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MetroMSP Wins Minnesota Economic Development Marketing Award

Saint Paul, Minn. – The Economic Development Association of Minnesota presented its 2009 economic development marketing award to MetroMSP.org during the association's annual summer conference in Brainerd. MetroMSP.org was one of eight organizations to be honored by EDAM and the only project to be recognized for outstanding marketing.

MetroMSP.org is a powerful site selection tool developed in 2008 by a public-private partnership convened by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce. More than a dozen of its partners joined the MetroMSP project team on stage to receive the EDAM award -- a testament to the collaborative nature of the project.

"MetroMSP.org won top marketing honors because the website is innovative, high-impact and widely used. It sets the new standard for site selection tools in Minnesota," said Eric Ewald, executive director of EDAM.

Outperforming Its Peers

"Web site traffic after the first year in operation exceeded our expectations," said Todd Klingel, president and CEO of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber. "By May 2009, it was averaging 600 pageviews per day and 1,000 customized reports each month. That's 20%-to-425% more pageviews than comparable websites in our four peer markets," he added.

Beyond its impressive user stats, MetroMSP.org earned points with the EDAM awards committee for several unique features:

- Of the nearly 200 websites in the U.S. using the GIS-based platform recommended by the International Economic Development Council, only MetroMSP.org provides a platform for cities to post information regarding redevelopment areas and publicly owned properties.
- Property data is provided free and updated weekly, thanks to a unique partnership with the Minnesota Commercial Association of Realtors (MNCAR).
- MetroMSP.org recently converted from aerial photography to the Google mapping platform, making it possible for users to "tour the neighborhood" without leaving their offices.

- Transit station areas were integrated into the redevelopment section of the website in May 2009. This enables developers, site locators and planners to review plans and easily access the website's powerful mapping and demographic analysis tools.
- MetroMSP is now part of ZoomProspector – a national site selection portal that enables prospects to identify and link to communities across the nation that meet their site location criteria.

A Model of Regional Collaboration

The project is funded by counties in the metropolitan area; the cities of Minneapolis, Saint Paul and Bloomington; the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED); and more than a dozen private partners committed to making the Minneapolis/Saint Paul region more competitive. Marketing support is provided by the *Minnesota Real Estate Journal*.

"MetroMSP represents the first time the 11 counties have come together on a project of this magnitude," says Bruce Halbasch, founding chair of the MetroMSP.org partnership and a former EDAM president. "Site selection moved to the web several years ago, so it's critical for our region to have a web presence that meets the site selection needs of local businesses seeking to expand, of entrepreneurs, and of companies considering the region."

About MetroMSP.org

MetroMSP.org is the first free site selection and economic development website with interactive mapping covering the entire 11-county Minneapolis-Saint Paul region.

It has two sides. The narrative side makes a compelling case for companies to locate or expand in the Metro MSP region. The site-selection side helps business prospects quickly locate and evaluate available properties. It gives site selectors, business owners and economic development professionals instant access to essential information on more than 5,000 commercial and industrial sites in the region. The tool is built around interactive GIS maps which display available sites and their proximity to transportation routes, other businesses, and important landmarks.

In addition to listings, MetroMSP.org generates site-specific reports on demographics, consumer spending, workforce, and potential business competitors or allies. The data can be easily converted into comparative reports that expedite the site selection process.

About EDAM

Headquartered in Saint Paul, the Economic Development Association of Minnesota serves economic development professionals throughout Minnesota. It has more than 500 members who represent private enterprise, local and regional development agencies, chambers of commerce, and utilities. The association annually recognizes individuals or organizations for outstanding economic development achievement at its summer conference.

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