

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2005 MINNESOTA QUALITY AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

The Minnesota Council for Quality, Minneapolis, recently announced the recipients of the 2005 Minnesota Quality Award. Ten organizations received recognition this year:

- Achievement Level
 - Mate Precision Tooling (Anoka)
 - Rochester Public Schools (Rochester)
- Advancement Level
 - Allina Hospitals & Clinics (Minneapolis)
 - Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (Monticello)
 - Mayo Health System (Rochester)
 - Winona Health (Winona)
- Commitment Level
 - Benedictine Health System (Duluth)
 - Kasson-Mantorville Schools (Kasson)
 - Immanuel St. Joseph's Medical Center (Mankato)
 - Rochester Catholic Schools (Rochester)

“The 10 organizations receiving the 2005 Minnesota Quality Award represent most of Minnesota’s economy – a manufacturer, a non-profit service organization, three K-12 school districts, and five health care providers,” says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality. “The organizations recognized [this evening] are in various stages of their improvement journey, but they are all on the journey. They are making systematic progress towards higher levels of performance – performance that will add value for their customers, their owners, their patients, their students, and their stakeholders. And performance that will add value to the quality of this already great state.”

All 10 Award recipients were recognized at a public event Tuesday evening in Bloomington. Attended by nearly 250 leaders, the event was sponsored by the ELCA Board of Pensions, Mortenson, Northland Community & Technical College, Sunny Fresh Foods, and Unisys (Silver Sponsors) and by BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota, Cargill Business Excellence, DuFresne Manufacturing Company, MN Healthcare Quality Professionals, Pemstar, Ronning Leadership Seminars, Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, and Studer Group (Bronze Sponsors). The event also recognized 2005 Minnesota Quality Award Board of Evaluators, a team of nearly 120 volunteers supporting this program, giving a combined estimated 10,000 volunteer hours of service.

Founded in 1991, the primary objective of the Minnesota Quality Award is to help organizations improve their performance results. The Award also serves to recognize performance excellence throughout the state. The Minnesota Quality Award is given at four levels – Excellence (the top Award), Achievement, Advancement, and Commitment – and is the culmination of a rigorous assessment process that uses the “Criteria for Performance Excellence” of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Since 1991, 80 organizations have received Minnesota Quality Award recognition at various levels (a full list is at http://www.councilforquality.org/assess_org_award.cfm).

Organizations that participate in the process receive comprehensive feedback that outlines their strengths and improvement opportunities in dozens of organizational processes including: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, information, and knowledge management; human resource focus; process management; and results. This feedback is typically used by senior leaders for organizational learning, planning, and improvement.

Dale Thompson, CEO of Benedictine Health System in Duluth states: “The Minnesota Quality Award and Baldrige unleashes our passion for quality. It provides energy, passion, and focus so that we can improve the quality of care for our patients.”

“It’s not about an award,” stated Diane Schwinghammer, Superintendent of Rochester Catholic Schools. “We are on a journey towards excellence. I could talk about our achievement scores and all of the student accomplishments. But if that is all that we focus on, we are making a huge mistake. The Baldrige process exposed so much more, and focusing on our opportunities for improvement will help us accomplish our mission of helping our students learn. [In this process,] we have learned that quality is not sustained by random acts, but by a systematic process and a culture of continuous improvement provided by productive employees who are nurtured and supported.”

Peter Grant, Superintendent of Kasson-Mantorville Schools agrees: “Many of you here are from businesses, but we are not a business. Our ‘bottom line’ is in helping kids learn and get ready for the world. Being new to the district, I was somewhat skeptical that Baldrige could help us accomplish our mission, but I now see the value of how this process helps us focus.”

Jerry Williams, Superintendent of Rochester Public Schools added: “I am absolutely convinced that Baldrige has contributed to the growth in our organization and to our ultimate goal of high student achievement. We have been on this continuous improvement journey for a decade, but in some ways we’re only just begun.”

Dean Sundquist, Chairman and CEO of Mate Precision Tooling in Anoka, the only manufacturer receiving recognition, commented: “We’re different than the other nine Award recipients; we actually make something! [Seriously,] we chose Baldrige because the framework evaluates everything in our business, not just the manufacturing processes...I just got back from a trip to China, and it occurred to me that we will not beat overseas competition with \$1/hour labor. We need to beat them with our brains. The Baldrige framework and the Minnesota Quality Award will help Mate to better compete with our brains.”

Mike Luker, president of Sunny Fresh Foods, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Cargill and a two-time Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award recipient, offered keynote remarks. “Achieving performance excellence requires buy-in from the top and throughout the organization,” says Luker. “It also requires a great deal of patience on this journey. For us, Baldrige is the absolute best model that has led to our prosperity and sustainability as a business.”

The 2006 Minnesota Quality Award cycle has already begun, and the Council expects 12-15 organizations to receive recognition this year.

“Minnesota organizations have always led the nation in quality and organizational improvement,” says Lassiter. “The fact that an increasing number of organizations are using sophisticated management frameworks like Baldrige, Six Sigma, Lean, and others, indicates that organizations in this state intend to remain leaders in their industries.”

About the Minnesota Council for Quality

Founded in 1987, the Minnesota Council for Quality is a non-profit corporation that advances improvement and performance excellence within organizations, individuals, and communities. The Council helps leaders identify strengths and improvement opportunities and we build networks that bring information, resources, knowledge, and best practices to organizations desiring to improve. We do this by offering services such as our Baldrige-based organizational assessments (and Minnesota Quality Award), the Performance Improvement Network, the Consultant Referral Network, and the improvement Clearinghouse, and by collaborating with other non-profits that focus on improvement. For more information, contact Brian Lassiter at 612-868-3519 or visit www.councilforquality.org.

About Allina Hospitals & Clinics

Allina Hospitals & Clinics represent a family of hospitals, clinics, and care services in Minnesota and western Wisconsin. With over 22,000 total employees, Allina is among the largest health care providers in Minnesota. Allina provides a continuum of care, from disease prevention programs, to technically advanced inpatient and outpatient care, to medical transportation, pharmacy and hospice services. For more information, contact Barbara Balik at 612-775-9711 or visit www.allina.com.

About Benedictine Health System

Based in Duluth, Benedictine Health System (BHS) is a Catholic non-profit health care organization. BHS includes more than 50 acute care and long-term care facilities operating in nine states. With a special focus on aging adults and rural health care, the Benedictine Health System's vision is to be the innovative leader, collaborative partner and a preferred provider for health care delivery in their communities. For more information, contact Janis Kivela Hooey at 218-786-2375 or visit www.bhshealth.org.

About Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services

Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (CMJTS) is a Monticello-based nonprofit employment and training agency and a partner in the Minnesota Workforce Center System. CMJTS's mission is to match job seekers, youth, businesses, and those seeking training with the resources available to them. With about 65 employees, CMJTS is a member of the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA), which represents the cooperative efforts of 16 area workforce councils across the state, each area council providing leadership and direction for local workforce development programs. CMJTS operates six workforce centers in their 11 counties. For more information, please contact Angie Theisen at 763-271-3707 or visit www.cmjts.org.

About Kasson-Mantorville Schools

Kasson-Mantorville Schools, District 204, serves the communities of Kasson, Mantorville, and surrounding communities. With one high school (serving 550 students in grades 9-12), a middle school (serving grades 7-8), an intermediate school (serving 350 students in grades 5-6), and elementary (serving 800 students in grades K-4), the Kasson-Mantorville's mission is to educate and its vision is to prepare life-long learners and responsible citizens. For more information, contact Marilyn Bongers at 507-634-1130 or visit www.komets.k12.mn.us.

About Immanuel St. Joseph's

Immanuel St. Joseph's Medical Center (ISJ), part of the Mayo Health System, is a non profit facility that provides healthcare services to a regional population of over 250,000 people in southern Minnesota in communities such as Mankato, Waseca, St. Peter. With a hospital, physician clinic, occupational medical services, home health and hospice services and a 185 member medical staff, ISJ is a regional healthcare provider, dedicated to helping the people of our region stay as healthy and safe as possible. For more information, contact Kevin Burns at 507-625-4031 or visit www.isj-mhs.org.

About Mate Precision Tooling

Founded in 1962, Mate Precision Tooling is a leading manufacturer of original and replacement tooling for punch press machines. With nearly 500 employees in their Anoka facility, Mate manufacturers premium quality optics, nozzles, mirrors, and other products. Mate's mission is to be the world's leading supplier of precision tooling for CNC punch presses. For more information, contact Kevin Nicholson at 763-576-3741 or visit www.mate.com.

About Mayo Health System

The Mayo Health System is a network of clinics and hospitals serving the healthcare needs of people in more than 60 communities in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The Mayo Health System has over 700 physicians and nearly 12,000 allied staff. Since its inception in 1992, Mayo Health System has grown from a new idea to one of the most

successful regional healthcare systems in America. Last year, Mayo Health System served more than a million patients. For more information, contact Deb Fischer at 507-255-8455 or visit www.mayohealthsystem.org.

About Rochester Catholic Schools

Rochester Catholic Schools (RCS) provides Nursery through twelfth grades at four elementary schools and one high school in Rochester, Minnesota. Founded over 120 years ago, RCS educates 2200 students and focuses on the values of faith formation, academic excellence, and community service for all students in a Catholic culture. For more information, contact Diane Schwinghammer at 507-280-0349 or visit www.rochestercatholic.k12.mn.us.

About Rochester Public Schools

With more than 16,000 students, Rochester Public Schools (RPS) has the sixth largest enrollment in the state. RPS has 16 elementary schools, four middle schools, and three comprehensive high schools; it also has various alternative schools and five choice programs throughout the District. The three strategic aims of the District are High Student Achievement; Safe and Welcoming Learning Environment; and Efficient and Effective Operations. Student achievement levels are consistently above state and national averages with more than 90% of graduating seniors pursuing post high school education. For more information, contact Lesley Schellenberg at 507-281-6212 or visit www.rochester.k12.mn.us.

About Winona Health

Winona Health is a locally owned and operated nonprofit organization whose primary mission is to meet the lifelong healthcare needs of the Winona, Minnesota, regional community. Currently, more than 50 physicians in 13 specialties, 875 staff members, and 300 volunteers serve the community's healthcare needs through several affiliates: Community Memorial Hospital, Lake Winona Manor Nursing Home, Memory Care Residences: Adith Miller & Roger Metz Manors, Parkview Pharmacy, Rushford Clinic, Southeast Minnesota Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery Specialists, Watkins Manor Assisted Living Facility, Winona Area Hospice Services, Winona Health Home Care, and the Winona Health Foundation. For more information, contact Kathleen Lanik at 507-457-4470 or visit www.winonahealth.org.

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