

The CI Circular

September 2015



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Welcome New CI Director, Joe Raasch

Hi! I'm Joe Raasch, the new Director of the Office of Continuous Improvement (CI) at the Department of Administration. I am excited to have the opportunity to lead, support, and guide the state's enterprise-wide CI program!

I want to thank Tom Baumann and Mary Jo Caldwell for their persistence, tenacity, and expertise. The foundation established by Tom and carried forward by Mary Jo has resulted in a nationally recognized program that we can all be proud of. With continued strong support from the Department of Administration, the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and senior leaders statewide, the future is bright.

As we begin a new phase of the state's CI journey together, I want to share some information about myself, the office, and where we're going.

The Team

Right now, we are staffed at 50 percent. Our Improvement Data Coordinator, Cathy Beil, has done an outstanding job through the past several months of transition and deserves a BIG 'thank you' for taking on much more work than ever expected—and all with a 'can do' attitude and smile. Cathy and I are looking forward to adding two new staff soon!

Meanwhile, Cristine Leavitt has accepted an opportunity with the Metropolitan Council. Her last day with our team is September 22. In Cristine's two years with the office, she trained over 2,000 public employees and led over 25 Kaizen projects. She developed new courses, updated existing courses, and played an important role coaching leaders and mentoring new Kaizen facilitators. She will be missed. You can stay in touch with her [via email](#), by phone at 651-434-9671, and on [LinkedIn](#).

I should note that Jane Xiong also recently left our team to pursue an opportunity with MNsure; though her time with the team was short, her contributions were many.

Today, we are close to hiring our new trainer and facilitator, and will be posting one more



more.

Where We're Headed

It is a critical time for state government and the Minnesotans we serve; the prevailing challenges of declining workforce numbers and statewide retirements increase the need for us to make efficient and effective budget investments and attract, engage, and retain talented public servants. CI is a way forward that can make a difference: solving problems that change lives.

There has been much accomplished since the beginning of this program more than seven years ago. Yet I know both our biggest challenges and best times are ahead of us.

A Little About Me

My professional history includes experience in the public and private sectors: most recently at the Department of Employment and Economic Development and previously at Target Community Relations and Saint Paul Public Schools. I completed my Six Sigma Black Belt training at General Electric and have a M.B.A. from the University of Saint Thomas. At home, I am married and have a daughter in first grade. We live in Apple Valley with our dog Skittles. I am a voracious reader, BBQ fanatic, wannabe Blues legend and can't get enough bacon.

In my nearly 30 years of doing CI work as a practitioner, trainer, and leader, I've tried to follow Theodore Roosevelt's guidance: "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

You can find me at the Admin building, via [email](#), by phone at 651-201-2560, or on [LinkedIn](#), and [Yammer](#). I look forward to connecting with you!

- Joe

2015 Governor's CI Awards Time is Upon Us

The Office of Governor Mark Dayton and the Office of Continuous Improvement (CI) are pleased to announce the **2015 Governor's Continuous Improvement Awards**.

The Governor's Continuous Improvement Awards recognize individual and organizational achievements within Minnesota state government that have increased the productivity, efficiency, quality, and responsiveness of state government services. We face many ongoing challenges within state government. It is important to recognize the contributions that CI efforts make in moving us forward and supporting our work for Minnesotans: **solving problems that change lives**.



Submit Your Nominations

All state agencies and boards are invited to participate. The nomination period for the 2015 Governor's Continuous Improvement Awards runs from Monday, September 21

To submit a nomination and for detailed evaluation criteria regarding the 2015 Governor's CI Awards visit our [online nomination page](#).

Project Spotlight: Minnesota Licensing and Registration System Kaizen Event



This past July, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) joined forces with the Office of Continuous Improvement (CI) to hold a Kaizen event in its Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) division. The event focused on the Minnesota Licensing and Registration System (MNLARS) and aimed to reduce the time required to issue titles for new-to-fleet vehicles and the rate of errors occurring during the process.

The MNLARS project is a multi-year DVS initiative to replace a nearly 30-year old mainframe information system and move to an efficient, secure web-based system for driver's license, identification card, and vehicle registration and ownership transactions.

The Kaizen event focused on the specific roles and responsibilities for DVS employees, and highlighted how process improvement methods can be used to engage the creativity of employees and remove waste from everyday processes, helping them be more effective and efficient. DVS employees on the Kaizen team:

- mapped out existing processes from beginning to end;
- identified the waste and problems with current processes;
- brainstormed and mapped out improvements; and
- outlined an action plan to implement the improvements.

Kaizen events can be as short as a few hours or as long as five days, but the momentum generated by these sessions can truly make rapid and significant improvements that generally aren't surmountable with traditional approaches. In addition, any time large scale IT projects occur, it is an important opportunity to look at the employee processes that work in tandem with the technology.

Upcoming Training and Events

The Minnesota Office of Continuous Improvement (CI) has announced two new training dates for the month of October, listed below. Stay tuned to our newsletter and website for more training announcements.

- **Intro to CI**
Tuesday, October 6, 8:30 a.m. to noon
Ramsey County Building ([90 West Plato Boulevard, St. Paul, MN](#))
- **Problem Solving Tools**
Tuesday, October 6, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Ramsey County Building ([90 West Plato Boulevard, St. Paul, MN](#))

Register for courses and events via Enterprise Learning Management (ELM) within the [State of Minnesota Employee Self Service portal](#). Check out our [Registration page](#) if you need help.