



September 2013

Nominations Now Open for 2013 Continuous Improvement Awards

Once again, the Office of Governor Mark Dayton and the State of Minnesota Lean Steering Team are pleased to announce the **2013 Governor's Continuous Improvement Awards**. Over the past few years, these awards have recognized outstanding continuous improvement achievements within state government – efforts that have improved quality of service, decreased costs, and made continuous improvement an increasing part of the culture of state government.

All state employees are encouraged to submit a nomination for an individual or team whose achievements are worthy of recognition. The nomination period opens today, Sept. 13 and will remain open until Oct. 18. All nominees that meet the basic selection criteria will be reviewed by the Lean Steering Team to determine finalists. Final winners will be selected by the Governor's Office in partnership with the Lean Steering Team. Qualified nominees and award winners will be recognized at a ceremony scheduled to take place on Dec. 10.

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For the record...

Lean isn't an acronym. It simply suggests a vision of organizations that are 'fit' or 'trim,' with no extra waste.



Governor Dayton spoke to nominees and congratulated winners at a previous year's awards event.

More information is available on the Lean website at mn.gov/lean. To get started, download a copy of the [awards overview](#) and the [nomination form](#).

Continuous Improvement User Group Kicks off This Fall

Last month, we inquired into your interest in participating in a Continuous Improvement User Group. Since then, we have heard from many of you and are pleased to share that user group sessions will begin taking place this fall. These sessions will offer a forum for continuous improvement practitioners of all stripes to come together to discuss their recent efforts, share ideas and best practices, and network with other experts and innovators across the state.

Thank you to all those who expressed interest in taking part! The inaugural user group session will take place sometime in October and those who contacted us will receive an invite with complete details in the coming weeks. If you are interested in participating, simply shoot us an email at lean@state.mn.us to let us know and we'll make sure you receive an invite. Future user group sessions will also be listed in this newsletter.

Agency Spotlight: Minnesota Department of Transportation



At the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), continuous improvement can be seen almost every day through kaizen events that are improving process. The agency has leveraged the kaizen method for many years, but in 2012 the agency's Business Process Section took responsibility for organizing and facilitating events for the agency.

The Business Process Section is a team of nine, led by director Dave Pehoski. The team includes two facilitators, John Aleksuk and John Stein, as well as Nancy Melvin, who focuses on policy management, and Kris Schulze, who focuses on technology. Additional support comes from Pam RigenHagen, who is the unit supervisor, and Vanessa Cruz, Lyn Isaacson, and Leah Nielsen, who help with everything from broad matters like standard work and return on investment down to more specific things like electronic signatures and mobile devices.

The team has overseen and coordinated at least 10 different kaizen events, which have tackled a variety of different processes across the agency. An event on prevailing wage is promoting better relationships with contractors, through more consistent communication on labor compliance issues and bidding processes. Another event on restitution for damage done to Minnesota roads reduced process lead time by about 90 percent and improved communication with law enforcement professionals. Other events have tackled the way crash data is analyzed, how traffic is counted, and how right-of-way is controlled. Future events will focus on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues, and much more.

Upcoming Events

Sept. 16, Lean 101, Open
Sept. 17-18, Facilitator Training, Open
Oct. 8, Lean 101, Full
Oct. 15-16, Facilitator Training, Open
Nov. 12, Lean 101, Open
Nov. 13-14, Facilitator Training, Open
Dec. 3, Lean 101, Open
Dec. 4-5, Facilitator Training, Open

View all Lean events at www.lean.state.mn.us/calendar

Register for trainings on our mnlean.eventbrite.com.

For each event, MnDOT has strived to secure broad participation, including both customers and providers of the process being assessed. As one participant noted, “It’s helpful to have both suppliers and customers be a part of the process because often we make inaccurate assumptions about their needs and abilities.” Events have included participants from multiple MnDOT teams across the state, and representatives from the counties too. In addition, partners from the Metropolitan Council and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are scheduled to take part in future kaizen events.

Participating in these events is helping MnDOT employees understand the value of the kaizen approach. One individual commented, “We can give our point of view more effectively in this type of setting and step back from our daily jobs and really focus on what the process is.”

Want to see your agency, team or event highlighted in a future issue? Email us your story at lean@state.mn.us!
