Lenders</u> 1st National Bank of Elk River/Maple Lake Annandale State Bank Bank of Elk River Bankwest Citizens State Bank First MN Bank Highland Bank Klein Bank Premier Banks Riverwood Bank State Bank of Cokato State Bank of Delano US Bank Wells Fargo</p> <p><u>Businesses</u> ActionCoach Business Coaching Acumen Inc. Alex Wikstrom Bainey Group Construction Services Bauer Design Build, LLC Bolton & Menk Engineers Bonestroo Braun Intertec Carlson Building Services Casualty Assurance Central MN Development Co. Central MN Jobs & Training Service Comfort Matters Commercial Capital Community Enhancement & Organization Congresswomen Michelle Bachmann Couri, MacArthur & Ruppe Darkenwald Real Estate DiOrio Business Group Duke Realty Ebert Construction Edina Realty - Buffalo Franklin Outdoor Advertising Greg Allen Companies Halagan Law Firm Henningson & Snoxell Law Firm HTG Architects Huikko's Bowling Center</p>	<p><u>Businesses continued...</u> IEDC - Monticello IKON Office Solutions Initiative Foundation Jones Lang LaSalle KKE Architects KLC Financial Land for Sale LarsonAllen Lenzmeier Realty Services Loucks & Associates Maratona Communication Inc. Marcus Construction Meyer – Rohlin Engineers MP Family of Companies Municipal Development Group Nelson Building & Development North Hennepin Comm. College Otto Assoc. Eng. & Land Surveyors PALO Companies Paumen Properties Pfeffer Company Premier Alliance Group River City Extreme Riverwood Inn & Conference Ctr Riverwood National Golf Course Schlenner Wenner & Co. S.E.H. Engineering Shingobee Builders Sil-Pro of Delano SRF Consulting Group Steiner Development Strategic LLC Summerset Studio Terra General Contractors TKDA Tri-County Abstract & Title Vantage Point Partners Veolia ES Landfill Wild Marsh Golf Course WSB Engineering</p>	<p><u>Cities</u> Albertville Annandale Buffalo Clearwater Cokato Delano Hanover Maple Lake Monticello Montrose Rockford South Haven St. Michael Waverly</p> <p><u>County</u> Wright</p> <p><u>Hospitals</u> Monticello-Big Lake Hospital Buffalo/Allina Hospital</p> <p><u>Townships</u> Woodland</p> <p><u>Utilities</u> Wright Hennepin Electric Xcel Energy</p> <p><u>Associate Members</u> Wright County Chambers of Commerce I-94 West Chamber of Commerce</p>
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