

Business Resource Guide

Brainerd Central Business District



MINNESOTA SMALL BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT CENTERS



BRAINERDLAKES
CHAMBER
Brainerd Main Street

Brainerd Main Street:

- Economic Restructuring
- Advisory Committee



Funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and regional support partners. All Opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the program sponsors.

Mission

The co-sponsors of this resource booklet are proud to provide you with the enclosed information.

It is our sincere hope that you will read the information, use the information, and let us know how helpful this booklet becomes as one more tool in the successful operation of your business.

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Help us make this more useful:

Is there more information that we should add to the booklet? Please contact Emily, Brainerd Main Street Coordinator at eroragen@explorebrainerdlakes.com or (218) 822-7126 with your ideas and suggestions.

Quick Reference Phone List

Emergencies.....	911
Brainerd Lakes Area Development Corporation (BLADC).....	(218) 828-0096
Brainerd Lakes Chamber.....	(218) 829-2838
Brainerd Main Street Coordinator.....	(218) 822-7126
Brainerd Public Utilities.....	(218) 829-8726
Central Lakes College Business and Industry Center.....	(218) 855-8142
City of Brainerd.....	(218) 828-2307
Administration and Finance.....	(218) 828-2307
Building Division.....	(218) 828-2309
Engineering Department.....	(218) 828-2309
Fire Department.....	(218) 828-2312
Police Department non-emergency.....	(218) 829-2805
Planning Department.....	(218) 828-2309
Street Division.....	(218) 828-2309
Consumer Consulting Services.....	(218) 831-6811
Crow Wing County Historical Museum.....	(218) 829-3268
DEED - Business Development.....	(320) 684-9985
DEED - Workforce.....	(218) 828-2450
Lutheran Social Services - Employee Assistance.....	(888) 988-0098
Rural Minnesota CEP.....	(218) 828-2450

Who Fixes This?

Problem	Organization to Notify	Contact Info
Banners fell down	Parks and Rec	(218) 828-2320
Handicap parking stall mis-use	Police Department	(218) 829-2805
Street light burnt out	Brainerd Public Utilities	(218) 829-2193
Overgrown/unkempt landscaping, immobile vehicles, and other nuisances	Police Department Elizabeth Harris – Crime Prevention Specialist	(218) 825-3494
Pothole in street or alley	Brainerd Streets Department	(218) 828-2312

Parking

Brainerd Police Department's website www.brainerdspd.com has information on:

- Process for Parking Ticket Appeals
- Download the Parking Ticket Appeal Form
- Parking Ordinances

Contact the Police Department (218) 829-2805 with questions.

Parking spaces for lease

The City of Brainerd rents out parking spaces north of Front Street and in other areas within the Central Business District. For more information about how to rent a space, contact the City's Administration Department at (218) 828-2307.

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**Permits, Licenses, and Approvals
Key Responsibilities/
Programs**

Organization		Contact Info
Planning Department City of Brainerd Mark Ostgarden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent Sign Permits • Temporary Sign Permits • Conditional Use Permits • Building appearance ordinances • Allowed uses in different zoning districts 	(218) 828-2309 www.ci.brainerd.mn.us 501 Laurel Street
Administration and Finance City of Brainerd Dan Vogt and Theresa Goble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for second hand goods dealer license • Parade permit application • Application for License to sell tobacco, tobacco products or tobacco related devices • Amusement device application • Peddler, solicitor or transient merchant application license • Public dance license application 	(218) 828-2307 www.ci.brainerd.mn.us 501 Laurel Street
Police Department City of Brainerd Chief Bolduc Elizabeth Harris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking Enforcement • Nuisances • Animal Control Referral 	(218) 829-2805 www.brainerdpc.com 225 East River Road
Brainerd Public Utilities Tom Phelps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Lights • Water and Sewer 	(218) 829-8726 www.bpu.org 8027 Highland Scenic Rd PO Box 373 Brainerd, MN 56401
Building Division City of Brainerd Tim Caughey Bill Kronstadt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interior and Exterior Construction or Remodeling • Rental 	(218) 828-2309 www.ci.brainerd.mn.us 501 Laurel Street
Street Division City of Brainerd c/o City Engineer	Street Repair	(218) 828-2309 www.ci.brainerd.mn.us 501 Laurel Street
Fire Department City of Brainerd Chief Fred Underhill Inspector Keith Bachman	Fire	(218) 828-2312 www.ci.brainerd.mn.us 23 Laurel Street
Engineering Department City of Brainerd Jeff Hulsether		(218) 828-2309 www.ci.brainerd.mn.us 501 Laurel Street

Support Organizations for Business

Organization	Key Responsibilities/ Programs	Contact Information
Brainerd Lakes Area Development Corporation (BLADC)	Business recruitment, retention, expansion, and start-up assistance. Help with site location and identifying financing options. Facilitates and coordinates government resources in Crow Wing County.	Sheila Haverkamp 124 North Sixth Street Brainerd, MN 56401 (218) 828-0096 (888) 322-5232 www.bladc.org
Brainerd Lakes Chamber	The Brainerd Lakes Chamber serves its members by building a healthy and successful business community in the lakes area through active destination marketing, advocating business interests, and coordinating member-focused marketing programs and educational opportunities. The Chamber also coordinates the Brainerd Main Street program and has an active Brainerd/Baxter Business Council that meets monthly. For membership information contact Kerry Holubar at (218) 822-7121.	Lisa Paxton Administrative Office: 124 North Sixth Street PO Box 356 Brainerd, MN 56401 (218) 829-2838 (800) 450-2838 Fax: (218) 829-8199 www.explorebrainerdlakes.com
Brainerd Main Street A program of the Chamber	Through community initiatives based on design, economic restructuring, and promotion, this program works to revitalize Brainerd's Central Business District.	Emily Roragen 124 North Sixth Street Brainerd, MN 56401 Phone (218) 822-7126 eroragen@explorebrainerdlakes.com www.explorebrainerdlakes.com
City of Brainerd Planning Department	The planning department is responsible for ensuring healthy and consistent growth throughout the community. It also develops long range goals for the development of the City. This department enforces the local zoning ordinance and reviews zoning variances and conditional use permits for consideration by the Planning Commission.	Mark Ostgarden City Hall 501 Laurel Street Brainerd, MN 56401 mostgarden@ci.brainerd.mn.us (218) 828-2309 www.ci.brainerd.mn.us
Brainerd Public Utilities	Provide reliable electric, water, and wastewater services to the City of Brainerd.	Tom Phelps Brainerd Public Utilities 8027 Highland Scenic Rd PO Box 373 Brainerd, MN 56401 (218) 829-8726 www.bpu.org

Central Lakes College Business and Industry Center	Customized Training, Management Programs, and Small Business Development Center to provide consulting and training services to small business owners, managers, and employees.	Del Lecy 501 West College Drive Brainerd, MN 56401 (218) 855-8142 (800) 933-0346 Fax: (218) 855-8141 www.clcmn.edu/BUSIND
Community Investment Network	Listings of (mostly national) organizations, Web sites and blogs that provide various types of information and assistance for small business start-up, development and expansion.	www.communityinvestmentnetwo rk.org/special-sections/small- business-entrepreneurship
Lutheran Social Services	Budget Counseling, Debt Management, and Counseling that concerns Housing, Bankruptcy, Reverse Mortgage, or Credit Reports. Employee Assistance Programs, Organizational Development and Training	Financial Assistance (888) 557-2227 Employee Assistance (888) 988-0098
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)	Business Services Specialists are trained to provide information on a wide variety of topics – from workforce recruitment and retention to starting a new business in Minnesota.	Cindy Brey (218) 825-6783 Cindy.Brey@state.mn.us 204 Laurel Street, Suite 21 Brainerd, MN 56401 Phone: (218) 828-2450 Fax: (218) 828-6194 TTY: (218) 855-5030 www.deed.state.mn.us
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)	Regional Representatives can provide information about business development and site selection services , community profiles, E-commerce readiness, and other technical services of the department.	Diane Knutson (320) 684-9985 (work & fax) (866) 684-9985 Diane.Knutson@state.mn.us www.deed.state.mn.us
Rural Minnesota CEP	On-the-job training contracts, job listings, and resource room	Craig Nathan 204 Laurel Street, Suite 21 Brainerd, MN 56401 Phone: (218) 828-2450 Fax: (218) 828-6194 TTY: (218) 855-5030

Special Events

This is an approximate listing of when different local events have been held. The schedule is subject to change without notice.

How can you use these special events to promote your business?

For more events and more specific times, see the Calendar at www.explorebrainerdlakes.com.

Month	Event	Contact
March	St. Patrick's Day Parade	Community Action (218) 829-5278
	Bunny Bash	Brainerd Main Street (218) 822-7126
	Budweiser Golf Spring Open	C & L Distributing (218) 829-2978
June	Jaycees Street Fest on Seventh	Brainerd Jaycees www.brainerdjaycees.com
July	4 th of July	Community Action (218) 829-5278
	Arts in the Park	Community Action (218) 829-5278
	Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure	Brainerd Lakes Affiliate Susan G. Komen for the Cure www.brainerdlakesrace.org
	Crazee Daze	Brainerd Main Street (218) 822-7126
	Crow Wing County Fair	(218) 829-6680 www.brainerd.com/fair
August	Nationals at BIR	Brainerd International Raceway, Inc. (218) 824-7220
September	Community Homecoming	Brainerd Community Education (218) 454-6927
December	"Old Fashioned" Holiday Celebration	Brainerd Main Street (218) 822-7126
	Brunch with Santa	Community Action (218) 829-5278
	Sertoma Winter Wonderland	Brainerd Sertoma Club www.sertoma.brainerd.com

Ideas for Growing Your Business

- Think of reasons for customers to sign onto your mailing list: information, coupons, customer sales, etc...
- Share customer databases and do a joint mailer with other businesses
- Extend your hours
- Inquire and request from suppliers information, giveaways, monies for promotion
- Create your own in-store events, including giveaways
- Send a thank you with an incentive for the customer to return within a specific time frame
- Deliver customer purchases, do cross selling in your business
- Offer special services as added value to your customers

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- Barter your services and expertise with other local businesses
- Do demonstrations that may lead to more business or new customers
- Involve parents and children in activities during the summer months.
- Do curb service and extra special service for customers
- Help make sure customers have space to park in front of your business by parking your own car in an off-street parking space. Provide off-street parking for employees and renters, too. Contact the City Engineer's office at (218) 828-2309 for more information about renting parking spaces.
- Review the support organizations for business listing on pages 3 & 4.
- Contact the Business and Industry Center at (218) 855-8145 for more ideas.

Your Business on the Map - GPS Devices and the Internet

GPS devices show locations of roads, lakes, businesses, and more. They are now in cars and cell phones. Many visitors use them to find things to do and places to go while traveling.

Google and other search engines are the phonebooks of today (and tomorrow) for many, so make sure your business is there to be found.

Here's how to put your business information on these maps and to double check that it's located accurately on the map:

Navteq – GPS Devices

- See if your business is listed with Navteq and is in the correct location. You can do this by going to www.mapquest.com; Mapquest uses Navteq for their website.
- <http://mapreporter.navteq.com> is where you can make any necessary changes to your business location. Follow the directions on the website.

Tele Atlas – GPS Devices

- <http://mapinsight.teleatlas.com/> - go here to add/edit your business listing. Remember during Step 2 to add your business as a point of interest. Under comments you may give a review.

Google – Search Engine

- See what's shown when people search for your business or business type in Brainerd: <http://maps.google.com>
- Go here to add/edit your business listing: www.google.com/local/add/businessCenter
- Allowed a 200 letter description, but beware: it counts spaces.

Yahoo – Search Engine

- See if your business is listed correctly by going to <http://www.yahoo.com/> and searching for your business or business type.
- Go here to add/edit your business listing: <http://listings.local.yahoo.com/csubmit/index.php>

Windows Live – Search Engine

- See if your business is listed correctly by going to www.live.com
- Go here to add/edit your business listing: <http://webapp.localeze.com/bizreg/add.aspx>
- Allow 30-60 days for the change to be posted. Remember to check back at www.live.com to make sure the changes were made correctly.

Sociallight

- <http://sociallight.com/> - A very creative way of getting your business on the map. Not sure how many people see it...
- Look at what other people are writing before making your own entry - you'll have to create a Sociallight account to make an entry. Think outside the box with this one and invite people.

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Press Releases

Press releases can be an effective way to get free advertising for your business. See the example and idea list below. The information below will give you some ideas for press releases.

- Are you or your associates the first, the youngest, the oldest, or the only ones to be in the type of business you're in?
- Who are your employees? Old school friends, family members, senior citizens, the disabled or multi-lingual?
- Is your company, or an employee, celebrating an anniversary?
- Did you recently receive an award for your work?
- Are you doing something that relates to the current national or local headline?
- Is your business planning to do something for an upcoming holiday?
- Have you had an unusual experience on a business trip that others can learn from?
- Have you or your business been involved in any behind the scenes activities at local events or openings?
- On a persona note, do you have an unusual collection, car, pet, or hobby for someone in your business?
- Is yours a rags to riches story?
- Have you found a better way to serve the community?
- Are you involved with any large national associations for your industry?

Example

For immediate release

For more information, contact
Emily Roragen
Brainerd Lakes Chamber
(218) 822-7126
eroragen@explorebrainerdlakes.com

Inaugural Easter Bunny Bash to take place Saturday, March 22

Bounce into Historic Downtown Brainerd for the first ever Easter Bunny Bash, Saturday, March 22 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Bring the family and have your picture taken with the Easter Bunny at Woody's Photography in Downtown Brainerd. Live bunnies will also be displayed by local 4-H members and will be available for purchase. This inaugural event is sponsored by J & M Printing, Inc.

And if you want to continue your Easter spirit, an Easter Egg Hunt will be held at Lum Park at 10 a.m. Kids can also attend their very own Easter Party at the Brainerd Moose Lodge from 12:30 to 3 p.m.

The Brainerd Lakes Chamber represents more than 1,200 businesses and operates offices in Brainerd, Crosslake, Pequot Lakes, and the Welcome Center on Hwy 371 South. The Chamber is the organization that connects businesses and leads the drive for responsible and profitable growth in the Brainerd Lakes region. For more information about becoming a member, contact Kerry Holubar at (218) 822-7121.

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Now that you have some ideas, don't hesitate to send a press release to newspapers, radio, television, the Main Street Coordinator, and other media.

Where can I Find...?

Visitors to the area often go into businesses to find restrooms, ATMs, and other services. To help these visitors have a comfortable experience in our area, here are a few answers to those common questions.

Where can I find...

Information about activities in the area?	Welcome Center south of town
ATMs	Bremer Bank Brainerd Savings and Loan US Bank Oak and S6 th St. in the parking lot
Internet – WiFi Centers	Coco Moon Boardwalk Bread 'n Bagles Citadel Games Eclectic Cafe

Other Resources for Business

Information, tips, and a weekly newsletter focused on small retail businesses
www.ricksegel.com

American Independent Business Alliance: www.amiba.net

Electronic Commerce – University of Minnesota Extension Office: www.access-ecom.info

Helpful Tips

Be open during business hours – Customers finding business closed during posted hours can leave a bad taste in their mouths and may affect future shopping habits

Think about who your customer is and who you want to be your customer. When does that person do their shopping? Is your business open then?

Have a customer service evaluation done to ensure your continued growth and profitability. It's never too busy or too slow to review services being offered. Do you know how your customers are being treated when you're away from the business? Receive tips for improvements.

How to Thrive During Road Construction*

Keeping Customers Informed

Drivers who are well informed about road construction tend to be “happy campers,” inconvenience notwithstanding. They understand why the improvement is desirable. They know about construction before they leave home, rather than being surprised by the sudden appearance of barricades, orange barrels, and Road Closed signs. They’ve been told about roads that are closed or restricted; they follow and sense the construction progress being made; and they’ve given some thought to other ways around construction either by studying the map or checking out possible alternate routes on their own rather than fuming in frustration as their vehicles sit in a long line of stop-and-go traffic.

How businesses can keep the customers coming:

Use simple maps to tell your customers about the best alternate routes to reach your business. Post them on your doors and bulletin boards, insert them into billings and other mailings and distribute them to your customers. Be especially mindful of customers who come a long distance and may be unfamiliar with local streets and roads.

Let the public know that you’re open for business. Develop ads for newspaper, radio, or television. Pool your resources for group advertising. Advertising cooperatively can be very cost-effective. Brainstorm for innovative ideas to promote your business.

- Plan ahead as much as possible; get involved early. A year is not too far ahead to begin organizing and planning.
- Form an alliance with other businesses in your locale.
- Attend public meetings to stay informed. Have knowledge of the project. Contact the Main Street Coordinator at 822-7126 to voice your concerns.
- Hold frequent and regular meetings with other businesses for support and strategies. Write down your fears and questions for discussion.
- Pool resources to purchase group advertising.
- Hold a pre-construction meeting with the project manager and contractor to find out how long the project will take, what to expect, i.e. dirt, mud, ground shaking, etc.
- Meet the on-site project manager. Keep his/her telephone number in a handy place.
- Establish a line of communication with the project manager. Project managers coordinate with the contractor.
- **Brainstorm for innovative ideas to promote your business and to communicate with customers:**
- Hold events prior to construction start-up to draw attention to the area.
- Plan groundbreaking activities.
- Design a logo for use by all affected merchants during the construction period.
- Hold special promotions such as free hot dogs and pop, or a one-day sign-up in parking lot for a free vacation.
- Print placemat advertisements.
- Place advertisements in outlying newspapers.
- Plan hard-hat promotions—some for sale, some as giveaways.
- Sell hard-hat lunches to go.
- Schedule a grand finale—plan ribbon cutting ceremonies; plan street dance, t-shirts, prizes.

*From MN/DoT's "How to Thrive During Road Construction," for full text go to http://www.dot.state.mn.us/d3/graphics2/businesswkb_road.pdf

BRAINERD MAIN STREET PROGRAM AREA

