



November 2013

## State of Minnesota Takes Part in Mid-Atlantic Lean Conference

The second annual Mid-Atlantic Lean Conference, held Nov. 5 and 6, brought together experts and practitioners from private business, health care providers, service organizations and, for the first time, public sector representatives.

The two-day conference featured a variety of sessions and keynote presentations that echoed a similar theme: applying lean thinking and tools to your work environment will save money, improve quality and provide customers with better value.

“Problems that arise in private business or government agencies often have similar roots,” said Jeff Fuchs, executive director of the Maryland World Class Consortia which sponsored the conference. “These problems can be solved using lean tools.”

Bob Minicucci, Lean Project Manager for the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services shared an example from his state’s Division of Motor Vehicles. Vehicle license processes there were so cumbersome that a vast majority of residents gave the agency negative reviews. After streamlining the process using lean principles, the state was able to turn that percentage on its head, now earning over 90 percent positive reviews.

Along with Minicucci, public sector representatives from Michigan, Iowa and Minnesota shared their experiences with conference attendees.



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### Got a handful of minutes?

See what lean and continuous improvement in public service are all about, [watch this video.](#)

*Tom Baumann, the recently retired Lean Director for the State of Minnesota (pictured second from right) was one of the presenters at this year's Mid-Atlantic Lean Conference.*

"We've never found anything we can't apply lean principles to in state government," said Teresa Hay McMahon, former deputy director for the Iowa Department of Economic Development. "A process doesn't have to be broken to improve."

These improvements have helped relationships with the business community as well. Here in Minnesota, for example, simple changes in the licensing process for electricians led to a noticeable decrease in calls from these workers to the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry.

"We are building a win, win, win environment" said Tom Baumann, former director of continuous improvement for Minnesota. Improvements in the operations of government are good for the taxpayer, good for the employee, and good for customer. It's hard to argue with that."

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## **Kaizen Team Goes for *Then, Now, Wow* at the Minnesota Historical Society**

The Minnesota History Center, the history museum adjacent to the State Capitol Complex in St. Paul, introduced a very unique history exhibit in 2012 called "Then, Now, Wow." Geared at children but appropriate for all, the exhibit brings history to life by using interactive, touchable and climbable exhibits to show how things were "then" and compare it to how things are "now."

When the Minnesota Historical Society, the public organization that runs the Minnesota History Center and several other historical properties and museums across the state, formed a kaizen team to assess its hiring process, you could say they too were going for a little "Then, Now, Wow."

The team started by looking in detail at their current processes, along the way assessing the needs of all the customers in the process, the things that worked well, and the opportunities for improvement.

The team was determined to make the existing hiring process a thing of the past, or "then" if you will. In general, the hiring process was taking too long and it wasn't meeting customer needs. What's more, the time was right for redesign, as the team aimed to streamline their processes prior to introducing new automation software.

Looking to the future, the team set a kaizen goal of cutting the process time in half, striving to implement this new "now" by Jan. 1, 2014. Over the course of the kaizen event, the team mapped the current state, made a long list of observations and

### Upcoming Events

**Dec. 3**, Lean 101, Full ([Waitlist](#))  
**Dec. 5-6**, Facilitator Training, Full ([Waitlist](#))  
**Dec. 11**, Lean User Group, [RSVP](#)  
**Jan. 9**, Lean User Group, [RSVP](#)  
**Jan. 13**, Lean 101, Full ([Waitlist](#))  
**Jan. 14-15**, Facilitator Training, [Register](#)  
**Feb. 11**, Lean 101, [Register](#)  
**Feb. 12-13**, Facilitator Training, [Register](#)  
**March 18**, Lean 101, [Register](#)  
**March 19-20**, Facilitator Training, [Register](#)  
**April 8**, Lean 101, [Register](#)  
**April 9-10**, Facilitator Training, [Register](#)

View all Lean events at [www.lean.state.mn.us/calendar](http://www.lean.state.mn.us/calendar)

Register for trainings on our [mnlean.eventbrite.com](http://mnlean.eventbrite.com).

opportunities, and ultimately came out with a desired future state and 20 different recommendations to get there.



*The Minnesota Historical Society Hiring team marveled at what they had accomplished as their kaizen event concluded.*

Once implemented, the new hiring process is expected to result in an 82 percent reduction in work time for staff, and a nearly 50 percent reduction in total, elapsed time, putting the team right on track to reach their goals. The team has much work to do to get there, but the new “now” is right around the corner.

With strong leadership support and staff engagement across the board, there is little doubt the team will have much to show in the days ahead. And perhaps one day, staff at the Minnesota Historical Society will look back on this great kaizen project as an important bit of history, noting, “then, now, wow.”

Then, now, wow, indeed.

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## Minnesota Lean User Group Update

Thank you to everyone who came out for the inaugural Minnesota Lean User Group session held in November! Attendees came from all across the state and many connections were made, resulting in great discussion and an exciting groundwork for future sessions.

The agenda for the second and third sessions is currently being developed and will be posted to our [events page](#) in the coming days. Please stay tuned, and feel free to RSVP if you plan to join us.

And don't forget, if you have feedback, questions, or a desire to get involved with the user group, you can always use our [suggestion box](#) or email us at [lean@state.mn.us](mailto:lean@state.mn.us).

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