



UNSHAKABLE LEADERSHIP

ST PAUL
AREA CHAMBER

2026 REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR

This past year asked a great deal of our region and its leaders. It tested our trust, challenged our assumptions, and made clear that what got us here will not take us where we need to go next. In moments like these we need to lead with innovation, curiosity and collaboration.

We have felt the weight many of you have felt: pressures from outside our control, divisions among us, and an uncertainty that can tempt us to retreat into what is familiar. And yet, we also have seen something extraordinary – people standing together, leaders engaging and choosing courage over convenience, and a real desire to figure out the path forward for Minnesota.

Your Chamber exists for pivotal moments like these - to convene diverse ideas and partner wherever possible towards a stronger regional economy.

We continue to believe deeply that what unites us is greater than what divides us. The work ahead requires both long-term vision and real urgency, as well as a willingness to let go of what is comfortable to build what is possible. We must harness our momentum and get growing.

The future isn't something we wait for. It's something we build - together.

Thank you for working with us!

B Kyle
President and CEO
St. Paul Area Chamber

Jennifer Hellman
Board Chair - St. Paul Area Chamber
Goff Public



BUSINESS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

We continue to operationalize the Twin Cities Talent Hub, supported by a **\$635,000 DEED Drive for 5 grant**. Over the next 18 months, we will implement two healthcare initiatives focused on retaining and upskilling workers, recognizing that healthcare remains the only Drive for 5 industry still outside the 4.2% vacancy rate. We will also deliver leadership training aligned with the grant's goals and expand industry-focused, skills-based hiring workshops. In addition, a **\$10,000 Greater Twin Cities United Way grant** will support development of a standardized framework for high schools to pursue deeper career pathway experiences, helping streamline employer engagement and reduce employer fatigue.



PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE:

The St. Paul Area Chamber is dedicated to fostering a community-focused environment, which is reflected in our policy platform. For a region to thrive economically, it's essential that people feel safe, have access to employment and housing, and that businesses can grow and succeed in a supportive environment.

Each year, our **Public Policy Committee** creates a policy platform that outlines our position on key issues and serves as a framework for evaluating further policy recommendations. Visit <https://www.stpaulchamber.com/advocacy.html> to view the 2025-26 Policy Platform. The Public Policy Committee also hosted 15 elected officials and thought leaders throughout 2025, spanning councilmembers, county and legislative elected officials, city staff, and nonprofit leaders.

LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES:

During the 2025 Minnesota legislative session, with a statewide coalition, SPAC's Government Affairs team advocated for an agreement on lead and cadmium limits in keys, successfully easing the onerous restrictions ahead the July 1, 2025, enforcement deadline. The Government Affairs team also helped to pass **Environmental Permitting Reform**, which shortened permitting timelines, lowered costs, and made Minnesota's regulatory process more certain for investment.

ELECTORAL SUCCESSES:

The St. Paul Area Chamber Political Action Committee **endorsed now-Councilmember Molly Coleman** during the Saint Paul Ward 4 Special Election. Councilmember Coleman's experience navigating complex issues effectively, combined with her dedication to working with diverse stakeholders, was one of the determining factors for the endorsement. The SPAC PAC's endorsement proved correct, as Councilmember Coleman has been an active partner to the Chamber during her time on the City Council.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WINS:

SPAC's Government Affairs team achieved several notable victories at the Saint Paul City Council, including exempting building height limits in the Urban Core from the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area ordinance, **amending the 2026-2027 Qualified Allocation Plan** to support downtown revitalization, and amending the city's rent stabilization ordinance to permanently exempt buildings built after 2004.

PRIORITIES:

- Stop Drive-thru Ban
- Downtown Revitalization
- CUB Tax Credit and Housing

EVENTS

In 2025, the St. Paul Area Chamber hosted more than **4,500 attendees** at nearly **100 events**. We offer a wide variety of programming for our members, from smaller, more intimate networking and learning events to our biggest signature events that draw hundreds of people from across the region. Our goals are always to offer insightful learning opportunities and resources to our members, and to bring people together for meaningful experiences where they can make authentic, helpful connections.

Highlights: One new event we launched this past year was **COMPETE 25**, which we hosted in partnership with GREATER MSP and the Minneapolis Regional Chamber, to share data on the Twin Cities as a competitive region, including the state of the economy and regional indicators. We hosted nearly **400 people** at that event in August, and plan to bring it back again this year.

We also continued to build on our Small Business Summit and Expo, and we hosted the largest ever group of about **115 attendees** on our InterCity Leadership Visit to Detroit.



[View Upcoming Events & Register](#)

WORKSTREAM

WorkStream partnerships expand our collective network and strengthen our business voice. With our 16 affiliate partners we've had the opportunity to create shared programs like our small business expo, chamber connect series, and young professionals events. We believe when we work in collaboration, we all grow stronger in service to our members.



[Find out more about WorkStream](#)

CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

The St. Paul Area Chamber Charitable Foundation continues to grow a network of diverse, connected, supportive leaders who invest in, educate, and build a strong and vibrant community. We facilitate professional growth opportunities, expose leaders to a wide range of ideas and industries, support organizations big and small, and encourage ownership and pride in our community. In addition to supporting the Chamber's Workforce Initiatives and facilitating Fiscal Sponsored Entities, the Foundation successfully ran our 45th year of Leadership St. Paul. This included 49 leaders in the cohort who connected with other leaders—both in the class and the speakers—with a shared commitment to community in addition to building a diverse, long-term network, and promoting the organization they represent. The cohort was able to learn about and partner with seven non-profits as part of our Nonprofit Engagement Program. We're grateful to the following organizations for their partnership: Mapping Prejudice, MORE Empowerment, Minneapolis Nature Preschool, Nine Lives Thrift, Rethos, St. Paul Art Collective, and Saint Paul Parks Conservancy.



St. Paul Area Chamber



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