

MetroNorth

Chamber of Commerce

Mission Statement: The MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce advocates and promotes business in the northern metropolitan trade area, strengthening our community.

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Chamber@metronorthchamber.org
www.metronorthchamber.org
Tom Snell, Executive Director
Rita Moser, Administrative Assistant
Lori Higgins, Manager of Administration

Grants and loans available to assist small businesses

Financial assistance is available to help small businesses see their way through the current economic downturn and be poised for recovery, thanks to grant money from the Pohlad Family Foundation administered through the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and its Grow Minnesota! Program, of which MetroNorth Chamber is a member.

The foundation has pledged \$5 million to assist small businesses. The grants and low-interest loans will be distributed in partnership with Grow Minnesota!, the Minnesota Chamber's private-sector initiative aimed at retaining and creating jobs. Grow Minnesota! has a primary focus to retain Minnesota businesses and to encourage them to expand in the state. It also is an opportunity to thank companies for doing business in Minnesota. Visits are carried out by staff and volunteers from the MetroNorth Chamber.

Small businesses will have access to grants up to \$50,000 to retain their employees while planning for and adjusting to their futures. Access to short-term, low-interest working capital and capital improvement loans up to \$50,000 also will be available to help continue operations and finance improvements consistent with a company's growth plans. Eligible small businesses must be privately held, have fewer than 50 employees and generate annual sales of \$10 million or less. The money will be administered through the Minnesota Chamber Foundation/Grow Minnesota!.

Local businesses must apply through the MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce, who can recommend four applications for funding. The application can be viewed via a link on the MetroNorth Chamber's website, www.metronorthchamber.org. A committee of small business owners will assist the Minnesota Chamber in deciding whether to award the money.

"We appreciate the generosity of the Pohlad family," said Tom Snell. "We take our role seriously. We want

to ensure this money not only preserves jobs, but also helps our local businesses get ready to grow."

Businesses seeking additional information on the grants should contact Snell ASAP at (763) 783-3553 or tom@metronorthchamber.org.

Promote, promote, promote.

During tough economic times, more than ever it is important to promote, promote and promote some more. Keeping your name continually in the public eye is the most important marketing tool that you have. If you don't, people may forget about you and will sail right on by your business, both in bad weather and in good.

Lucky for you, your chamber membership entitles you to inexpensive yet extensive marketing. It gives you exposure to unlimited networking opportunities through the multitude of events organized by the Chamber. Whether it is the Sunrise group, a membership luncheon, a speaker or a social outing, these are the times to meet, greet, and self-promote. Our members are a loyal group and many of them will only do business with other chamber members. In fact, our Sunrise group once determined that they gave each other roughly 1 million dollars worth of business in a recent year. It is up to you, however, to find a way to remind them that you are a chamber member wanting their business.

Chamber membership also provides you with unlimited resources to advertise your business. Advertise on our website or our weekly e-newsletter. Sponsor an event. Join a committee. Add promotional items to the new member baskets. Give referrals. Hold an educational seminar in the office. Be creative. Ask how we can help.

The adage "people do business with people who they know, who they like and who they trust" remains as true today as it was twenty years ago.

We urge you to use the Chamber to your full advantage.

2009 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Leonard Gandel, VICE CHAIR

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Jim Kugler, TREASURER

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JoAnn Evans, PAST CHAIR

PC Solutions, 763-221-7700

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Heidi Heroff

SPIRE, 651-641-2116

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Sue Ann Olson

Walters Recycling & Refuse, 763-438-6359

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Bob Schlichte

Grand Casino Mille Lacs & Hinckley, 763-488-1899

Mike Thorsland

Nationwide Insurance, 763-780-1133

Mary Tjosvold

Mary T., Inc., 763-754-2505

Lisa Tollakson

ADP, 763-234-8736

Committee Chairs:**Ambassador:**

Deb Barbeln, Independent Beauty Consultant

Gala: Heidi Heroff, SPIRE

Golf: Tom Newland, Allegra Printing, and Leonard Gandel

Government Affairs: Mike Kraft, HTG Architects

BEL Bill Gschwind, Inpursuit Consulting

Young Professionals Mike Schardin, Betmar Languages

Marketing: Randy Korus, Cyberex

Membership: Mike Thorsland, Nationwide Insurance

Sunrise: Dean Hancy, PC Bits, and Dean Prince, Tidbits

Wine Tasting: Jim Kugler, Kugler Financial Services, and Tom Newland, Allegra Printing

If you are interested in joining a committee or learning more, contact the Chamber. We'd love to hear from you!

Event Recap: Look what went on!

The day after St. Patrick's Day was a busy one. March 18th was the Business Day at the Capitol event where several members spoke with legislators about issues important to our area businesses. That evening was our annual Talent Show, organized by our Ambassador Committee in order to raise funds for the new member welcome baskets. A lot of impressive talent was heard, with the winner being Keith Hajny of Doc's Bohemian Cue for his amazing harmonica performance.

It was a full house at the Mermaid a week later, where over 160 business and community leaders heard Governor Pawlenty talk about the economy and other issues vital to Minnesota businesses. Several of our members had the opportunity to ask the Governor questions pertinent to their industry, to which he gave in-depth responses to all.



The next morning, Jill Ide, attorney with Weikel Law Firm LLC, was the guest speaker at the Lino Lakes Sunrise breakfast the next morning and gave important information on estate planning.

Our Government Affairs Committee kept very busy in April. They started off the month on April 1st by meeting with 5 local legislators at 7 am at Legal Grounds in Anoka prior to their committee meeting. The next day, members of the Transportation Subcommittee kicked off a series of meetings with Anoka County officials to talk about the Chamber's transportation priorities and how we can work together to achieve those objectives. More information on these meetings will be shared in the near future.

It was a very Good Friday on April 10 when BEL provided an excellent speaker, Dr. Richard Brynteson, for its monthly continuing education seminar. Richard spoke on the need to innovate one's business during these uncertain economic times. He stressed the importance of finding ways to make one's products and/or services stand out from the crowd.

MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION PARTY

We couldn't have done it without you! The night of April 21 was a fun-filled evening with fellow friends at Brookhall. Well over a hundred chamber members enjoyed great food and great conversation. Blue coolers, sponsored by SPIRE Credit Union, were stuffed to the brim with promotional items and were very well received by everyone. Heidi Heroff of SPIRE commented that "the response to the coolers was fabulous. Everyone really enjoyed receiving them, and SPIRE was very pleased to have sponsored these for the Chamber and all of their great members."

Mike Thorsland of Nationwide, won the prize drawing for a hotel stay and food coupons, donated by Grand Casino Mille Lacs Hinckley. Timothy's Fine Jewelry spiced up the night by donating a gorgeous perfume bottle to the drawing...the very lucky winner was Clara Johnson from The Daily Shake.

The Chamber would like to thank the following businesses for making the

evening so successful: ADP, EcoQuest International, Epiphany Senior Housing, Kugler Financial, Oakwood Insurance, Mary T., Inc., MN School of Business, Minnesota Renaissance School, Office Depot, Specific Family Chiropractic, LLC, SPIRE, TDS Metrocom, The Greenery Schack Landscaping, Timothy's Fine Jewelry, K-Fult Productions, Bakers Square - Blaine, Broadway Bar & Pizza, Brookhall, Figaro's Pizza, Outback Steakhouse, Totino's Italian Kitchen, The Daily Shake, & Two Stooges Sports Bar & Grill. Also thanks to the committee: Joann Evans, Christina Akinola, Heidi Heroff, Sue Ann Olson, Katy Ruger, Dave Debuhr, and Rita Moser.



Upcoming Educational Seminars

We are pleased to announce the following free educational seminars:

Waddell & Reed is holding **Financial Wellness Program** informational seminars on May 21 and June 4 from 11:30-1 pm at the Chamber office. The Program helps employee-centric companies help their largest asset become more aware and educated about their fiscal fitness while providing them a chance to change their behavior and make better financial choices. This helps them plan to live well instead of just hoping to live well. If you would like to reserve two seats for your company at the information session please RSVP as lunch will be included. Contact Melissa Holland at (651) 483-1411 or mholland@wradvisors.com.

Brad Welton of **Align HC** will hold a seminar on Wed. May 27 from 8-9 am at the Chamber office. Is your business interested in getting the right people in the right seats on the bus? Learn how to build and optimize an engaged, high-performance workforce, make more informed people decisions and increase your bottom line. For more information or to RSVP contact bradw@align-hc.com.

Background Screening: Hiring Decisions and Compliance Considerations. As an employer, it's extremely important to select the right people for your organization. With increased concern about workplace violence and negligent hiring liability, more and more organizations are performing background checks on applicants before hiring them. If you use background screening results as a part of your selection process, you need to use the reports in a compliant manner or risk possible litigation. In addition, there are federal and state laws that regulate the use of arrest, conviction and misdemeanor information for employment purposes. How can you comply with these laws to ensure applicants are given a fair employment opportunity? You are invited to a free webinar on Tuesday, May 19th at 9 a.m. hosted by ADP Screening and Selection Services on the topic of background screening. To register go to: www.informativewebinars.com/mnsasswebinar.html You will be emailed the link to the webinar the morning of the event.

Politics & Business: Why we're Involved

Meetings with city, county and state officials. A committee dedicated to government affairs. Positions on local legislation. Resolutions by the Board. As you may already know, the Chamber is extremely active in all things politics. Why, though, you may ask? Andy why is politics so important to business owners, anyways? We at the Chamber cannot stress enough the impact that legislative decisions have on businesses. From everything from taxes to transportation, businesses are affected on a daily basis.

Luckily for you, you are a direct beneficiary of the Chamber's many accomplishments in the political arena. Some of these achievements are:

The MetroNorth Chamber led the statewide effort that allowed micro family owned businesses to purchase small group coverage.

MetroNorth saved business owners in Anoka County over \$6 million by pushing legislation that allowed alternative funding for superfund landfill cleanup.

Annually we sponsor and showcase the largest Chamber legislative reception in the metropolitan area, allowing our members' access to key decision makers.

On several occasions we have persuaded Anoka County communities to forgo taxes on gas & electric utilities, and impervious surface taxes.

We successfully advocated for major improvements in the Anoka County Airport; including improved runway features, instrument landing and a new fixed base operation.

Committee meetings that bring together the business and legislative leadership from our community.

If you are interested in becoming more involved with the Chamber's advocacy efforts, contact Tom Snell at tom@metronorthchamber.org.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

May 28th Upswing Event

Started in 1997, the UpSwing Business Expo is the most popular business business-to-business networking event focusing on small businesses in the Twin Cities. With an average attendance of 500 at each event, the UpSwing is held 5 times per year throughout the Twin Cities. A business card gets you in to attend the event; once inside we have complementary hors d'oeuvres & cash bars in a fun, upbeat environment.

87% of our exhibitors tell us they will be back to participate within the next 12 months and 83% are back at the next event! The cost to exhibit ranges from \$215-\$345. Our next event is on **Thursday, May 28th at the Metropolitan Ballroom in Golden Valley from 5PM to 7:30PM.** For more information on exhibiting contact Stacy Jackson at 952-400-0198 ext 203 or sjackson@sharpupswing.com.

Make profits have fun!

**Entrepreneur Extraordinaire Mike Veeck,
Owner of Saint Paul Saints.**

Midgets, nuns who give back rubs, and Demolition Disco are all part of the marketing wizardry propagated by Mike Veeck, the owner of the most profitable minor league baseball team in the United States.

As part of the Coon Rapids 50th Year Celebration the MetroNorth Chamber, in cooperation with CTN Studios, is having Mike Veeck address members of our business community at a lunch event on Thursday, June 4.

All Chamber members are encouraged to attend this event at the Seasons Country Club in Coon Rapids, located in Bunker Hills Regional Park Golf Course off of Foley Blvd and Hwy 242. Help us celebrate the 50th anniversary of Coon Rapids while you unlock new strategies to promote your business.

Cost to attend is



Mike Veeck

\$20 for Chamber members and \$25 non-members. Registration and social hour begins at 11:00 A.M. followed by lunch and address from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Please RSVP rita@metronorthchamber.org or (763) 783-3553.

Celebrate with Coon Rapids and the Saints

On Wednesday June 10th the Saint Paul Saints baseball team will celebrate the City of Coon Rapids 50th Anniversary. The Saints are offering a special discounted package for the game to Chamber members with a portion of the package proceeds to benefit the Coon Rapids 50th Anniversary celebration. Expect in-game promotions honoring the Coon Rapids milestone. More information and offer details can be found on the Chamber website.



Outdoor Wine Tasting at Acapulco

We might not be in Mexico, but sitting outside of Acapulco's on a June evening tasting superb wines promises to be even better. The Grapevine Wine Networking Club is pleased to announce its upcoming Wine Tasting on Tuesday, June 16 at 5:13 pm with the tasting starting at 5:43 pm. We will taste wines with a VIP from Acapulco's supplier paired with some of Acapulco's cuisine, network with Chamber members, and have another great time at the Coon Rapids Acapulco Restaurante, 12759 Riverdale Blvd. Cost is \$29 in advance; RSVP to rita@metronorthchamber.org or (763) 783-3553.



Ribbon Cutting



Eagle Liquor and Tobacco:

Eagle Liquor & Tobacco is a full-service liquor store offering a great price and selection of beers, wines, and hard liquors as well as low prices on cigarettes and tobacco products. They are located at 730 Apollo Drive across from Super Target™ and Kohl's™ in Lino Lakes. For friendly service, top-quality liquor and tobacco products and very competitive prices, visit Eagle Liquor & Tobacco!



Ambassadors Present: **Pam Becker**, Reflection Promotional Products; **Kari Hefnider**, American Family Insurance-Jeff Baker Agency; **Deb Barbeln**, Independent Beauty Consultant; **Gail Fackler**, GFA Interiors; **Harvey Karth**, Flightline. Cutting the ribbon are owners **Suhdan** and **Christina Manandhar**.

Twice Nice Thrift Store

Twice Nice Thrift Store, operated by the nonprofit Anoka County Community Action Program, has expanded in Blaine, at 11716 Jefferson St., NE (about 2 miles west of Hwy 65 and 117th). There is now almost 5,000 square feet of deals—quality, low-cost, previously used clothing, dishes, household items, toys, linens, books, and more. More information is available at www.accap.org.



Ambassadors Present: **Kari Hefnider**, American Family Insurance-Jeff Baker Agency; **Deb Barbeln**, Independent Beauty Consultant; **Diane Nichols**, Courtyards of Andover; **Dean Prince**, Tidbits; **Jim Huff**, Achieve Services. Cutting the ribbon are ACCAP Executive Director **Pat McFarland**, ACCAP Board Chair **Jon Erickson** and Blaine Mayor **Tom Ryan**.

For the second month in a row, the AmbASSador of the month is **Pam Becker**, Reflection Promotional Products. Congratulations, Pam, and thank you for your many efforts as a MetroNorth Ambassador!

American Family Insurance – Jeff Baker Agency

At the Jeff Baker Agency we do insurance with a focus on service. We have been awarded for “Outstanding Customer Service” 4 years in a row by J.D. Power & Associates.

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Ambassadors Present: **Pam Becker**, Reflection Promotional Products; **Kari Hefnider**, American Family Insurance-Jeff Baker Agency; **Deb Barbeln**, Independent Beauty Consultant; Bill Gavin, AmRes Mortgage; **Mike Schardin**, betmar languages; **Diane Nichols**, Courtyards of Andover; **Sherrie Hatton**, SeaMaster Cruises. Cutting the ribbon is owner **Jeff Baker**.

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March New Members and Renewals

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MARCH 2009 – Renewals

1. 21st Century Bank
2. ActionCOACH Metro North
3. Anoka County Commissioner – West
4. Anoka County Community Action
5. Anoka Technical College
6. Best Siding Company
7. Blaine International Village
8. Blaine Medical Center
9. Brookhall
10. Central Bank
11. Central Cleaning Home & Office
12. City of Blaine
13. Coldwell Banker Burnet
14. Community Pride Bank
15. Connexus Energy
16. COR Cleaning Inc.
17. Dailey Homes
18. Diesel & Import Auto/Truck Service, Inc.
19. Erhart & Associates, L.L.C.
20. Financial One Credit Union – Champlin
21. Green Bay Packaging, Inc.
22. Greenwell Realty
23. Halls of Entertainment
24. Insurance Brokers of Minnesota Inc.
25. Integrated Contract Services
26. Kozlak-Radulovich Funeral Chapel
27. Lockwood Sales
28. Majors Sports Café
29. Minnesota Vikings
30. Minnwest Bank Metro
31. National Sports Center
32. Oppenheimer & Co., Inc.
33. OSI Physical Therapy
34. Reflection Promotional Products
35. Richardson, Richter & Associates, Inc.
36. SaberPack, Inc.
37. Sam's Club
38. Second Chance for Life Foundation
39. SignaPay of MN, LLC
40. Signs By Tomorrow
41. Spring Lake Park Lumber Company
42. Stone Construction, Inc.
43. Running Aces
44. Village Bank
45. Village Floor & Wall, Inc.
46. Von Hanson's Meats
47. Walmart - Coon Rapids

Members in the News:

Marnie Ochs-Raleigh: "40 Under 40" Honoree

The Mpls-St. Paul Business Journal recently announced its "40 under 40" award honorees, recognizing the regions up-and-coming business and community leaders. One of the honorees was none-other than Chamber member Marnie Ochs-Raleigh of Evolve Systems. Last year the MN Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners awarded Marnie with their "Innovative Business Woman of the Year Award" for the highly secure card processing 'pay at the table' technology she introduced through Evolve. Her company is also known for being a member of Minnesota's "5 Percent Club," whose members donate 5% of their profits to local charities. Marnie is also on the board of directors for Alexandra House. The Chamber wants to commend Marnie on her many noteworthy achievements.

Pak Mail Celebrates 25th Anniversary

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Pak Mail Centers of America, Inc., a franchise company headquartered in Colorado. The Pak Mail Center at 1512 125th Ave NE is participating in an international celebration of this significant milestone in the history of the company. Over the course of history, the company has sustained a healthy pattern of growth and continues in its commitment to provide a comprehensive menu of professional packing and shipping services. Congratulations, Pak Mail!

Epiphany Senior Housing Awarded Confident Choices Designation

Confident Choices For Senior Living, a program designed to improve quality in housing-with-services settings, increase public trust and inform consumer decision-making has awarded a designation to Epiphany Senior Housing in Coon Rapids, MN. In order to receive this designation Epiphany Senior Housing met certain core and elective requirements in the areas of ethical practice, management experience and training, customer satisfaction, resident information and communication, regulatory compliance, staff training and satisfaction, performance improvement, resident services, and more. In addition, they successfully completed a site review by two trained housing professionals. Join the Chamber in congratulating Epiphany Senior Housing on receiving this award.

Work Some.
Play Some.

Schedule your company's meeting or party.
Call 877-447-2631.



What's your Grand Casino story? 

Get to know your Chamber!

Each month the newsletter will spotlight various Chamber members.

This month focuses on 3 board members.

Dick Haluptzok, past Board chair:

I have worked as a Registered Architect, Construction Manager, and Developer. I am married to Nancy, my high school sweetheart, and have two adult daughters. I joined the chamber seven years ago to meet the concerns raised by the business community regarding the proposed changes to Highway 65. I used the chamber to gather information from City of Blaine, Anoka County, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. I used it to moderate several meetings that included representatives from those agencies and about 200 businesses. These proved to be very helpful for our members who have been and will be impacted by these changes.

The friends I have made are far more important to me than any gains for business reasons. We are fortunate to have many wonderful people as members. I joined the Board because the issues we face as a chamber are important and deserve strong leadership to help our members face these issues. I have proven that I can help in these efforts.

Fellow members should: a. Get into the networking scene in as many ways as time will allow, b. Be informed as to the issues that face us, c. Get to know your local representatives from City, County, and State, and let them know your opinions, d. Get to know your Board of Directors, and let them know your opinions, e. Go to chamber events and support our cause.

I have two special likes: I have been collecting pennies since 1960. My collection goes back to 1820, and I love cake!!!

Sue Ann Olson, Walters Recycling & Refuse, Inc:

I am currently the Director of Sales & Marketing at Walters Recycling & Refuse, Inc. In addition, I also manage the Walters Customer Service Staff. I have two children ages 28 and 26 and two stepchildren, ages 30 and 32. My husband and I have lived in Ramsey since we built our home in 1990.

I asked Walters to join the Chamber when I started working for them in 2002. I knew it would be a great way to network with other members and gain additional business and advertising for Walters. The opportunities and people I meet through the Chamber keep me a member. I joined the Chamber to apply my skills and knowledge to achieving the goals of the Chamber. My advice to fellow members about utilizing the Chamber? Get involved!

Something no one else knows about me... Prior to my girlfriend talking me into taking up golf a few years ago, I was on a trap shooting league. I think I was more accurate shooting at clay pigeons than trying to hit a golf ball!

Bob Schlichte, Grand Casino Mille Lacs Hinckley

I'm married, have three kids, and have been in the entertainment business for 36 years: 18 years in the travel industry, 18 years at Grand Casino. As Director of Strategic Relationships, I build ships for Grand Casino – sponsorships, relationships, friendships, partnerships. We joined the Chamber in 2002 and maintain our membership because it is important to be part of our community. I joined the Board of Directors because it's an extension of that involvement. Being a voice for the Chamber gives us the opportunity to get to know other leaders in the community and to have some say in what happens in the Chamber. Grand Casino belongs to 51 chambers statewide. I'm directly involved in seven of them and indirectly with ten, and I believe MetroNorth is one of the top chambers in the state.

My advice to other members: Get involved and stay involved. Show up at the Chamber events. The Chamber works for you but only if you work with them. You can't just sit back and let it happen...show up at networking events, golf tournaments, galas, and work it hard. If you look at the Chamber as an essential part of your job, the results will be a lot better.

Something no one knows about me: Well, I live for golf, but everyone knows that. When I was growing up, I wanted to be a priest.

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Posting a position	Suggesting curriculum changes
Requesting an intern	Serving as a guest lecturer
Scheduling a recruiting visit	Serving on a program advisory committee
Hosting a company tour	

For personal assistance and questions contact the Career Services Department at **763-225-8000**

MetroNorth

Chamber of Commerce

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MAY				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				1 7:30 am: Sunrise Networking, TimeOut, Blaine
4	5 4:14 p.m. Golf Committee Majestic Oaks	6 7:30 am: Gov't Affairs Committee, TBD 4:44 pm Wine Committee meets, Acapulco Coon rapids	7 8 am: Gala Committee @ Chamber	8 7:30 am: BEL event, Anoka Ramsey Community College
11	12 Noon: Golf Tournament, Majestic Oaks Golf Course, Ham Lake	13 7:30 am: Board meeting @ Chamber <small>Deadline for Advertising in the MetroNorth issue Please call Danielle at 763-712-3527</small>	14	15 7:30 am: Sunrise Networking, Wingate, Coon Rapids
18	19 11:30 am: Marketing Committee @ Chamber 4 pm: Ambassador Committee @ Acapulco's, Coon Rapids	20 4 pm: Membership Committee @ Chamber	21	22 NO SUNRISE DUE TO HOLIDAY WEEKEND
25 Memorial Day Office closed	26	27	28	29

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