**WHAT’S NEXT**

**HOW TO BUILD UPON A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE AND INTERNATIONALIZE MINNESOTA**

**The US-Russia Innovation Conference was a success.**

**The goals were :**

1. **To showcase Minnesota industries, technologies, educational systems and social institutions as strong and thriving.**
2. **To build relationships between Russian and American entrepreneurs.**
3. **To demonstrate the potential interest of both Russian and American businesses in building new and increasing established relationship,**
4. **To demonstrate the reality that relationships are not only built between nations, but even more effectively among and between the citizens of nations. These relations can be encouraged and successful during times of official stress between nations**
5. **To demonstrate a potential model of organization which could be a template for the future between Minnesota institutions and those of every nation in the world.**
6. **To promote the concept of Minnesota as a world class home of new systems, both in the US and Russia.**
7. **The potential for utilization of telecommunications to assist in the creation and development of relationships.**

**The first goal of this proposal is to analyze which elements of the Conference provided the basis for success and which could have made the process more effective. How to strengthen these established relationships for the future is also a focus.**

**The secondary concept is how to build upon these relationships as a model for more effectively integrating Minnesota as a center for international economic, social and educational development. What the Conference demonstrated was that Minnesota currently possesses existing technologies, skills and resources, which if positively developed allow Minnesota to be at the center of a global economic and social growth.**

**Russia provided a model.**

**The real success will be the development of Minnesota as the recognized model for world creativity and as the center for global development.**

**The potential includes benefits both to regional citizens, industries and institutions. Possibilities, such as the 2023 World’s Fair demonstrate the possibility of Minnesota becoming the world-wide positive vision of the future.**

**WHAT WORKED DURING THE CONFERENCE AND WHAT COULD HAVE BEN IMPROVED.**

1. **The informal time together at Russian Museum and Ray Johnson’s gallery. The ability to talk about art and other subjects created an ability for bonding and the atmosphere of class and culture which is difficult in other circumstances. This time was also limited in size and showed that small ,more intimate social relations where model which should be expanded.**
2. **The time on buses and site visits. Once again, providing chance for discussion which formal sessions do not allow.**
3. **The realization that group was seeking to accomplish a relationship made more difficult by formal governmental actions. The realization that process was something which individuals could accomplish, in spite of governmental difficulties.**
4. **The role of Mark Ritchie. Without Mark, the Conference would not have taken place, let along succeeded. It was the need for central co-ordination which allowed for process to succeed. Without Mark, process would have lacked coherence.**
5. **The exhibition allowed presentation of ideas and variety of groups, which should have been expanded.**
6. **The ability for video conferencing demonstrated potential.**
7. **The mixing of groups which often lack communication and relationship demonstrate how new possibilities could be developed between government, businesses and universities.**

**WHICH IMPROVEMENTS WOULD HAVE INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS**

1. **An increase in information concerning all participants and their companies, universities and groups.**
2. **As noted by RVC, color-coded name-tags to increase participant’s ability for creating matches.**
3. **The ability for more match-making time during sessions.**
4. **The ability for similar groups to be placed together during lunches.**
5. **The ability to increase registration co-ordination.**
6. **More time to meet with similar groups during the Conference.**
7. **Could have initial meetings be established by Skype before conference so that time required for knowledge about potential partners and expectations of relationships could be reduced.**
8. **We needed ability to build sustained coordination and planning process, without dependence upon one person. If anything had happened to Mark, the process would have failed.**
9. **We lack the ability to create, judge and assist potential follow-up with participants.**
10. **We do not know which potentials for follow-up relationships were established.**
11. **We have no formal process for judging participant evaluation of the Conference and if their expectations were achieved.**
12. **We lacked any background information on Minnesota and/or Russian economy, society and communications issues. We lost opportunity to build idea for both participants and their firms in both Russia and the US of Minnesota’s role in innovation and existing range of Russian ties. This potential for promoting Minnesota was not available by either their packets or internet.**

**We needed better sales approach for Minnesota and region. The Russians were impressed with the people and institutions they met, but this could have been enhanced if their pre-expectations of going to a major technological and culturally advanced region had been previously created. This would have been assisted by pre-information available on web during the registration process.**

1. **We had not developed “like-what “examples of existing Russian-American exchanges, business relationships or non-governmental ties, as examples of current successes and the wide range of possibilities.**
2. **The length of time for sales presentation on Mall of America felt almost like a trip for those listening. We should have limited time for “sales event”. It was kind of the Mall to provide packets of “goodies” and coupons, but became an overkill.**
3. **We had problem with those groups, such as universities, which did not fit in one single category. Many were seeking both educational exchange and faculty relationships, but also desired process for technology transfer.**
4. **We need to think through how to utilize this experience with Russia as template for all countries and regions for ties with Minnesota**

**WHAT IS REQUIRED TO BUILD UPON CONFERENCE POTENTIAL**

**Two levels exist for analysis of the potential for Minnesota.**

**First, is the immediate development of an established group responsible for analysis of reaction, relationships established and suggestions from all participants on process improvement.**

**Second, is the determination of how an ongoing process can be established, either by a new organization, or by coordination with existing groups. This process would be creation of a model to expand Minnesota relationships with nations and institutions worldwide. The goal of the process would be to “Internationalize Minnesota”, for economic, social and research potential.**

**The process developed would focus upon the following goals:**

1. **Increase in the understanding that the future of Minnesota is directly related to growth of partnerships world-wide.**
2. **Increase in the knowledge of the benefits available to Minnesota from these potential ties.**
3. **Create the image of Minnesota as a “unique and special place” which is the center of innovation, education, creativity and excellence around the world.**
4. **Utilize the ability of recent immigrant groups in Minnesota to be viewed as resource for world-wide relationships and a strength for our state. Dr. Bruce Corrie at Concordia is directing efforts to provide an understanding of immigrant populations as an un-recognized resource.**
5. **Increase the knowledge of world-wide potentials by increased student and faculty exchanges, foreign language learning and travel to and from Minnesota. This would increase the potential of “citizen diplomacy”**
6. **Creating a process which builds upon, strengthens and is not defined as competing with existing international programs.**
7. **Development of a “Minnesota Model” for formalizing potential relationships with all nations around the world.**
8. **An increase in the use of technologies for increased communications and relationships.**

**HOW CAN THESE GOALS BE ACHIEVED**

**The focus should be upon the increased knowledge of Minnesota’s role and leadership within a worldwide context. Organizations have centered on Minnesota’s contributions and how to improve the educational, industrial and social life of Minnesotans. This remains an important goal.**

**What becomes unique is the philosophy that Minnesota has much both to teach and to learn from the world. In the new world, with instant worldwide communications, information, business and ideas are international. The process established will filter ideas for improved social, governmental and industrial ideas into Minnesota, to strengthen the fabric of our state and region. Minnesota will remain a leader only if it is able to utilize effective new concepts, adapted to the Minnesota culture and tradition.**

**We seek to create a “Minnesota Model” for building relationships between the citizens, businesses, educational institutions and non-profit communities of Minnesota and the world.**

1. **By use of participant surveys and small group focus groups to analyze the outcome of the Conference.**
2. **By developing a complete list of existing Minnesota programs and business relationships worldwide.**
3. **By an analysis of potentially complementary programs from other States and organizations in business, education and citizen diplomacy, for adaptation to the culture and potential of Minnesota.**
4. **By creation of a steering committee (Board of Directors) to fulfill the above goals, with the understanding that this is a long-term and on-going process to shape the State of Minnesota for the future, utilizing all resources.**
5. **By seeking funding to achieve the stated goals. We need to develop a first year budget.**
6. **To build a larger process, focused upon strengthening existing organizations.**
7. **To play role as convenor and catalyst of existing institutions and organizations to build organizational capacities. By sponsoring small group discussions, lectures, conferences and building the capacity for groups to cooperate which are currently not working together.**
8. **To provide research and information so shared goals can be achieved.**
9. **To follow up on ties created during Conference to provide support to increase success.**
10. **To publish reports, articles and provide internet materials providing a step by step vision of the benefits of more clearly integrating Minnesota into the world.**
11. **By development of both goals and tools for measurement of success, which can clearly state progress and need for further action.**
12. **By publicly emphasizing the benefits for all organizations and institutions in Minnesota to cooperate and increase their effectiveness by working together, and to insure that this is not competition, but expansion of opportunities for all participants.**
13. **By publishing and presenting information on successful programs in education, business, and non-profits in both Minnesota and worldwide.**
14. **By strong support of increased relationships between schools in Minnesota and worldwide.**
15. **Publishing stories in newspapers, magazines and on the media relative to program successes and new ideas.**
16. **Repeat the successful Russia-Minnesota Conference with every region in the world. This will utilize existing relationships, as well as the increasing immigrant community.**
17. **Provide research and programming stressing the contributions which the growing immigrant community is producing in Minnesota.**
18. **To promote Minnesota as a world-class developer and home of new systems.**
19. **Develop the use of new technologies for communications between individuals, schools, institutions, government and businesses of Minnesota and the world.**
20. **To promote Minnesota and the region as a center of global development in food, energy and resource usage and management.**

**WHAT ARE OUR EXISTING RESOURCES**

1. **Minnesota has a variety of existing business, educational, volunteer organizational and cultural ties world-wide. These current processes include:**
2. **Student and faculty exchanges at most colleges and universities.**
3. **Some of the strongest adoption organizations programs in US**
4. **A large immigrant community, seeking to participate fully in success and the American society.**
5. **Strong existing programs in both public and private language learning and translation services.**
6. **The Minnesota International Center, the most effective similar national organization in the US.**
7. **The capacity for the latest educational and business communications technologies.**
8. **An effective Minnesota State Trade office, providing information, training, programs and potential funding sources for international trade development.**
9. **A large international business community, providing Minnesota-produce or managed products world-wide.**
10. **An established process for close cooperation between educational systems and private businesses statewide**
11. **One of the strongest agri-business industries in US.**
12. **Minnesota being the center of world-wide water industry. Thus, as a basis for the future of the world, Minnesota combines technology, energy efficiency, water, food and biomedical research and production, all international growth areas located within one state.**
13. **One of the leading materials management research facilities at Winona State University.**
14. **One of the major centers for Technological Leadership with program at University of Minnesota under Dr. Massoud Amin.**
15. **Major existing volunteer international development programs, such as Global Volunteers, Minnesota International Health Volunteers, Books for Africa, American Refuge Committee and others.**
16. **Existing Sister-Cities programs in most communities in Minnesota.**
17. **A strong existing critical mass of individuals who have worked, studied and traveled abroad.**
18. **One of largest Great Decisions Programs in US, with 62 groups of citizens statewide discussing foreign affairs monthly.**
19. **An existing social studies program in all high school and grade schools**
20. **A strong religious community, many of whom participate in international humanitarian programs and support of immigration into Minnesota.**
21. **A unique program at University of Minnesota-Duluth in Cultural Entrepreneurship, focused upon developing cross-cultural thinkers. I believe this is the future of education and could be an international model.**
22. **Minnesota as a media center for public radio**
23. **The Museum of Russian Art, a unique resource for international relations.**

**WHAT ARE THREATS TO ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR GOALS**

1. **Apathy and non-action. Existing systems are focused upon specific goals and programs. Success is measured by achievement of these defined goals. Without development of a broader vision, the potential of synergy and working together to strengthen all participants will not develop.**
2. **A fear of competition over limited public, foundation and corporate resources, as well a fear of greater competition for public attention.**
3. **The sense of austerity in public funding of programs.**
4. **The dichotomy of growing neo-isolation, along with a parallel realization that processes are increasingly integrating Minnesotans into world. These processes include international trade, dependence upon this trade for employment, travel, communications and international news forcing the United States to remains involvement worldwide. It is the potential for neo-isolation which competes with the potential benefits of the integrating elements and limits actions which overcomes the reticence of isolationism.**
5. **The reality that there are few models for what we seeking to accomplish. There are examples of trade, citizen diplomacy and exchanges, but the concept of a unified approach is unique. This increases the need for creation of a vision which can be understood and adopted by existing organizations an institutions**
6. **The need to develop a focused leadership and individuals able and willing to develop this process.**