



December 2012

Nominations for Governor's Continuous Improvement Awards are in, capture the extraordinary work of state employees

From reducing the time needed by plumbers and electricians to acquire their licenses by nearly three weeks, to reducing the energy costs needed to power the Capitol complex by nearly \$1.8 million per year, this year's nominees for the Governor's Continuous Improvement awards are a microcosm of a much larger commitment by state employees to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Minnesota State government.

Staff from 17 cabinet-level state agencies submitted a total of 43 nominations for projects that were implemented during the last fiscal year. The nominations require that the improvements were measurable, and that the results sustained.

"We are really pleased at the number and quality of the nominations; we know these represent only a portion of the great work being done by our state employees. It's inspiring to see such a wide variety of projects that show real results in providing better services to Minnesotans," said Spencer Cronk, Commissioner of the Department of Administration, and member of the Governor's Better Government for a Better Minnesota committee.

Inside this issue

And the nominees are...
DPS and DOR Kaizen events
Upcoming Lean events

Lean Fun Fact

The Governor of Washington recently put out [a report to the public](#) summarizing all of the successes of its State Lean Program.



A number of agency team's were honored at last year's ceremony for the Governor's Awards for Continuous Improvement.

The nominations have now been reviewed and ranked by the Enterprise Lean Steering Team, based on positive outcomes, cost savings and the application of continuous improvement tools and methods.

Ultimately this research finds that managers who are serious about organizational excellence must go beyond superficial interactions with frontline staff to truly understand issues; take substantive and intense action to resolve them; and provide an honest assessment of their actions and outcomes to convince frontline workers that management is serious.

The next step is the Governor's Better Government for a Better Minnesota committee, who will ultimately recommend their selections to Governor Mark Dayton for final selection.

Minnesota Department of Public Safety improves their leasing process

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety held a Kaizen event November 14 to 16 to improve the lease request and renewal process. The department holds 200 active leases for locations throughout Minnesota.

The goals of the event were to standardize the leasing process, clarify roles and responsibilities, improve reporting and communication, and better provide information for strategic planning.



The DPS Leasing Kaizen Team.

By updating templates, utilizing shared folders, and improving communications, the new process will provide real-time, on-demand tracking of lease requests and will reduce wait times by 38 percent.

Upcoming Events

Dec. 3, Association of Minnesota Counties Lean Presentation

Dec. 10-13, DLI Kaizen Event

Dec. 13, Pope County Lean 101

Dec. 18, Lean 101, Registration Full

Dec. 19-20, Kaizen Facilitator Training, Registration Full

Jan. 7-10, Dept. of Revenue Kaizen Event

Jan. 22, Lean 101, Registration Full

Jan. 23-24, Kaizen Facilitator Training, Registration Full

Feb. 14, Lean 101, **Registration Open**

Feb. 19-20, Kaizen Facilitator Training, **Registration Open**

March 19, Lean 101, **Registration Open**

March 20-21, Kaizen Facilitator Training, **Registration Open**

View all Lean events at

www.lean.state.mn.us/calendar

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety serves Minnesotans with programs that include law enforcement, public safety education, traffic safety, driver licensing and vehicle registration, and emergency management and communications.

Processing paper business tax returns at the Department of Revenue

In 2011, the Tax Operations Division of the Minnesota Department of Revenue processed 140,000 paper business tax returns. On November 13 to 16, a team of individuals from the department came together for a Kaizen event focusing on its procedures for processing those returns.

Going into the event, the team set ambitious goals, the most notable one being to reduce the number of days to process a paper business return to 30 days. That processing includes every step from the department receiving the returns, to prepping the required documents, and scanning and capturing the data from them digitally. The final step in the process comes when the paper returns are destroyed. Currently, it's estimated that returns take about three to five months to navigate this process.



The members of the paper business tax return Kaizen team.

By discovering and rooting out needless handoffs, storage and duplication of effort, as well as reassigning responsibilities, creating universal procedures across the division and proposing technological changes, the team now hopes to not only meet that 30 day goal, but exceed it.

The future process swim lane map and recommendations of the group laid out a process that would have most paper business tax returns prepped, scanned, data-captured, and destroyed in about 16 days. The team also expects to see much higher first-pass-yield on returns and greatly improved consistency and effectiveness in its processing procedures.
