

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 14, 2015

Contacts:

Ellen Muller

Economic Development Manager, City of Saint Paul

651-266-6605

[Ellen.muller@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Ellen.muller@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

Denise Beigbeder

Community and Economic Development, Ramsey County

651-266-8005

[Denise.beigbeder@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:Denise.beigbeder@co.ramsey.mn.us)

## **Saint Paul and Ramsey County businesses encouraged to apply for Economic Gardening initiative to help them grow**

*Program provides free tools and resources for small businesses*

SAINT PAUL, MINN. – The City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County, in partnership with the Edward Lowe Foundation and the National Center for Economic Gardening (NCEG), are participating in a metro-wide Economic Gardening Program aimed at connecting seasoned businesses with strategic research, facilitated CEO discussions, and access to a team of specialists that provide expert knowledge in their respective fields. The program provides free tools and resources for companies looking to take their business to the next level.

“The Economic Gardening program is a wonderful option for cultivating small business growth,” said Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development Director Jonathan Sage-Martinson. “The program is designed to help growing companies make informed decisions through market research and peer discussion - it’s a great opportunity for second stage businesses to get the resources they need.”

In the past two years, 23 Ramsey County businesses, including nine in Saint Paul, completed the program.

“This collaboration has already produced real results for our businesses, our cities and the county,” said Heather Worthington, Ramsey County’s Deputy County Manager of Economic Growth and Community Investment. “We’re focused on expanding the base of good, well-paying jobs in Ramsey County by sponsoring proven programs like Economic Gardening that support and grow our own businesses in Saint Paul and our other cities.”

Businesses who have taken part in the program have seen positive results. Reid Lutter, CEO of Podiumwear Custom Sports Apparel in Saint Paul, had the following comments:

“The Economic gardening program was incredibly helpful to me as a small business C.E.O. The lectures provided MBA level information, and the round tables are a great place to get ideas and opinions from other executives. Companies in different industries all face similar challenges as they grow. The roundtables helped us understand that and arrive at better solutions together.”

Saint Paul and Ramsey County businesses that meet program criteria are encouraged to register at <https://hcrs.nationalcentereg.org/> to access the online application. Only 45 companies will be selected across the Twin Cities metro region to participate in the next eight-month Economic Gardening Program. Applications are due September 11, 2015.

A free informational session will be held next Thursday, August 20, from 8 to 9:30 a.m. at the Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union in Roseville, located at 2750 Snelling Avenue North. Those attending are asked to park in the back parking lot.

**Economic Gardening Business Requirements:**

- Be a for-profit, privately held company headquartered and operating in Ramsey County and/or the City of Saint Paul.
- Have between \$1 million and \$50 million in annual revenue.
- Employ 10 to 99 full-time equivalent W-2 employees, including the owner.
- Maintained its principal place of business in Ramsey County and/or in the City of Saint Paul for at least the previous 2 years.
- Demonstrated growth in either revenue or employees in 2 of the last 5 years.
- Provide product(s) and/or services beyond current service area to regional and/or international markets.

For more information visit: [bit.ly/EconGardening2015](http://bit.ly/EconGardening2015)

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