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MetroMSP.org Migrates to New Platform, Adds Robust Features

Minneapolis/Saint Paul, Minn. – Two years after its successful launch in May 2008, MetroMSP.org has upgraded to the latest navigational platform to make it easier for business site selectors, commercial real estate users, and entrepreneurs to access critical site-selection information on the 11-county Minneapolis/Saint Paul region. The upgrade coincided with a recent national site selector tour designed to showcase the Twin Cities' advantages as a business location.

The new platform, developed by San Francisco-based GIS Planning, uses cutting-edge, ZoomProspector Enterprise technology to meet the market's real-time need for site-specific information.

"The new interface is more intuitive, and the features are much more robust," says Todd Klingel, president and CEO of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, which administers the regional economic development website.

The interface also connects the Metro MSP region to GIS Planning's national site selection website, ZoomProspector.com – the most extensive site selection network in the country.

"Being part of the ZoomProspector network increases the likelihood that site selectors from outside the region will evaluate the Minneapolis/Saint Paul area as a business location or expansion destination," says Russ Riblett of GIS Planning. The network enables prospects to do a national search of markets and available commercial properties based on their unique search criteria. When a community or property listing in the Metro MSP region matches the search criteria, the prospect is directed to MetroMSP.ZoomProspector.com.

"Our goal is to drive business growth in the Minneapolis/Saint Paul region," says Klingel, whose organization spearheaded regional efforts to develop the MetroMSP website more than three years ago. "Our migration to ZoomProspector positions Minneapolis/Saint Paul at the forefront of economic development websites in the U.S. It gives us national visibility and makes us more globally competitive."

Ground-Breaking Features

The new ZoomProspector platform can be accessed with one click from MetroMSP.org or directly from MetroMSP.ZoomProspector.com.

- It includes groundbreaking tools for doing community, business and real estate searches and sophisticated demographic analysis.
- It expands user options for setting and saving search preferences to make it easier to compare properties.
- It adds “heat maps” that show concentrations of demographic groups to help businesses identify clusters of potential customers or skilled workers.
- It offers a fully integrated social media strategy to help brokers and communities communicate with prospects.

In tandem with the platform upgrade, the website also added a “[transit development](#)” layer that enables users to quickly identify and analyze transit-oriented development opportunities.

“The addition of the transit layer recognizes the importance of transit stations as a catalyst for development and redevelopment,” says Janna King, president of Economic Development Services, Inc. and the lead consultant to MetroMSP.org.

Users can learn about the new platform by viewing a “[New Features PowerPoint](#)” or signing up for free training webinars on [July 22](#) and [August 4](#).

MetroMSP Outperforms Peers in Usage Comparison

The MetroMSP website has been well received since its unveiling in May 2008. Within its first 18 months, the site had earned design and innovation awards from state, regional and international economic development associations. Within two years, it had generated significantly higher traffic than comparable GIS-based websites in peer markets.

“MetroMSP attracted up to four times more pageviews than three peer regions of similar size that also use ZoomProspector technology,” King reports. MetroMSP also performed well in the “unique visitor” category – beating two of the three markets by 31-41% and approaching the volume of the largest peer market, which has a five-year head start.

About MetroMSP.org

MetroMSP.org is the only regional economic development and site selection website devoted to the 11-county Minneapolis/Saint Paul area. Free to users, it is designed to meet the needs of entrepreneurs, existing businesses and external prospects by providing high-quality, web-based site selection information and tools.

MetroMSP includes two seamlessly linked websites that answer two different but complementary information needs. The first makes a case for why a company would benefit from locating or expanding in the Metro MSP region. The second identifies the ideal site on which to locate or expand, based on the unique needs of that business. It includes a "property search" function with access to more than 5,000 property listings provided by the Minnesota Commercial Association of Realtors (MNCAR). It also provides powerful demographic and business analysis tools.

The property-search function is powered by geographic information system (GIS) software. The GIS is centered around an interactive online map, giving users numerous options for customizing their search preferences – including drive times, Google Street View and Google Earth, and heat maps.

MetroMSP.org is administered by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber Development Foundation and funded by a consortium of private and public partners.

About GIS Planning, Inc.

In the last 12 years, [GIS Planning Inc.](#) has implemented GIS-based, site selection websites for more than 200 states and metro regions, including most of the largest metro areas in the country. Its proprietary ZoomProspector Enterprise technology is considered the industry standard in economic development.

GIS Planning is also the parent company of [ZoomProspector.com](#), the largest nationwide website for corporate real estate professionals and site location experts seeking the right location for their business.

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