



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 20, 2012

MEDIA CONTACT  
Ben Anderson 218-681-3720

## Chamber Joins Grow Minnesota! Economic Development Program

THIEF RIVER FALLS, MINN. ó The Thief River Falls Chamber of Commerce announced today that it has joined Grow Minnesota!, a private sector economic development program led by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. Among its newest services is BusinessConnection, an assistance and referral network free to all Minnesota companies.

õWe welcome the participation of the Thief River Falls Chamber and look forward to a solid and continuing partnership,õ said Bill Blazar, Minnesota Chamber senior vice president of public affairs and business development. õOur growing network of local chamber partners strengthens our state's existing economic development effort by adding hundreds of additional eyes and ears, increasing our ability to address the needs of businesses in all corners of the state and to keep them growing in Minnesota.ö

Grow Minnesota!, launched in 2003, has a primary focus to retain Minnesota businesses and to encourage them to expand in the state. It also is an opportunity to thank companies for doing business in Minnesota. Visits are carried out by staff and volunteers from the Minnesota Chamber and its 55 local chamber partners.

Volunteers conduct one-on-one conversations with owners or managers of businesses. Close to 1,000 visits were conducted during the 2010-11 program year, bringing the eight-year total to over 6,300 visits. On average, one in seven visits has concluded with a request for some kind of assistance. That has translated into assistance for 128 companies this past year, directly affecting 4,900 Minnesota jobs. Over 800 companies have received assistance since the program started.

The program has grown steadily since its inception to now include BusinessConnection, which is intended to be a single entry point to be connected with private and public resources to solve everyday business problems. Free to all businesses, it can be reached at [www.mnbizconnect.com](http://www.mnbizconnect.com) or 1-888-MINN-BIZ.

Information gleaned from visits also helps strengthen the Minnesota Chamber's public policy agenda on behalf of the statewide business community at the Capitol.

“The findings from our visits are different from what you might see in typical surveys,” Blazar said. “The findings we deliver to policymakers are not based on mounds of statistics, but on what businesses throughout the state are actually saying.”

The Thief River Falls Chamber will begin visiting businesses this spring. Businesses may also contact the Chamber directly at 681-3720 or [contact@trfchamber.com](mailto:contact@trfchamber.com) for more information on the program and the assistance it can provide.

The Thief River Falls Chamber of Commerce was established in 1913 to promote a business climate that enhances economic vitality and improves the quality of life for all citizens. It currently represents over 240 Thief River Falls area businesses and organizations. For more information, visit [www.trfchamber.com](http://www.trfchamber.com).

###