

PRESS RELEASE

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2002 MINNESOTA QUALITY AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

The Minnesota Council for Quality, Minnetonka, today announced the recipients of the 2002 Minnesota Quality Award. One organization received recognition at the Achievement Level: Medtronic Energy and Component Center, Brooklyn Center. Three organizations received recognition at the Advancement Level: Bethel Lutheran Church, Rochester; Hearth and Home Technologies, Lakeville; and Hubert Olson Elementary, Bloomington. Central Minnesota Job and Training Services (CMJTS), Monticello, received recognition at the Commitment Level.

“All five organizations demonstrate a strong level of commitment to organizational improvement, and all five organizations show improvements in their performance, their results, and their operations,” says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality.

Founded in 1991, the primary objective of the Minnesota Quality Award is to help organizations improve their results and/or competitiveness. The Award also serves to recognize performance excellence throughout the state. The Minnesota Quality Award is given at four levels – Excellence, 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, 59 organizations have received recognition at various levels.

Organizations that participate in the process receive comprehensive feedback that outlines their strengths and improvement opportunities along several categories: leadership, strategic planning, customer and market (student and stakeholder) focus, information and analysis, human resource (faculty and staff) focus, process management, and results. This feedback is used for learning, planning, and improvement.

“The recipients this year represent the full range of Minnesota’s economy: we have two manufacturers, a non-profit service organization, an elementary school, and a church,” says Lassiter.

“While all five organizations deserve recognition, this is the first time that a Minnesota church has applied for the Award. In fact, we believe that this is the first church in the country to have participated in the full Baldrige-based assessment process. Bethel Lutheran will certainly benefit from the process, as it is helping them identify ways to improve their ministry, advance their mission, and address the spiritual needs of the people they serve. As educational institutions have done so before them, Bethel is blazing a trail and should be considered a role model for other churches desiring to improve their ministries.”

The five organizations each will be recognized at a private ceremony at their facilities later this spring and at a public event in early summer.

About the Minnesota Council for Quality

Founded in 1987, the Minnesota Council for Quality is a non-profit that helps organizations improve performance and competitiveness. The Council's primary product is a comprehensive organizational assessment that identifies strengths and improvement opportunities and serves as the foundation for the Minnesota Quality Award. In addition, the Council brokers improvement-related resources, information, knowledge, and best practices within and between Minnesota organizations. For more information, please visit our improvement Clearinghouse at www.councilforquality.org.

About Bethel Lutheran Church

Located in Rochester, Minnesota, Bethel Lutheran Church is a 4200-member congregation affiliated with the ELCA. Its mission is "We, the Bethel Congregation, called by God, commit ourselves: to proclaim the Gospel, to prepare our members for outreach and service, and to minister to human needs." Bethel provides Sunday worship, adult education, missionary services, youth services, and other religious services. For more information, please contact Chris Zabel at 507-288-6430.

About Central Minnesota Job and Training Services

Central Minnesota Job & Training Services (CMJTS) is located in Monticello, Minnesota, with facilities in eleven counties throughout central Minnesota. CMJTS is part of the National Association of Workforce Boards, and is one of sixteen Minnesota-based one-stop centers in the Department of Economic Security. With over 80 employees, CMJTS is a local employer-led partnership charged with developing a workforce development system from disparate education, job training, and employment programs in each local community. For more information, please contact Angie Thiesen at 763-271-3707.

About Hearth and Home Technologies

Hearth and Home Technologies is home of three fireplace brands: Quadra-Fire, Heat-N-Glo, and Heatilator. Hearth was formed in 1996 when parent company Hon Industries acquired Heat-N-Glo Fireplace Products and merged it with their existing Heatilator subsidiary. In 1998, Hon purchased Aladdin Hearth Products to form the current Hearth Technologies organization. Headquartered in Lakeville, Hearth is the largest single manufacturer of hearth products in the US. Hearth has a manufacturing facility in Lake City, Minnesota, as well as facilities in Iowa and Washington. For more information, please contact Dennis Wilson at 952-985-6613.

About Medtronic Energy and Component Center

Medtronic Energy and Component Center (MECC) is a fully-integrated vertical supplier to parts of Medtronic. Based in Brooklyn Center, MECC is a unit within Cardiac Rhythm Management (CRM). MECC produces three major technologies: energy systems (such as batteries and capacitors); metals, ceramics, and electrodes; and polymers. For more information, please contact Bob Christenson at 763-514-1037.

About Olson Elementary

Part of the Bloomington K-12 school district, Olson Elementary offers public elementary education to the south-central and southwestern sections of Bloomington, MN. Olson's mission is "to create a unique and dynamic learning environment that encourages students to be lifelong learners through excellence, cultural, and learning diversity, partnerships, and community involvement." For more information, please contact Tim Case at 952-806-8800.

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