



★ 39TH GOVERNOR'S ★
**INTERNATIONAL
TRADE AWARDS**

MINNESOTA TRADE OFFICE



HONORING GLOBAL EXCELLENCE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2025



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Walz
Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155-1611

Dear Guests,

On behalf of the State of Minnesota, I am honored to continue the annual tradition of recognizing the outstanding accomplishments of Minnesota companies that export to global markets and foreign firms with investments in our great state.

Since 1985, the Minnesota Trade Office has overseen the process of selecting the recipients of the Governor's International Trade Awards. This luncheon ceremony serves to congratulate and celebrate the award winners, and also provides an opportunity to acknowledge and show appreciation to the state's entire international business community. Thank you all for your efforts and valuable contributions to the state's economy.

Trade and investment play an important role in our state's economic growth and job creation. I am proud to recognize the success of companies in Minnesota that are globally engaged.

International markets offer excellent opportunities to grow your business. I encourage you to contact the Minnesota Trade Office for assistance as you begin exporting or wish to expand sales in global markets. I also encourage executives from foreign-owned enterprises and those that work with them to contact the Minnesota Trade Office if you are considering a U.S. location.

My best wishes for continued success!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. J. Walz".

Tim Walz
Governor of Minnesota



HONORED RECIPIENTS



MANUFACTURED GOODS

KERN LASER SYSTEMS

Wadena, MN

www.kernlasers.com

Accepting:

Aaron Kern – President/CEO

Description:

Since 1982, Kern Laser Systems has designed and manufactured advanced laser cutting and engraving systems in Wadena, MN. Still family-owned, we've grown into a global leader, distributing products across six continents. Key partnerships in Japan, Australia, Dubai, Egypt, and Austria have fueled our international reach. Our Austrian OEM partner, established in 2019, has expanded into Germany, Italy, and France, significantly boosting our European presence. Over the next 2-3 years, we aim to double international sales, with global revenue projected to account for 35-45% of our total. Collaborating with partners, we're developing innovative solutions to meet global market demands. Kern Laser Systems and our sister company, Kern Technologies, are proud to manufacture all products in Minnesota and distribute them worldwide.



SERVICES

IMPRINT ENGINE

Brooklyn Center, MN

www.imprintengine.com

Accepting:

Scott Malam – Director, Product Marketing

Description:

From our roots in Minnesota to the world stage, Imprint Engine is redefining global branded merchandise and fulfillment. Since launching our Dublin, Ireland office in 2022 with just three team members, we've grown by 300% and achieved nearly 70% EU revenue growth in the past year alone – serving 20+ regular clients and counting. In 2024, we expanded further, establishing a business entity in India to serve the APAC region, and LATAM on the horizon. With teams in the U.S., EU, and APAC collaborating seamlessly, Imprint Engine consistently ships to & serves over 180 countries, delivering world-class service, all backed by proprietary enterprise technology and unparalleled international expertise. Wherever our clients grow, we're already there – innovating, executing, and delivering at a global scale.

[Δ] imprint engine

AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

ASSOCIATED MILK PRODUCERS INC. (AMPI)

New Ulm, MN

www.ampi.com

Accepting:

Tony Busch – Director of Sales

Description:

Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI) is headquartered in New Ulm, MN, and owned by dairy farm families from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota. AMPI is the largest farmer-owned cheese cooperative in the U.S. The cooperative's cheese, butter and powdered dairy products are marketed to foodservice, retail, and food ingredient customers. The co-op launched its Dinner Bell Creamery brand and accompanying Co-op Crafted promise in 2019, highlighting more than 50 years of dairy farm families partnering with skilled dairy craftsmen to make great-tasting, award-winning products. AMPI began a targeted export program in 2020 with the intention of developing long-term relationships with in-market distributors. Today, more than 20 percent of the co-op's packaged cheese production is destined for customers overseas. Sliced American cheese, loaves, and shreds of natural cheese are now distributed to 14 countries, primarily in Asia, the Middle East-North Africa, Central America, and the Caribbean.



INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT

SOFIDEL AMERICA

Duluth, MN

www.sofidel.com/en

Accepting:

Simone Giacomelli – Integration Manager

Description:

The Sofidel Group, a privately held company, is a world leader in the manufacture of tissue paper. Founded in 1966, it has a strong presence in Europe and North America with more than 8,500 employees. A member of the UN Global Compact, Sofidel considers sustainability a strategic imperative and is committed to promoting sustainable development. In North America, Sofidel recently strengthened its position by acquiring Clearwater Paper's Tissue Business, increasing its U.S. footprint to 11 facilities. In addition, following the February 2024 acquisition of the Duluth site, Sofidel is currently developing a state-of-the-art converting facility and an automated finished goods warehouse, creating new jobs in the local community. Building on this momentum, the company is also enhancing its Circleville, Ohio, production capacity by adding a third paper machine by 2025. These efforts reflect Sofidel's ongoing dedication to strategic growth, innovation, and long-term sustainability.



Dear Guests,

As we begin this new year, the Minnesota Trade Office (MTO) team extends our sincere gratitude to our trusted partners and the state's remarkable international business community for your partnership and the privilege of working with you. ***Cheers to a few 2024 highlights!***

- » Governor Walz led business development missions organized by the MTO to France and Canada in support of expansions by established foreign owned companies in Minnesota and to showcase the state to potential investors.
- » Governor Walz met with 45 foreign dignitaries from 30 countries.
- » The MTO organized a first-of-its-kind field hearing for the U.S. Trade Representative to allow Minnesotan voices to be shared on federal trade policy.
- » The MTO hosted or supported 8 foreign delegations visiting Minnesota from 8 countries, including two delegations that visited the Great Minnesota Get Together (State Fair)!
- » The MTO logged nearly 1,000 export assistance inquiries and foreign office projects.
- » 40 companies received financial support for their export expansion activities through our STEP (State Trade and Export Promotion) Grant Program.
- » The MTO team was honored to receive the agency award from the Minnesota Solar Energy Industries Association (MNSEIA) for our excellence in supporting and advancing Minnesota's solar industry.
- » The MTO organized delegations to the SelectUSA Summit, promoting in-bound investment into Minnesota, the MEDICA trade show, and for the SelectUSA Road Show on Clean Tech with our colleagues at the Minnesota Department of Commerce.
- » The MTO collaborated with our sister agencies, including the Minnesota Department of Commerce and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, on a renewed joint declaration on clean technology with the German state of North Rhine Westphalia – including a signing ceremony in the State Fair's EcoExperience building.
- » The first nine months of 2024 saw Minnesota exports grow nearly 10% over the same time period in 2023, compared with the U.S. growth just under 3% over the same period. **In the third quarter, Minnesota exports surged to \$6.7 billion, jumping nearly 11% over the same quarter last year. The state's exports outpaced the national rate of 3% for the quarter.**

We look forward to supporting your export development activities and foreign investment attraction efforts in 2025. Our best wishes for much success!

Warm regards,
The MTO Team

Minnesota Trade Office Services and Staff

The Minnesota Trade Office (MTO), an office within the Department of Employment and Economic Development, is the state agency that provides export assistance to Minnesota companies, attracts foreign direct investment, and serves as the Office of Protocol for Minnesota. The MTO delivers programs and services particularly focused on helping small and medium sized companies enter and compete in the international market.

Export Counseling and Technical Assistance

Regional trade managers with broad international business experience are available to provide practical advice and information to help companies successfully export. Regional trade managers provide assistance with conducting market research, identifying market opportunities, developing business plans, evaluating market entry strategies, identifying potential distributors/agents/partners, providing advice on international logistics, reviewing regulatory requirements, and much more.

Export Education and Training Services

The MTO provides cutting-edge training seminars designed to provide knowledge and tools necessary to be successful exporters.

Export Promotion Services

The MTO organizes promotional events to help companies explore market opportunities firsthand and meet potential business partners and buyers. The MTO organizes trade missions, provides exhibition opportunities at domestic and international trade shows, and arranges face-to-face meetings with potential foreign buyers.

Foreign Direct Investment

Within the MTO, the Office of Foreign Direct Investment recruits and guides foreign companies through the advantages of expanding or relocating in Minnesota. The office works in partnership with the MTO Foreign Office Network to develop foreign investment leads and support Minnesota's Foreign Direct Investment Initiatives.

Foreign Office Network

The MTO Foreign Office Representatives provide export assistance to Minnesota companies including market evaluation, partner searches, distributor searches, trade show assistance and on-the-ground consultation on a variety of business-related needs in international markets. Additionally, these offices help foreign companies explore business startup, expansion and relocation opportunities in Minnesota.

Protocol Assistance

As the Office of Protocol for Minnesota, the MTO ensures that affairs of the state with official visiting foreign delegations and dignitaries are conducted in accordance with standard etiquette of diplomacy and culturally appropriate practices. The MTO also serves as the liaison between the State of Minnesota and the Minnesota Consular Corps.

State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) Grant Programs

The MTO has the State STEP Grant programs to support a range of export development activities, including participation in trade shows and missions.



MINNESOTA TRADE OFFICE STAFF



GABRIELLE GERBAUD
Executive Director and
Chief Protocol Officer



LAURENCE RESZETAR
Deputy Director, MTO and Director,
International Business Strategy



JACKIE GEIGER
Executive Assistant



ELISE BUCHEN
International Business
Development Manager



RACHEL LIMÓN
Regional Trade Manager
and Protocol Officer

Latin America, Mexico,
Caribbean, China, Education



NATE LONG
Regional Trade Specialist

ASEAN, Clean
Technology



BARBARA MATTSON
Regional Trade Manager

Western Europe, Canada,
Australia, New Zealand



MYKOLA MEGITS
MBA, PhD
Regional Trade Manager

Central & Eastern Europe,
Central Asia, Agricultural
Machinery



AELI ROSIN
Regional Trade Specialist
and Protocol Officer

India, Medical Technology



MARY NETZLOFF
Administrative Specialist



MOLLY RABBIT
Administrative Specialist

Contact Us

Staff	Title	Region/Industry	Phone	Email
Gabrielle Gerbaud	Executive Director and Chief Protocol Officer		(651) 707-3287	gabrielle.gerbaud@state.mn.us
Laurence Reszetar	Deputy Director, MTO and Director, International Business Strategy	All	(651) 785-7211	laurence.reszetar@state.mn.us
Jackie Geiger	Executive Assistant		(651) 259-7485	jackie.geiger@state.mn.us
Elise Buchen	International Business Development Manager	All	(651) 387-0335	elise.buchen@state.mn.us
Rachel Limón	Regional Trade Manager and Protocol Officer	Latin America, Mexico, Caribbean, China, Education	(651) 259-7492	rachel.limon@state.mn.us
Nate Long	Regional Trade Specialist	ASEAN, Clean Technology	(651) 248-3745	nate.long@state.mn.us
Barbara Mattson	Regional Trade Manager	Western Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand	(651) 248-7230	barbara.mattson@state.mn.us
Mykola Megits	Regional Trade Manager	Central & Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Agricultural Machinery	(651) 248-2215	mykola.megits@state.mn.us
Aeli Rosin	Regional Trade Specialist and Protocol Officer	India, Medical Technology	(651) 336-2650	aeli.rosin@state.mn.us
Mary Netzloff	Administrative Specialist		(651) 259-7304	mary.netzloff@state.mn.us
Molly Rabbit	Administrative Specialist		(651) 259-7486	molly.rabbit@state.mn.us

Trade Assistance Helpline: (651) 259-7498 | mto.tradeassistance@state.mn.us

There's a world of opportunity out there...

The Minnesota Trade Office helps turn opportunities into profits in foreign markets by providing the training and expertise that small and mid-sized companies need to export goods and services successfully worldwide.