

## ■ Minn. manufacturers promote their state

On Aug. 11, Hutchinson, Minn.-area businesses partnered with the local Economic Development Authority (EDA), the Southwest Initiative Foundation and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development as part of a statewide initiative to promote Minnesota as a viable manufacturing destination for businesses considering U.S. locations. Dividing the state into eight regions, the “Site Selector Familiarization Tour” brought in site-selecting consultants to familiarize them with Minnesota’s assets and infrastructure.

“In the southwest region, which includes communities such as Hutchinson and Willmar, we are strong in industries like manufacturing, food, agribusiness and bioscience,” said Scott Marquardt, vice president of the Southwest Initiative Foundation. “Site selectors help provide location strategy to international companies in every industry. Our goal in bringing them to Hutchinson and Willmar was to show them what the region has to offer, the depth of technology utilized and an entrepreneurial spirit that makes manufacturing so strong in our area.”

The sites were carefully chosen to showcase the area’s strengths, noted Jennie Nelson, director of marketing and media at Hutchinson custom toolmaker Midwest Industrial Tool Grinding Inc. (MITGI), one of the sites chosen for the tour.

“In Hutchinson, there are a lot of manufacturers, especially considering the size of the community,” Nelson said. “MITGI is unique among them in that we manufacture very small-scale tooling.”

At a nearby tour site, NuCrane Manufacturing LLC manufactures large cranes for the nuclear power industry. The juxtaposition of macro- and micro-scale manufacturing was chosen to give visitors a visual representation of the scalability of manufacturing in the region, she added.

Other tour locations included manufacturing facilities that specialize in



Midwest Industrial Tool Grinding

Left to right: Deane Foote, president and CEO of Foote Consulting Group, Tim Ulrich, Hutchinson EDA board president, and Eric Lipke, general manager of MITGI, discuss quality and workmanship on a MITGI facility tour.

agribusiness, technical products, large equipment and materials used by manufacturers, including Crow River Winery, Hutchinson Technology Inc. and Hutchinson Manufacturing Inc. In addition, the tour showcased Hutchinson’s labor and infrastructure attributes that could make it an attractive candidate for foreign and domestic companies looking to establish a U.S. presence, joint venture or regional distribution center, according to Lee Miller, economic development director of the Hutchinson EDA.

“While many communities focus on financial incentives, such as tax breaks, loan forgiveness and financing, we’ve found one additional factor that helps position Hutchinson as a premier location: a highly skilled workforce,” Miller explained. “Approximately 35 percent of the labor force in Hutchinson is directly involved in manufacturing.”

“As part of the Hutchinson business community, we were glad to help represent manufacturing in the region,” said Eric Lipke, general manager of MITGI.

“We see the advantages of working in this area every day: readily available, quality labor; people who care about what they are doing and making; and a strong work ethic. In some parts of the country, companies have to work hard to build that culture. In Hutchinson, that culture already exists.”

—Evan Jones Thorne

## ■ TechSolve develops low-cost machine monitoring software

Cincinnati-based manufacturing consultancy TechSolve is developing machine tool monitoring software at the lowest available price, according to Ron Pieper, TechSolve manager of Viz products. The company’s MiniViz monitoring software, slated for a 2015 release, is designed to eliminate sticker shock and help new users reap the advantages of machine monitoring.

“MiniViz is our entry into software monitoring of machine tools and related assets, but with a bit of a different