

## 3rd Shovel State Certified Ready Park in GPS Region



With the addition of the Pine City Technology Park, the GPS Region now has over 170 acres of industrial park land near major highways that are “Shovel Ready.” The others are in Cambridge and Isanti. This is the most concentrated region state wide for this designation. Only 18 sites have been approved since the program was established in 2009.

Cambridge (pop. 8,209) and Isanti (pop. 5,369) are located along the State Highway 65 corridor. So far, Pine City (pop. 3,570) has the only industrial park along I-35 that is Shovel Ready-certified but in nearby North Branch (pop. 10,131) talks are underway to do the same.

“The site certification program makes the site-selection process easier, faster and more predictable for companies that are looking to grow here in Minnesota,” said Sean Sullivan, Economic Development Director for the City of Isanti.

Bridgitte Konrad, City Administrator for the City of North Branch, said, “Businesses consider multiple properties in different states when determining where to locate, and having a shovel-ready site would give us a competitive advantage in the selection process.”

North Branch leaders were expected to discuss the certification process at a meeting last week.

The term “shovel ready” refers to commercial and industrial sites that have had all of the planning, zoning, surveys, title work, environmental studies, soils analysis and public infrastructure engineering completed prior to offering the site for sale. In addition, the sites are under the legal control of a community or in partnership with a third party.

“Sites that are certified ‘shovel ready’ are more attractive to companies and site-selection consultants looking for locations for business expansions or relocations,” said John Rhodes, a leading national site-location consultant with Moran, Stahl & Boyer of Lakewood Ranch, Fla.

Rhodes, who was in Pine City last month touring the State’s newest certified site, said, “Shovel-ready sites reduce the time and increase the predictability of getting the land developed, the building constructed, and the operation up and running.”

Certified shovel-ready status is fast becoming a standard for sites that are marketed around the country. Minnesota’s Certified Shovel Ready sites continue to be marketed at national conferences, trade shows and on the MnProspector.com Web site, the state’s site-selection database.

The application fee for shovel-ready certification was \$2,950 per community, paid by various Economic Development Authorities. The fee covered the cost of initial review, onsite inspection, final certification and marketing. The Minnesota Shovel Ready Certified Development Sites Initiative was created by the Positively Minnesota Marketing Partnership together with DEED.

For more information on Minnesota's Shovel Ready Site Certification Program, contact Gene Goddard, senior business development specialist, DEED, 651-259-7436, toll free 1-800-657-3858, e-mail [gene.goddard@state.mn.us](mailto:gene.goddard@state.mn.us), or John Rhodes, senior principal, Moran, Stahl & Boyer, 941-755-0074, e-mail [john.rhodes@msbconsulting.com](mailto:john.rhodes@msbconsulting.com). The Minnesota Shovel Ready Certification Web site is located at [www.PositivelyMinnesota.com](http://www.PositivelyMinnesota.com).

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