

BUSINESS

9 TO 5
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State chamber receives award

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

A state-wide business organization was recently recognized by a national association for its efforts and accomplishments.

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce received the President's Award from the Association of State Chamber Professionals for its overall accomplishments during the 2012 program year. In addition, its 95-percent member retention was recognized as the highest among state chambers for the fifth consecutive year.

"We share this award with our members. They truly are the lifeblood of our organization," Minnesota Chamber president David Olson said in a news release. "They invest in us to work on their behalf."

The chamber's ability to retain a high percentage of its members from year to year is credited to its three main actions: advocacy, growth, and connection, director of communications Jim Pumarlo said.

"We foster strong grassroots connections, and we work at the capital on their behalf," he said. "Our retention reflects that members value the Minnesota Chamber investment."

The President's Award underscored accomplishments in rebranding, increasing social media presence and developing new programming for members following the adoption of a strategic plan in 2011. ASCP consists of the top professionals from state chambers of commerce across the country.

The Minnesota Chamber works with local chambers throughout the state, and has a close relationship with the International Falls Chamber, Pumarlo said. The International Falls Chamber is part of the Minnesota Chamber Federation, which adopts the yearly priorities for the Minnesota Chamber.

The Minnesota Chamber is the state's largest business organization representing approximately 2,300 businesses of all types and sizes and their more than a half-million employees. It focuses on offering solutions to help businesses advocate, connect and grow.

The state chamber isn't just for large companies like 3M and Target, Pumarlo said. "Eighty percent of our members have 100 employees or less," he said. "Small businesses are the backbone of the chamber."

Company violates air quality permits

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

A local chemical processing plant has run afoul of its state air quality permits limits, resulting in a civil penalty.

Specialty Minerals Inc., a foreign corporation, operates the precipitation calcium carbonate processing facility in International Falls. The company is located on the premises of the Boise Inc. paper mill and is a separate entity from Boise, said Lori Lyman, Boise public affairs manager.

The SMI facility accepts excess carbon dioxide from the mill, processes it with water and lime and produces precipitation calcium carbonate, which is an additive used in making paper, sealants, adhesives, plastics, rubber, inks, pharmaceuticals and nutritional supplements.

The calcium carbonate adds brightness, bulk and opacity to paper, and is a necessary filler in the paper-making process, SMI vice-president of corporate communications Rick Honey said.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency enforces environmental regulations and monitors environmental quality in Minnesota. According to a MPCA report, between September 2011 and August 2012, SMI reported the facility exceeded its air emissions permit limit of 19,050 hours based on a 12-month-rolling-sum basis.

SMI exceeded its hours limit because its three compressors were running around the clock, Honey said. He added they were running so much because Boise increased its produc-

tion and couldn't make paper without calcium carbonate.

"We went over the limit because we lost track of the hours, because of customer need and more products," Honey said.

While SMI did go over the limit put in place by the MPCA, Honey said the more SMI runs its compressors, the better it is for the environment.

"The more we operate, the more carbon dioxide particulates we take out of the air," he said. "We were fined because we went over the limit, but the more we operate, the cleaner the air is."

Using the carbon dioxide from the boilers and kilns at Boise to make calcium carbonate does benefit the environment by removing the carbon dioxide from the waste chain, MPCA pollution control specialist Brent Rohne said.

SMI has agreed to pay a \$24,000 civil penalty, submit a plan to ensure its operating hours will not be exceeded in the future, and submit a permit application that would change its current permitted emissions limit, both of which have already been completed. The new permit doesn't have an hours cap, Honey said, which will allow SMI to meet Boise's production demands.

When it comes to fines resulting from breaking the rules, any fine is too much for SMI, Honey said.

"We pride ourselves on our environmental record," he said. "We adhere to the rules and try not to violate any of the environmental laws. In this case, it occurred and we're correcting it."

More power at RLMC

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Tim Taylor from "Home Improvement" championed the cause of "more power," and Rainy Lake Medical Center has furthered that cause by installing a new generator.

RLMC hospital campus completed the generator replacement project through a \$112,140 grant from the Minnesota Office of Rural Health and Primary Care. The grant replaced the current emergency electrical generator and helped perform preventative maintenance on the electrical system.

The old generator needed to be replaced, said Margaret Hyatt, director of maintenance. Bids were sought on what was needed and the best offer selected, while considering a desire to stay local, she said. Then a grant was sought and approved for the full amount.

The new generator has increased capacity, and is also located outside, while the old generator was indoors. RLMC bought the CAT 125kW generator through Ziegler. Kantor Electric did all the electrical installation, and Rainy Lake Oil provided the fuel and created custom housing. Pelland & Swenson installed and transported the generator.

RLMC decided to purchase the new generator through Ziegler because it was the source of the old one, and hospital officials



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The new electrical emergency CAT 125kW generator at Rainy Lake Medical Center hospital campus. The generator has been affectionately nicknamed Miss Genie.

wanted to stick with what they knew, Hyatt said. The new one had to be located outside because of rules and regulations, and also because of logistical issues.

"The generator room we have now isn't big enough for the old one," she said.

So far, the response from staff has been positive, Hyatt said.

"We nicknamed it Miss Genie, because she's a generator," she said. "I heard the Ziegler rep call it 'Genie' and then I knew that would be the name."

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