

For distributors and contractors, 2012 look like a better (not a great) year. We see signs of expansion from our distribution with building additions and in some cases new branches being established. Also if you haven't heard, western North Dakota is enjoying an oil boom. The state has 1 billion surplus and they are drawing workers from across the country.

Minnesota is also adding workers with unemployment rates at 5.7%, an improvement of 1% in the last 2 years.

One big factor for 2012 is the upcoming National Elections and most companies feel this will bring some much needed "looser" money to the construction side of business.

Manufacturing has remained strong and continues to strengthen. Also mining and steel, although fluctuating remain strong and with the addition of energy projects the attitude is solid for a strong year.

The Minnesota Mall of America has a new 500 room hotel being built that will be sold out from the day it opens. A 2.1 billion expansion plan exists that will double the size of the mall. There is also talk of a new Vikings football stadium being built.

As we have all heard and read the "American Dream" may not include owning a home. Bad for homebuilders, but on the positive side good for apartment and condo complexes as the rental market remains strong.

As the bulk of the population is reaching the mid sixties we are seeing a surge in elderly and assisted living housing.

Overall, the attitude is optimistic for 2012 but it won't come easy and our customers will need to diversify and react quickly to the contractors needs.