

Explore Minnesota for Business Council Meeting
Tuesday, October 8, 2024
Virtual Meeting

Attendees

Council Members: Michael Flynn, Nick Leonard, Pamela Schechtman, Tawnya Stewart, Amanda Taylor, Denise Williams

Explore Minnesota and DEED Staff: Marya Barsanti, Frances Fyten, Beth Helle, Karina Hill, Lauren Bennett McGinty, Kevin McKinnon, Kat Sutton, Matt Varilek

Agenda

Welcome and Approval of Minutes

- Approval of the minutes from the June 26, 2024 Council meeting was tabled.

Business Attraction Campaign Launch

- The campaign launched on September 9, 2024 after a coordinated effort between Explore MN and DEED.
- The featured businesses were Polar Semiconductor, Rosenbauer USA, Mayo Clinic and Microbiologics.
- Interviews were conducted with key personnel at these businesses about their reasons for keeping their business in Minnesota and what they would recommend to businesses looking to start or move a business here.
 - Discussions focused on investment in talent and training, and state support for businesses.
 - All content is available at exploreminnesota.com/business.
- Explore MN and DEED are working to develop trade show collateral and more shareable content for social media.
- There are ongoing conversations about how to ensure this content provides businesses with all the information they need.
- Council members are invited to contact staff with feedback about the campaign and website content.
- There will be more information about how the website is performing in the coming months, but there has initially been strong engagement.
 - People generally scroll around halfway down the homepage to the “Start & Grow”, “Locate & Expand”, and “Foreign Investment” tiles, and around 50% of people scroll all the way down.
 - Engagement will be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure optimization.
 - Traffic to the site is predominantly from out of state.
 - There is sponsored content in key publications including *The Atlantic* to help drive traffic to the website, particularly in geographic areas where Explore MN has not previously targeted.

- Data from the campaign will be used to help promote this work with the legislature, and new assets will be added to optimize content for conference attendees and other visitors to the state.
- Many campaign assets are currently focused on the four selected businesses, which were chosen to ensure geographic diversity and representation of different types of businesses.
- Tourism assets can supplement the business campaign when they are relevant to that audience.
- There has been significant activity in DEED's business development pipeline recently.
- Council members were invited to share feedback around the types of content and methods of content delivery they believe would be beneficial for Explore MN and DEED to develop.
 - It may be helpful to develop ways to target messaging to conference attendees before they arrive in the state.
 - Council members can share information about upcoming conferences with Explore MN staff to try to develop this type of content and technique.
 - Explore MN will follow up with Council members from organizations that target conference attendees to consider future strategies.
 - It would be helpful for Council members to have branded items to bring to conferences they are attending to promote this work.
 - Council members and agency employees could work together to create a list of events where it would be beneficial to have a presence to promote this work.
 - It is important to pay attention to who the audience is at specific events and to be thoughtful about providing relevant messaging to that audience.
 - Post cannabis legalization, there could be potential for cannabis messaging in future campaigns, with attention to the strict rules around marketing cannabis.
 - The campaign should focus more on ways to attract smaller or midsized businesses to MN.
 - It would be helpful to create a list of "pain points" for companies such as workforce.
 - MN has the third largest education system in the country, but workforce needs are not being met for many companies.
- Future content will focus on a wider variety of stories from more diverse types of Minnesota businesses.
- Explore MN is hiring a videographer / multimedia specialist in order to create more varied content in a cost effective way.
- A future campaign idea is to follow someone traveling in MN for business and show them engaging in leisure activities while they are in MN.

Summary of Workforce Attraction/Livability Campaign Metrics (March 2024 – June 2024)

- 12,238 views, engagement rate: 24.4%, time on site: 1m 23 sec, 88% out-of-state traffic.
- Paid ads with The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, NPR podcasts
- Business Facilities custom content, including a dedicated landing page, five owned content articles, and one podcast feature.
- Smartbrief targeted e-newsletters; SEM/paid search campaign.
- Video performed either at or above benchmarks
 - Video didn't perform as well when users clicked to the website before it finished.

- Those with a high propensity to move or interest in transitioning performed best.
- Nearly 34,000 clicks driven by retargeting; consistent exposure drives consideration.
- Efforts are ongoing to reach out to communities with people in-house who are ready to help with relocation and help interested people make decisions.
- Explore MN monitors user activity in the MN subreddit by people who are interested in learning more about moving to MN.
- Paid media: 314,539 sessions, 393,173 pageviews, 2m 21 sec average duration, 1.25 pages per session, 55.17 bounce rate.
- Paid Search: 43,806 impressions: 43,806, 7,831 clicks, 17.88% CTR, 35 conversions
- Top SEM searches: "best state to live in" "top states to live in" "state with low cost of living" "best state to live in usa" "best state to work" "things to know before moving to Minnesota" "best states to live in 2024" "best state for families" "move to mn" "cost of living in minneapolis mn"
- Workforce attraction survey:
 - Campaign viewed positively by 84.2% of those surveyed, above 70% benchmark.
 - More than 82% of ad aware rated MN as good, very good or excellent.
 - 23% lift in positive ratings compared to those not aware of campaign.
 - 78% of those who visited website said it was very useful; 97% said it improved their perception of MN.
 - Those who recalled website said they visited an average of 3.6 times since the campaign debuted.
 - Top three motivators for considering a move were better, larger or cheaper housing; new career opportunity/looking for work; desire for lower cost of living.
 - Survey participants said they could see themselves living a long and happy life in MN after viewing a single ad.

Coming up

- Legislative session / biennium budget requests due October 15, 2024.
 - These requests will focus on the work that is still to come in the campaign, and Council members can help target future campaigns by sharing feedback.
 - Agencies will find out more about what is included in the Governor's budget request later this year or early in 2025.
- Campaign Phase 3, Resident Retention / Recruitment.
 - College-age recruitment; target students returning to MN for family visits, capture boomerangers.
 - Career pathing for non-degree positions; on the job training; trades + Drive for 5
 - Inclusive workforce organization & gap analysis.
 - Long-term goals: expanded age groups, retirement retention.
 - Metro State has 270,000 students; there could be future survey of students throughout the state focusing on career pathways and targeted messaging.
- Open council seats
 - Minnesota Tribal Leadership Representative
 - Minnesota's Ethnic Chambers of Commerce Leadership Representative
 - Representative in Marketing, Human Resources, or Executive Leadership from Minnesota-Based Companies with more than 100 Employees Representing Minnesota's Key Industries

Future Council meeting dates:

- Wednesday, January 15, Virtual – 10-11am
- Thursday, April 17, In person – 10:30am-12pm (lunch to follow)