

Itasca Project Joins Forces with GREATER MSP

ST. PAUL, MINN. (July 26, 2022) – Today, the Itasca Project and the GREATER MSP Partnership announced a formal integration that officially acknowledges the increasing collaboration between the two groups.

The Itasca Project, a volunteer-driven group of leaders from business and other sectors, was founded by business leaders in 2004 to address long-term challenges that impact prosperity for all employers and residents of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region.

GREATER MSP is the region's economic development partnership comprised of over 300 businesses, universities, cities, counties and philanthropic organizations working together to grow the economy and create inclusive economic opportunity.

After several months of discussion, a joint task force recommended the integration. As part of the GREATER MSP Partnership, the Itasca Project will be able to scale and accelerate its work to develop civic leaders and address long-term issues affecting the region's economic competitiveness and quality of life. The Itasca Project brand will continue and its work will grow as a result of new connections to more leaders and organizations as well as the operational support available within GREATER MSP.

Itasca produced many original studies over the years with recommendations that rallied leaders to act on issues such as early childhood development, transportation, affordable housing and economic development. In fact, Itasca research on job growth during the 2008 Great Recession led to the founding of GREATER MSP.

Since 2011, public and private sector partners have worked together through GREATER MSP to create jobs, market the region, build the region's talent base and promote the local startup ecosystem.

Recent GREATER MSP/Itasca collaborations include the Regional Economic Indicators Dashboard, which tracks progress on economic growth against peer regions; Business Bridge, a local supplier-diversity accelerator; and ConnexMSP, which ensures that young professionals of color in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region are recruited, hired, and supported by local employers as they launch their careers.

"Both Itasca and GREATER MSP share an ethos of civic engagement to solve big challenges," said Itasca Project chair Lynn Casey. "As we began to collaborate more frequently, we started to

think about whether joining forces could increase the impact of each entity and serve the entire community better.”

“The work Itasca does to support our regional economy complements the existing capabilities of GREATER MSP and is completely aligned with the mission of our partnership, which is to accelerate regional competitiveness and inclusive economic growth,” said GREATER MSP president and CEO Peter Frosch. “Coming together makes GREATER MSP stronger and will accelerate Itasca’s impact.”

The joint task force that recommended joining forces included leaders active in both groups. John Naylor, president and CEO of Medica, was one of them. “I am honored and proud to serve as a leader at both GREATER MSP and Itasca,” he said. “I believe the time is now for two successful entities focused on regional economic health and competitiveness to come together and leverage their unique strengths for the greater good of our community and the lives of our neighbors.”

About the Itasca Project

The Itasca Project is an employer-led alliance drawn together by an interest in new and better ways to address regional issues that impact the future economic competitiveness and quality of life in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region. Its 70-plus participants are primarily private-sector CEOs, public-sector leaders and the leaders of major foundations based in the region. To learn more, visit itascaproject.org.

About the GREATER MSP Partnership

GREATER MSP is the economic development partnership for the 15-county Minneapolis Saint Paul region. Over 300 leading businesses, universities, cities, counties, philanthropies, and others are working together to accelerate the competitiveness of the regional economy and drive inclusive economic growth by creating jobs, expanding our labor force, and increasing investment. For more information go to greatermsp.org.

Media Contact

Don Ball

don.ball@greatermsp.org

612-810-3153