

Fall Issue 2014

In This Issue

Featured Member - Custom Caseworks

Highlighting Entrepreneurs

MN Home to Cool Products

Volunteer Bio

New Members

Did You Know?

Upcoming Events

November 18

360° Taking Shape Summit in Minnetonka

[Click here](#) for flyer

November 20

Breakfast meeting at Becker High School.

Learn about FIRST! Tour: Liberty Paper.

[Click here](#) for details and to register

December 4 Holiday Party

Brothers Bar & Grill, St. Cloud

[Click here](#) for details and to register

January 22, 2015

Breakfast meeting in Rogers.

Tour: Graco Co.

Do you have suggestions for speakers or topics you'd like presented? Please contact the office.

Letter From Les

"Fall colors are funny. They're so bright and intense and beautiful. It's like nature is trying to fill you up with color, to saturate you so you can stockpile it before winter turns everything muted and dreary." — Siobhan Vivian

Fall greetings to CMMA members and friends, I hope this message finds you bronzed from summer's sun and enjoying the theater of seasons in central Minnesota. CMMA has been hard at work tending our crop of initiatives and goals and I'm happy to share the bounty of updates and outcomes with you, our valued partners.

"Engaged, innovative and committed. CMMA is a dynamic, member-driven organization that has been strengthening and promoting the concerns of manufacturing throughout central Minnesota since its launch in 2008." These words are taken from CMMA's newly revised brochure and capture the essence of our work; truly we are stronger together. At this writing and in our sixth year, our membership has grown to 130. We are comprised of a healthy balance of manufacturers, suppliers, servicers, educators and mutual stakeholders. This vibrant mix serves our goals to educate members, develop our workforce and advocate legislatively.

Our Education Systems Group, designed to integrate with students and teachers, is updating our database of contact information for all superintendents, principals, and technical education teachers at high schools in the CMMA service region. This initiative will improve communication and interaction with this mission critical group of partners. CMMA will also be convening a focus group with area technical education instructors to further develop our partnerships and connections. This committee is also working on methods to help CMMA members in hiring veterans.

CMMA is exploring the possibility of partnering with the Central Minnesota Community Foundation to create a CMMA Manufacturing Fund to better position the organization to accept donations and contributions for future organizational development. This strategic investment makes good sense and will be a responsible step toward future organizational growth and stability.

The CMMA Board of Directors is pleased to receive much interest from members willing to serve on the board and our action committees. CMMA offers members meaningful and rewarding service opportunities and our organization cannot function without the contribution of volunteer time, talent and resources. We are moving forward to provide enhanced service opportunities and help is needed, let us know where your talents fit best!

Our annual Holiday Party is scheduled at 4:00 PM on December 4 at Brothers Bar and Grill in St. Cloud. Plan now to attend and bring a guest! We're sure to have a good time together so come and join the fun. There will be good food, libations and spirited conversation on manufacturing and more!

As CMMA President, I am so proud to proclaim manufacturing as central Minnesota's economic engine, employment backbone and pulse of productivity! Much thanks to our meeting sponsors and speakers, to our tour hosts and to our valued members. CMMA works for manufacturers, for your customers, your employees and our communities.

CMMA... where members get more!

Les Engel, CMMA President



Featured Member:

Panels to Parts to Products

Wherever you're reading this article, you're no doubt surrounded by countless pieces of what started out to be rectangular sheets of engineered wood. Desks, cabinetry, reception counters, shelving, tables, storage organizers – even furniture – often begin as surface laminated composite wood sheets (MDF, plywood, particle board, etc.) sawed, machined and edged to their final size and shape. If you visit a restaurant or retail store, most of the workspaces and displays you see are heavily based on flat engineered wood panels. Processing wood panels with precision and speed is the world in which Custom Caseworks has lived since 1994.

We manufacture wood panels into dimensioned parts and products strictly on behalf of other businesses who then sell the final goods to their end customers. Custom Caseworks offers our customers complete in-house resources. We can provide services as simple as dimensioning wood panels into parts, or we can fulfill complex multi-unit custom orders that go from concept engineering through manufacturing, finishing, and assembly to final installation. Each of our more than 40 team members has years of woodworking and manufacturing experience. We can draw upon decades of unique expertise to complete any project we're awarded.

Throughout the years, the founding mantra that has formed the essence of our brand is expressed in our company slogan, "We get it right." We've become established in our industry as the trusted "behind-the-scenes" manufacturing partner for a diverse universe of store fixture design and woodworking firms. Customers regularly use our services to produce goods to fulfill the needs of some of the world's largest brands. They know we can deliver consistent quality for them on their projects; providing what they want it, where they want it and when they need it. It's our job to protect and project their brand in the markets they serve.

Innovative Technology Makes It All Possible

The pride of our operation is the advanced technology and production versatility present on our shop floor. The projects we work on flow through our factory in a reconfigurable workshop orientation rather than a production line. This is due to the widely variable needs of our customers and the space and resources producing their products can require. We have a machine shop with multiple CNC machines, automated panel sawing, engineered panel lamination equipment, and automated edgebanding capabilities. Several bays are dedicated to sanding, paint and finishing, final assembly, and staging/warehousing for shipment.

As with any industry, technologies arise that can offer startling new opportunities. Custom Caseworks is one of the very few firms in North America that has mastered powder coating of MDF wood panels. We can provide a full spectrum of vibrant colors and textured surfaces applied to parts for store displays, commercial furniture and cabinetry. Our Tru2Hue electrostatic, thermally-fused powder coat line seals the surfaces of engineered wood parts with a durable polymer coating that resists stains, scratches and moisture.

Now a Proud Member Company of Universal Forest Products

On January 2nd, 2013, Universal Forest Products of Grand Rapids, MN announced the acquisition of Custom Caseworks, Inc. The addition of Caseworks furthers Universal's strategic objective to expand into new, value-added product lines for the industrial market, and adds capabilities to Universal's offerings. Founded in 1955, Universal Forest Products is headquartered in Grand Rapids, Mich., with operations throughout North America. UFPI provides capital, management and administrative resources to its subsidiaries that design manufacture and market wood and wood-alternative products across many consumer and commercial markets.

Written by: Jim Eckberg, Custom Caseworks



Highlighting Entrepreneurs and Innovation

Grow Minnesota! Highlighting Entrepreneurs and Innovation Businesses across Minnesota continue to benefit from the personalized assistance of Grow Minnesota!, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce program coordinated with over 70 local chambers of commerce and economic development organizations. The statewide program is dedicated to retaining, assisting and growing Minnesota companies.

Our [fall quarterly update](#) highlights Minnesota entrepreneurs in Backus, Brainerd, and Minneapolis. Close to 1,400 Minnesota companies have been assisted since the program began in 2003. For 2014, 600 companies have been visited year-to-date; nearly 200 of these received assistance. As a result of identifying and coordinating resources with many of your organizations, we together have solved everyday business challenges for companies statewide.

If you know a business that would welcome a Grow Minnesota! visit, contact one of our local chamber Grow Minnesota! partners or send an e-mail to growminnesota@mnchamber.com. Click on the link provided for more information on the [Grow Minnesota! program](#) and to access a listing of our local partners.

Minnesota – Home to Innovative Business and Cool Products

Minnesota is known as the best place to live, work and play. And it's the 10th most innovative state in the U.S., according to 2014 rankings by Bloomberg.

Minnesota is home to innovative manufacturing companies, suppliers and products. And cool products can be found in the [Made in Minnesota Directory](#), a database launched by DEED in 2013 with thousands of diverse products.

The directory makes it easy for companies to find – and be found – by home state suppliers. Using the directory helps manufacturers by saving time, money on transportation costs and other long-distance expenses. The directory has nearly 900 manufacturers and suppliers listed and is free to use and be listed.

[Try it now](#) and see what cool products you can find!

For more information about the Made in Minnesota Directory, contact [Magda Olson](#) at 651-258-7183.

Volunteer Bio

NOTE: Historically, this column provides a biography on a current CMMA board member. Since all current board members have been featured, the column will now feature an active volunteer.

Name: Rick Virnig

CMMA Involvement: Co-Chair, Membership Committee

Where do you work, what do you do? MidCountry Bank, Vice President of Commercial Lending

What was your first job? Highway Construction; this is where I learned to stay in school

Hometown: Pierz, MN

Family: Wife Carrie and 3 Sons: Ben (11), Nicholas (6), Jack (2)

Pets: Golden Retriever; Cooper

Do you have a favorite book or author? *The Road Less Traveled* by M. Scott Peck

Favorite movie? Tombstone

Favorite food? Smoked Salmon

Do you have any hobbies, play any sports or favorite games? Anything outdoors – Family Camping, Hunting, Fishing, Snowmobiling. Now that our sons are getting old enough to be involved in sports we spend most of our weekends at baseball, basketball and football tournaments.

Comment on your involvement in CMMA:

I've been very impressed by the passion the members have for the manufacturing industry and the willingness to donate time and resources to advance the industry. It's easy to see why manufacturing continues to be so strong in Central MN.

What would CMMA members be surprised to learn about you? I jumped from a perfectly good plane while at an elevation of about 10,000 ft.



Welcome New Members!

DMK Intellectual Property Law, PLLC

Liberty Insurance Agency

Stang Precision, Inc.

West Central Industries

Member News

The **Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation (GSDC)** recently launched a regional talent portal, Greater St. Cloud JobSpot (www.GreaterStCloudJobSpot.com). JobSpot links employers, job seekers, educational institutions and workforce partners, and is a resource for all community members focusing on workforce development. Since its launch in May, more than 280 job seekers and 180 employers have registered on the site, over 950 jobs have been posted, and many positions have been filled.

HealthPartners Central Minnesota Clinics invites you to a joint HealthPartners/NovaCare Occupational Medicine Conference on Wednesday, December 10th, at their Sartell Clinic. HealthPartners Occupational and Environmental Medicine specializes in preventing and managing workplace injury in a cost-effective manner. They believe in safe and early return to work and achieve this through prompt medical care and clear communication with both employer and employee. A full spectrum of services are available to help your company comply with national regulations and recommendations. For more information visit their website at www.hpcmc.com/occmcd.

Manufacturing Matters is edited and published at the Midwest Manufacturers' Association office, PO Box 150, Elbow Lake, MN 56531. Toll free: 800-654-5773. Email: stephd@runestone.net. Office hours are 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. However, messages can be left on the answering machine at any time.

Did You Know?

Dream It. Do It. Statewide Tour of Manufacturing

85 companies across the state opened their doors for public and "student only" tours during the fourth annual Dream It. Do It. Statewide Tour of Manufacturing, including CMMA members C4 Welding, Park Industries, St. Cloud Technical and Community College, and Starrett Tru-Stone Technologies. Thank you for changing perceptions about manufacturing!

Electronic Ballot for Board Election

CMMA members, watch your email for an electronic ballot to be issued in November and take a few moments to cast your vote. The office was overwhelmed with nominations this year; what a tribute to the value of this organization!

Bring a FREE guest!

CMMA members are encouraged to bring a prospective member to a CMMA breakfast meeting; your guest can attend (one time) free of charge.

MNI Database – save 20%

The MMA office has access to database information in the five-state area and members are encouraged to request a "basic search" free of charge. Call to inquire!

Legislator Connection

CMMA Manufacturers ... use CMMA staff time (at no cost) to coordinate a visit from a local senator or representative. Call the office for details.

Educators are FREE!

Invite a representative(s) from your local high school to an upcoming CMMA meeting. Teachers, administrators, and students are encouraged to attend FREE of charge (includes a free breakfast). And – membership in CMMA is FREE to area high schools.

Post Manufacturing jobs on the CMMA website

Post your manufacturing-related job openings on the CMMA website for FREE.



A cost effective way to reach a broad manufacturing audience.

To learn more, contact
Sandy Kashmark at 800-654-5773 or
midwest@runestone.net