

# BUSINESS

9 TO 5  
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## State chamber reports on issues

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

With a short 2014 session of the Minnesota Legislature nearing a close, a Minnesota Chamber of Commerce official presented community members with a summary of how the legislative actions will affect businesses.

Jennifer Byers, vice president of local chamber relations for the state chamber, spoke at a luncheon Monday about the priorities the state chamber had for the 2014 legislative session, and how new laws will affect the business community.

One of the main goals the state chamber had for the 2014 legislative session was repealing the three business-to-business taxes enacted in 2013, a goal it accomplished, Byers said. The taxes were on labor service charges for repair and maintenance of business equipment, purchases of telecommunications equipment by telecommunications providers, and storage and warehousing services of business related goods.

The priorities the chamber sets for legislative sessions come from talking with people and learning what their needs are, Byers said. She urged citi-

zens to have a conversation with their legislators when they have issues they're passionate about, as they listen when people reach out to them.

"For the most part, if a legislator receives five or six calls, that's a big deal, because people don't do it," Byers said.

Repealing the B2B taxes is an example of concerned citizens staying on an issue and influencing a change, Byers said.

"I think it's a good example of, maybe we can fix some of these things next time around," Byers said.

Byers also addressed the issue of Minnesota recently raising its minimum wage to \$9.50 per hour, which she said is one of the highest in the United States. The state chamber supported raising the minimum wage to conform with the federal standard of \$7.25 per hour, she said, however, this much higher rate will create problems for small employers.

"It's a difficult issue, particularly for companies in the retail and hospital-ity industry," Byers said.

The increased minimum wage can also create a ripple effect on employers paying their employees more than the minimum wage, Byers said. A cham-

ber member in the manufacturing industry told Byers while his employees make much higher than minimum wage, she said, they saw the increase in minimum wage and have been asking for pay increases themselves.

Byers said the minimum wage issue can be boiled down to a difference in opinion of what the minimum wage actually is. While the chamber sees it as a wage for youth to come into the job market and learn skills, she said, some policymakers view it as a livable wage that should be able to support a family.

"It's a real change in how people believe citizens should live," Byers said.

One of the state chamber's goals is to get people more engaged in government, and having their voices heard, Byers said. The organization also needs more people who run businesses in the Legislature, she said, because they can provide a real-world business perspective to lawmaking.

"We need people who understand what it's like to write a paycheck, run a small business, work in a business at the Legislature," Byers said. "It would help moderate some of these issues."

## Teen pursues photography business

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

One local teenager has parlayed his love of photography into a growing business, all before he's able to vote.

Brady Rasmussen, owner of Rasmussen Unlimited Photography, has been pursuing photography for about four years, he said. Once he started using his first camera, he was hooked.

"I remember taking my first photograph and being in shock of the detail that I captured," Rasmussen said. "Sometimes photography still amazes me, and of the shots I'm able to capture."

At 18 years old, Rasmussen has been doing professional portraits for a year and a half. He got his business name certified through the state of Minnesota in August 2013, and he said he's glad he transitioned from landscape and wildlife photography to portraits.

"Nature photographs are completely different than portraiture," Rasmussen said. "I am happy I took the leap of faith and started taking photographs for clients, it's the best decision I've made."

So far, Rasmussen said

he's specialized in graduation photographs, though he's booked some weddings for the summer.

"I look forward to doing weddings this summer," Rasmussen said. "I hope doing weddings helps me branch out my photography career."

Rasmussen's training comes from high school classes, he said, though he's looking forward to taking more classes in college and growing his business even more.

"I have already come so far, but would love to expand my knowledge," Rasmussen said.

He doesn't work with a photography mentor, Rasmussen said, though he does respect the more experienced photographers he looks up to.

"I respect all older photographers because they have been around much longer than me and know what they're doing," Rasmussen said.

His lack of experience and youth has caused some confusion when he meets



Brady Rasmussen

with clients for the first time, Rasmussen said, when clients tell him they didn't know the person behind the business name was so young. However, he said he doesn't let his youth get in the way of pursuing his career.

"It just gives me the chance to get my name out there by being young and showing that I can work for what I want and pursue my dreams," Rasmussen said.


Right now, his photography business supplements his main income, Rasmussen said, though he'd like to get to a point where he can support himself on his photography business. Right now, he said he's focusing on getting his name out there and separating himself from the other local photographers.

What separates him from other photographers is professional quality and affordable prices, Rasmussen said.

"Not only am I young but I'm new and people just need to give me a chance in this field because I feel I do great," Rasmussen said. "I make sure to keep my photography professional and high-quality, but also remaining affordable for everyone."

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