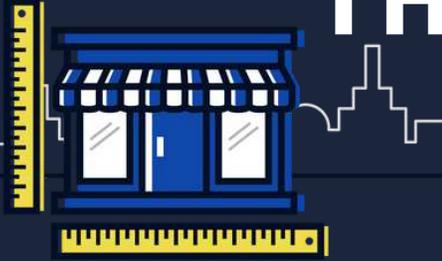


# THE BUSINESS LEAD



SPRING 2023

## OPEN FOR BUSINESS

### SMALL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTAL COST SAVINGS PROGRAMS

Protecting the community in which we live, play, and do business in should be everyone's priority. How can small businesses contribute? The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) can assist businesses in various ways to ensure that every Minnesotan has healthy air, sustainable lands, clean water, and a better climate.

MPCA can help businesses by defining ways to reduce emissions and wastes, and also assist in implementing cost-saving environmental projects in all areas of business to increase sustainability and resilience.

If you are thinking of expanding or building, the MPCA can offer guidance through an environmental review of planned projects and what environmental impacts could possibly be generated. By offering suggestions to modify projects to avoid problems, the MPCA can establish permit conditions that will protect our environment.

In addition, the MPCA provides environmental audit checklists that can be used for you to evaluate your current processes covering a number of areas, such as water, air, solid waste, hazardous waste, and tanks. To learn more about what the MPCA has to offer small businesses, scroll down to page 2.

BY MICHELLE ELLINGSON  
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To subscribe to the Business Lead Newsletter, contact City Hall at [cityhall@caledoniamn.gov](mailto:cityhall@caledoniamn.gov) or call 507-725-3450

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	P. 2
The Importance of Preserving Historic Buildings Business Spotlight	P. 3
What is a Pop-Up Retail Business?	P.4
Upcoming Events Business Development	P. 5

## GOING BEYOND COMPLIANCE-DOING MORE TO BENEFIT YOUR BUSINESS

Businesses and industries are expected to do their part to protect the environment and being compliant may not be enough. Going beyond normal regulations can be a smart decision and have many benefits including the following:

- Reduced regulatory fees
- Health and environmental benefits
- Increased efficiency
- Employee satisfaction, retention, and attraction
- Business resiliency
- Green marketing potential



Where do small businesses start? Below is a list of programs that can assist with pollution prevention:

- **Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program (RETAP)** provides no cost, non-regulatory energy efficiency and waste reduction assessments for small businesses in Minnesota.
- **Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP)** a University of Minnesota outreach program, helps Minnesota businesses prevent pollution, use resources efficiently, and reduce energy use and costs.
- **Minnesota Waste Wise** offers consulting on waste reduction, recycling, and organics management for Minnesota businesses.



### Grants and Loans-Small Business Environmental Improvement Loans

The MPCA provides loans at zero-percent interest to small businesses for capital equipment purchases that help the company meet or exceed environmental regulations, and costs associated with the investigation and cleanup of contaminated sites. Common benefits include a healthier workplace, lower waste disposal bills, and reduced regulatory obligations. Projects that go beyond compliance may result in simpler permits and cost savings, and are highly encouraged.

To qualify a borrower must be an existing small business corporation, sole proprietor, partnership, or association with the following:

- Less than 100 full-time employees
- An after-tax profit of less than \$500,000
- A demonstrated ability to repay the loan

Loan terms and conditions:

- Loan amount between \$1,000 to \$75,000.
- Interest rate: Zero percent (0%)
- Repayment term up to seven years
- Flexibility in types of collateral accepted
- Awarded through the year



Contact the Small Business team to learn about the benefits of going beyond compliance: 651-282-6143 or [smallbizhelp.pca@state.mn.us](mailto:smallbizhelp.pca@state.mn.us).

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING AND PROMOTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

An important part of what gives a city character and a sense of community is its history. One way of acknowledging this history is by preserving historic buildings and structures.

Older buildings, especially those built prior to World War II are often made of higher quality materials. Replacing these buildings with similar rare hardwoods such as heart pine would be impractical and unaffordable. Newer buildings also tend to have a life expectancy of only 30-40 years, whereas many older buildings were made to last. It can make economic sense to retain historic buildings and improve them to meet modern codes and requirements.

Rehabilitating old buildings to their original appearance not only adds character to the area, but can also help attract investment, as well as tourists if the structures are historically significant. For example, a historic but abandoned industrial building can be turned into small business space, or a mixed-use development - giving new life to a building and even a whole neighborhood.

Older buildings often are made with unique, valuable materials such as the heart pine, marble, or old brick. They may have detailing and features that you can't find anymore like decorative facades, unusual glasswork, or copper lining. An added benefit to retaining and maintaining old buildings is that old methods of workmanship are also supported.

Historical buildings are vital to the upkeep of the cultural significance of our country. It is, therefore, essential that we continue to devote time, money and resources to the restoration and renovation of these heritage buildings and structures to ensure we can keep enjoying and learning from these buildings for many more years to come.

source: [buildingtalk.com](http://buildingtalk.com)



### USING THE CORRECT MORTAR FOR HISTORIC BUILDING RESTORATIONS:

Since the late 1800s through early 1900s the mortar used in historic buildings contained a higher percentage of lime. This mortar is much softer than the portland cement used in the modern buildings of today. The higher lime content mortar worked well with the soft bricks of the earlier time. Modern bricks are harder because kilns used for firing bricks burn much hotter. So, using a mortar with a higher percentage of portland cement works well with new brick. However, it causes problems when used with the older, softer brick.

The rule to follow on historic brick is "The masonry unit must be harder than the mortar that holds it in place." (1) If the mortar is too hard the soft bricks can be destroyed because the mortar can cause the faces of the brick to crack and fall off and turn into powder, a condition which is known as "spalling." The soft brick has to be allowed to expand and contract with seasonal changes. When the mortar is too hard it will not allow the expansion/contraction process to occur within the mortar. Hence the damage to the brick. This same rule also applies to stonework.

Conditions inside the building may also become a problem. The natural breathability of historic mortar allows moisture to escape through the mortar. If moisture is not able to escape it will be trapped inside the building and build up during winter months. If the inside walls are covered this may lead to mold growth.

For more information:

\*Department of the Interior National Park Service - repointing mortar joints on historic buildings

\*Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office

\*(1) The Craftsman Blog by Scott Sidler

Submitted by HCHS



### BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

The Historic Caledonia Inn located at 135 E. Main Street is not an unfamiliar business in Caledonia. Built in 1905, the hotel still reflects its splendor and charm through its elegant features.

Purchased, owned, and operated by David and Betsy Pieper in 2006, the hotel features 4 beautifully restored guest rooms and 5 new guest rooms all with their own private bath.

Betsy's attention to detail and historic interests, allows her to tastefully blend modern touches with antique furnishings and displays creating a nostalgic atmosphere and providing a comfortable stay for the inn's guests.

In addition to the guest rooms, the inn includes a space for hosting various small events. The Historic Inn is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

## WHAT IS A POP-UP RETAIL BUSINESS?

A pop-up retail shop is the term given to a shop or store that is deliberately temporary. It's a store that "pops-up" for a limited period of time to achieve a particular goal. Overall, pop-up retail is becoming more and more common, challenging the traditional brick-and-mortar retail of long leases.

Pop-up retail shops are great tools for small brands just starting out. Perhaps a young entrepreneur has been going to small markets or fairs and are considering the next step. Running a pop-up in a busy area for a week or two a couple of times a year will help them understand whether there is a market for their brand.

### What are the benefits of a pop-up retail shop?

Pop-up retail is hugely beneficial for customers, retailers and landlords alike. Often situated in places with high foot traffic, pop-up retail shops are a valid way to increase sales, but benefits also include more diverse and fluctuating retail stores with a wider variety and opportunities to explore new brands and products. In addition, pop-up retail shops are more likely to offer discounts, giveaways and event specific concessions that traditional retail establishments may not offer.

#### Pop-ups can be:

- Booths and stands at festivals.
- Short-term stores for the holiday season (Christmas or Fourth of July items).
- Displays of items for sale inside another business.
- Specific seasonal displays (Sno-cone stand during the summer months).

#### In a small town, you might open a pop-up business for many reasons.

- The local customer base is limited, so the business is only needed during seasonal influx or only for a short time to sell to the local base before reaching saturation.
- Usable business space is limited, so creative forms are required.
- Existing buildings may require extensive rehab or remodeling, so testing an idea before investing large amounts is needed.
- Business financing may be more limited, so a smaller business may be all you could afford to finance yourself.
- The workforce is limited and may be seasonal, requiring the business to exist only while workers are available.
- Business intelligence on the potential market may be scarce, so running a temporary test will be the easiest way to find out what is feasible.

source: [thestorefront.com](http://thestorefront.com) and [smallbizsurvival.com](http://smallbizsurvival.com)



Historic Caledonia Inn 2023

#### Old Buildings Renewed



The Williams Hotel 1905

The Historic Caledonia Inn is a cornerstone of Caledonia's historic downtown. The original building located 135 E. Main was the Barnes House, a wood-frame boarding house built in 1854. The Williams family then purchased the Barnes House in 1874, and in 1905, they built the brick structure that you see today.

The Williams Hotel was a first class hotel. It had electric lights, running water, and a restaurant, but no "hard drinks." Rooms were \$1.50, and the best in town. The train brought many guests through Caledonia, including the Ringling Brothers, who stayed at the hotel, and Ulysses S. Grant, who ate a meal at the hotel's restaurant. The building has passed through many Caledonia families during its lifetime, and is now again being operated as an inn, fully restored for a step back in time thanks to David and Betsy Pieper.

source: Houston County Historical Society

## Upcoming Events

**Bluff Country Collaborative (BBC) 2023 Career & Job Fair March 8. La Crescent Event Center 9:00am-3:00pm.**

**City Wide Garage Sale May 18, 19, 20th Watch for details!**

**Music in the Park June 27, July 11, July 18, July 25 Gazebo Park 6:00pm-7:30pm Save the dates! Performers will be announced soon.**

**Caledonia Founders Day Celebration June 15th-June 17th. Watch for an event schedule.**

**National Wild Turkey Federation Ceremony July 22nd Celebration to recognize Caledonia as the Wild Turkey Capital of Minnesota! Details will be posted soon!**

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Tamiko's Salon opened at their new location at 111 E. Grove Street in January. Once known as The Ranch, the newly renovated building gives the salon a clean and modern feel inside while still maintaining its historic characteristics on the exterior. Owner Tamiko Hubka-Steele in partnership with Lee and Elsie Babler created the new space and the business offers several beauty services.



Lee and Elsie Babler's new business, The Crooked Quarter opened its doors recently and invited vintage marketers and antique dealers to display and sell their merchandise. The new business is located at 113 E. Grove Street, a former blacksmith shop that has been completely renovated. Both projects were recipients of funding through the Caledonia Intermediary Relending Loan Program.

Bluff Country Collaborative (BCC) partnered with Houston County Seat-Caledonia on a student tour of government and public service career fields on December 14, 2022. Areas included emergency services, law enforcement, criminal justice and legal system, social work and human services, and soil and water conservation. Presenters provided information pertaining to educational requirements, roles and responsibilities, duties performed, and the career path for the particular fields visited. Participants included students from Mabel-Canton, Spring Grove, and Caledonia schools. The event offered opportunities for students to explore a variety of interests in preparation for future career plans.

