



## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR: State of the City 2023

**GREETINGS!** Thank you for being a Minnetonka business leader. We are pleased you have chosen Minnetonka as a place to build your business.

The city's 2021 business survey indicated that Minnetonka is a great place to do business. Respondents feel that the city offers a sense of community, is vibrant, benefits from a great location, feels safe and has an excellent customer base. As a city, we want to nurture and support our diverse mix of businesses that range from global companies to national chains, franchises to small businesses and everything in between.

Businesses have been challenged these last few years by the pandemic, worker shortages, supply chain disruptions and rising costs. That's why I think it's important to highlight and celebrate the successes of our local businesses. This year, the Minnetonka State of the City event will showcase some of the emerging and thriving businesses in our city. Minnetonka businesses will prepare the food, and you will hear stories from local business leaders.

The State of the City is an excellent opportunity to highlight our thriving businesses. We need to be intentional about sharing Minnetonka's extraordinary qualities to residents and businesses. We will celebrate what we have accomplished, as we work together to continue building a thriving, welcoming community that is a great place to live, work and run a business.

Please join me Friday, March 10 for the 2023 State of the City. I look forward to seeing you there!



Brad Wiersum, Mayor

**State of the City  
Friday, March 10, Noon**

**Minnetonka Community Center  
14600 Minnetonka Blvd.**



**Contractors and building professionals attended the city's first Minnetonka Contractor's Expo Feb. 2 at the Minneapolis Marriott Southwest.**

The half-day event served as a one-stop shop for builders and contractors across the region to learn more about the city's development process, including permit and inspection requirements, small business resources and sustainability ideas.

City staff led workshops and were available to answer questions about building in Minnetonka.

# Empowering Black-owned businesses

MN Black Chamber of Commerce serves black entrepreneurs and their communities of support

Formed in 2004, the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce connects black entrepreneurs to resources to help them start, scale and sustain their businesses.

With a membership of approximately 200 small businesses, representing all sectors, the chamber offers a variety of services, including workshops, networking and mentorship.

"[Our] services address some of the needs black entrepreneurs expressed at various stages of their business journey," said Chamber Board Chair Abel Ebane.

One of the biggest challenges the chamber hears from its members is access to capital for entrepreneurs. That's why the chamber is rolling out a new program that will invest \$10 million over the next five years to increasing the number of black entrepreneurs running successful businesses.



The 10,000 Black Business Program will provide technical assistance, networking opportunities, micro-loans and micro-grants to black entrepreneurs. Since announcing the initiative, Huntington Bank and the McKnight Foundation have made significant contributions toward the program, Ebane said.

The Minnesota Black Chamber also supports its members through its High Impact Mentorship Program. The program aims to connect entrepreneurs with industry leaders and change-makers to learn and deploy best practices for highest impact.

"The best way to learn and reduce mistakes in business, or in life, is to learn from someone who's been there and done it," Ebane said.

Whether education, advocacy or networking, the goal of the chamber is to maximize the potential of black-owned business, large or small, by providing equitable opportunities for growth at every stage. The organization strives to be a leading resource of prosperity for black businesses and their communities.

"I want [people] to think of our organization as a pillar in the black business ecosystem," Ebane said. "If they're looking for a partner to address supplier diversity initiatives, they should think of the chamber. If they're looking for an organization that takes bold action steps for change in black business ownership and success, they should think of the chamber."



## About the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce

- Founded in 2004
- Membership includes more than 200 small businesses from a variety of sectors
- Over the past three years, the organization has engaged with nearly 1,000 small, black-owned businesses.

• More info:

[minnesotablackchamber.org](https://minnesotablackchamber.org)



**Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce**

*Working Together For Business*

# Grants available for business waste reduction

Hennepin County is currently assisting businesses who want to reduce their waste.

## Business recycling containers

Small businesses and non-profits are eligible for up to \$3,000 worth of containers and compostable bags to start or improve recycling and organics recycling. No match required.



## Business waste prevention grants

Grants are available to fund innovative waste prevention projects that focus on prevention of food waste; reuse and recovery of goods and materials; and development and use of recovered products. Applicants may apply for up to \$50,000 (minimum of \$5,000 per project; projects over \$10,000 require a 25-percent match).



Learn more about these grants at [hennepin.us/businessrecycling](https://hennepin.us/businessrecycling). You can also email [businessrecycling@hennepin.us](mailto:businessrecycling@hennepin.us) or call 612-543-9298.

## CEO Now

Hennepin County is proud to announce CEO Now, a new opportunity designed to help offer owners establish systems to run their business more efficiently. Business owners work with local advisors and their peers to develop a strategic roadmap using a nationally recognized curriculum focused on strengthening core business principles. Eligible businesses can join this cohort at no cost.

- Development of a three-year strategic growth plan tailored to their business
- Hands-on curriculum that combines business expertise and management know-how
- Professional peer group of other founders and owners
- Access to experienced instructors and local business advisors
- Preparing owners to access growth capital and outside investment

To learn more, visit [hennepin.us/economic-development/programs/CEO-Now](https://hennepin.us/economic-development/programs/CEO-Now).



## MNimize

### Reduce single-use plastic waste



Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation, in partnership with Hennepin County, has launched a new program called MNimize to help food businesses reduce their single-use plastic waste and receive recognition for their efforts.

Participating businesses receive technical assistance and a \$500 MNimize rebate toward expenses to reduce single-use plastics. Use the rebate to purchase durable reusable or certified compostable alternatives to replace single-use plastic items or for other creative plastic reduction strategies.

More information: [mnimize.org/rebate](https://mnimize.org/rebate)

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# Business Spotlight

## STEVENS CONSTRUCTION CORP.

In Minnetonka, construction is always happening, and the city is fortunate to have many construction companies who are committed not only to their projects, but collaborate to make projects easier.

Stevens Construction Corp., a general contractor that specializes in construction of multi-unit apartments, is one such company. City staff describe Stevens as proactive and their organized efforts ensure the city and staff are on the same page when it comes to construction projects.

“Stevens routinely submits documents and plans in a precise and concise manner,” said Community Development Director Julie Wischnack. “They prepare and schedule timely inspections, and their site conditions are well-managed.”

This collaborative approach is appreciated when dealing with the inevitable issues that occur during construction. “When situations arise, Stevens engages with the city to come up with appropriate solutions,” Wischnack noted.

Among Stevens’ recent Minnetonka projects are Shady Oak Office Center, Minnetonka Station and Avidor.

The city recognized Stevens Construction Corp. as an outstanding contractor at the Minnetonka Contractor’s Expo earlier this month. See more about the expo on page 1.



**Pictured from left, Travis Sutherland, Stevens Construction Corp. project manager; Bruce Larson, Stevens’ assistant superintendent; Julie Wischnack, City of Minnetonka community development director; and Jim Harmon, Stevens’ director of Minnesota operations**

The Thrive Minnetonka business spotlight showcases local businesses to foster a sense of pride in our thriving business community. For consideration, email Rob Hanson at [rhanson@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:rhanson@minnetonkamn.gov) Include basic information, why you chose Minnetonka and how your business positively impacts the community.