

News Release



Contact: Krista Bergert, Communications (612) 673-5015; cell, (612) 360-8702

Minneapolis City Goals: A Safe Place to Call Home ▫ Jobs & Economic Vitality ▫ Eco-Focused ▫ Livable Communities, Healthy Lives ▫ Many People, One Minneapolis ▫ A City That Works

Minneapolis Sailboat Manufacturer Receives Federal Export Award

May 2, 2012 (MINNEAPOLIS) – MINNEAPOLIS, MN – Minneapolis sailboat manufacturer WindRider International today received an Export Achievement Award from the U.S. Department of Commerce. The award recognizes businesses that have benefited from Commercial Service export assistance to make its first export sale or expand to new foreign markets.

“WindRider is a perfect example of how local governments and business organizations can make critical introductions between Minneapolis businesses and state and federal export service providers,” said **Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak**. “Making these connections for small companies is a key element of the export plan that we just adopted to double our region’s exports by 2017.”

“WindRider International is a prime example of how innovative Minnesota businesses are tapping global markets to increase their sales which support jobs and economic growth here at home,” said **Mary Joyce, Midwest Regional Director for the U.S. Commercial Service**. “Ninety-five percent of the world’s consumers are beyond U.S. borders, and we must continue to give small -and medium-sized U.S. businesses a competitive edge by making the necessary investments that will lead America into the future. I commend WindRider International on its outstanding export accomplishments.”

WindRider International is a manufacturer of easy-to-use, portable trimarans, or three-hulled, sailboats. This unique product resembles a kayak with outriggers and has foot-pedal steering with a single-handed mainsail control and is therefore suitable for both the novice and experienced sailors.

WindRider started in 1995 as a product of a North Carolina-based kayak maker Wilderness Systems. A small group of enthusiasts bought WindRider in 2005 and moved production to Pine City, Minnesota. In 2010, Dean Sanberg purchased WindRider, opening a production facility in Minneapolis.

Soon after opening shop in the North Loop, Sanberg contacted City staff on how to respond to an internet order from an unknown Australian buyer. City staff connected Sanberg with the U.S. Commercial Service to vet that order with trade officers on site in Australia. Subsequently, WindRider has pursued numerous export markets, with the assistance of the U.S. Commercial Service.

“Two years ago we were exporting to only two countries, Netherlands and Canada. In the past two years we have added Australia, Chile, Thailand, France and Aruba. And hopefully soon we will have shipments going to Brazil and Spain,” said **Dean Sanberg, President, WindRider International**. “Besides the growth in exports, we are also proud of the fact that our sailboats are assembled in Minnesota, with 93% of the components manufactured in the U.S. including 74% of those made in Minnesota.”

“Many companies of all sizes across Minnesota are finding export opportunities, but many more have the potential to do so,” said **Joyce**. “If you can do business in the United States, one of the world’s most open markets, you’re a likely candidate for doing business overseas. We’d like to help you realize that potential.”

As part of Commerce’s International Trade Administration, the U.S. Commercial Service connects U.S. companies with international buyers. The Commercial Service Minneapolis is part of the agency’s worldwide network of offices located in over 100 U.S. cities and nearly 75 countries. For more information on the U.S. Commercial Service visit www.export.gov.

###