



**A Watco Company is newest tenant at Industrial Park of Minot**

Watco Supply Chain Services is the Minot Area Development Corporation's (MADC) newest tenant at the Industrial Park of Minot. A Watco Companies



subsidiary, the Arkansas-based division provides efficient, cost-effective supply chain solutions for their customers.

The company's agreement with MADC was executed in late 2018, to lease 76 acres of land at the industrial park in northeast Minot for two years. The land is being used as a staging and deployment location for a future wind turbine development. Wind turbine components arrived via truck and rail, were offloaded, and placed on bunks on the ground. The 680 total components, including tower sections, hubs, and blades, are scheduled to remain there until they're assigned to the 89-unit wind farm.

This contract is a direct result of the Industrial Park of Minot earning BNSF Railway's stamp of approval as a Certified Site in fall 2017. "The decision to pursue site certification wasn't an easy sell. Time and resources had to be diverted to complete the intensive screening process," said MADC President and CEO Stephanie Hoffart. "Our contract with Watco Supply Chain Services is a strong representation of the return on investment realized from being vetted by BNSF Railway."

BNSF Railway currently has 18 sites in their select inventory; the Industrial Park of Minot is the only Certified Site in North Dakota.

Barth West, vice president of Operations & Rail Logistics for Watco Supply Chain Services, emphasized the importance of identifying key partnerships. "It is Watco's obligation to devise and implement solid business solutions for our customers. A key element in this process is to locate and build strong relationships with great partners such as MADC and the entire

Minot community.” West indicated there is potential for expansion in the local market. “We would also like to thank MADC, current MADC tenants, and local businesses for the partnerships and hospitality. We hope to grow our wind energy footprint in the Minot area.”

Watco Companies, is the largest, privately held, rail-based entity in the United States.

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### Minot is Focusing Forward

Focus Forward. That was Mayor Shaun Sipma’s message for the 2019 State of the City.

Following a crowded open house where members of the public mingled and sought information from City of Minot department leaders, Sipma discussed a wide variety of topics that have impacted Minot in the past and will continue to impact the City moving forward. While noting there have been difficult decisions made in 2018, Sipma also reiterated that, as a community, Minot must focus on its future.



“There are those issues that continue to impact the future plans, but we will not let those issues define our future,” the mayor said. “On the contrary, we are making positive strides and ensuring the future of our city is one of purpose and one of prosperity.”

Sipma discussed the ongoing challenges Minot faces, including work on two of the largest infrastructure projects in the city’s history in the Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) project and the Mouse River Enhanced Flood Protection Project. The mayor also discussed Minot’s ongoing role as a regional leader in such things as providing essential services to neighboring cities and providing water for other communities through NAWS.

“The past leaders in the community, as a whole, have welcomed this responsibility, and we, today, have no intention of shying away from that commitment,” he said. “Rather, we will continue to shoulder the weight of leadership while building strong relationships and partnerships with our neighbors.”

Sipma also addressed recent property tax increases, noting that the majority of the 2019 increase was due to an increase in funding for restarting NAWS construction and to cover costs that have been shifted from sales tax collections back to property taxes by necessity.

“Based on our forecasting models, we will not be adjusting property taxes as our next budgeting cycle begins,” he said. “So let me make this clear. We currently see no need for any tax increase in the next budget cycle. We have ripped off the Band-Aid, and we still have some healing to do, but as we do that we continue to focus forward.”

For additional information on the State of the City message and details, [click here](#).

**Minot Chamber encourages all to hire here, shop here, invest here**

The Minot Area Chamber of Commerce has launched an effort to help people see the importance of local business. Maximize Minot is designed to encourage everyone to hire here, shop here and invest here.



“This campaign is something that goes beyond shopping local retail, as it encourages everyone to use local services and professionals,” said Minot Area Chamber of Commerce President John MacMartin. “We need people to realize that when you buy something from a store in Minot, when you hire someone from Minot to do a project or when you look for professional services here, you are benefiting our community as we have all of that talent right here in the Magic City, you don’t have to go elsewhere. When we do that, we are adding to our tax base, creating jobs and investing locally.” The Maximize Minot effort reaches out to the public, local government and businesses.

**Minot starts Safe Kids Coalition**

Minot is the fourth North Dakota community to launch a Safe Kids Coalition. Trinity Health announced it is the lead agency for Safe Kids Minot, an affiliate of Safe Kids Worldwide. Chief Nursing Officer Karen Zimmerman says Trinity plans to bring local health and safety experts, educators,



businesses, and volunteers together to teach community members about childhood safety and injury prevention. “Pediatric injury is the leading cause of death and disability among children ages 19 and under,” she said. “We know that these injuries are predictable and preventable.”

Safe Kids Worldwide is a nonprofit global network that helps families and communities keep kids safe from trauma such as traffic injuries, drownings, falls, burns, and poisonings. Grand Forks, Fargo, and Bismarck-Mandan also have Safe Kids Coalitions.

## Minot State to assist taxpayers through VITA program in 2019

Minot State University will again be offering tax preparation services free of charge to



individuals earning less than \$55,000 a year, elderly individuals, military members, and tax payers with small businesses that meet certain guidelines, through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. VITA was originally created by the Internal Revenue Service to assist low-income tax payers in properly filling out and filing their tax forms.

"Taxes can be complicated," said Nicole Wald, assistant professor in accounting and finance. "For people with tax situations that are not complicated, VITA offers a way for them to meet their tax obligation without an extra expense."

All tax preparation work will be completed by fully-trained accounting students. This year, seven Minot State students are participating in the program. Services will be offered every week starting February 4 until April 3.

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