

MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope



Features:

**Lawrence Tan:
Navigating Hardship and
Embracing Opportunity**

Connecting AMA's
Successful Dusk2Dawn
Event to the Plan for Sears
Site Plan for the
Walk/Ride Audits

This monthly E-Magazine is published by the Asian American Business Resilience Network to highlight Asian American small businesses' accomplishments.

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Asian American Business Resilience Network

VISION

Envision a new reality that addressing historic inequities, and enhancing culturally/linguistically appropriate ways to thrive through resilience, sustainability, and inclusive growth for all members and the communities where they learn, live, play, and work.

MISSION

AABRN radically accelerates the pace of change by disrupting the status quo; providing resources, training, and support; building bridges across diverse ecosystems; and bringing together public health and business networks, in order to achieve sustainable growth along with an equitable future.

PROGRAMS

- Community Engagement and Translation Assistance, especially public health in nature
- Navigate local, state and national resources
- Access digital tools in advancing members' wellbeing
- Provide training to retain a healthy workforce
- Provide technical assistance in business operation and IT needs





NAVIGATING HARDSHIP AND EMBRACING OPPORTUNITY: THE STORY OF LAWRENCE TAN'S STALLION INSURANCE GROUP

Interviewed By Meejoo Choi

Lawrence Tan, the founder of Stallion Insurance Group, was born and raised in Malaysia before moving to the U.S. at the age of 19. After graduating, he began his career at Sysco Asian Foods, where he worked for four years. However, his entrepreneurial spirit led him to explore other opportunities, eventually sparking his interest in the insurance industry. Inspired by a friend in the field, he quickly saw the potential for growth, especially within the growing Asian community. Realizing that many potential clients faced language barriers and were underinsured, he took a leap of faith and started his own agency.

About Stallion Insurance Group

Licensed in Over 30 States | In Business Since 2007
Partners With Over 25 Carriers | Free Quotes



Our Story
Story

Whether you're looking for insurance to protect your vehicle or home, you will find the best options here at Stallion Insurance Group. We started doing multiple acquisitions in 2018. [Get in touch](#) with us today for a **FREE** quote!

[Learn More](#)
About Us

Stallion Insurance group began in 2007 as LTA Insurance with the aim of insuring the local and regional hospitality industries. Since then, the agency has grown tremendously and now operates as a group of two agencies: LTA Insurance and Mullen Insurance Agency. With a wider regional footprint, Stallion group now serves as a premier agency for Midwestern insurance needs in both personal and commercial insurance. While we have a large existing clientele, we are always ready to help new clients get their insurance setup properly!

Stallion Insurance Group has grown into a successful independent brokerage, offering a wide range of insurance solutions since it was established in 2007. The company provides various types of insurance, including hospitality, commercial, auto, home, and life insurance, with a specialization in serving restaurants and hotels. With licenses in over 30 states and access to more than 35 carriers, Stallion Insurance Group is well-equipped to meet diverse client needs, particularly within the food and beverage industry. As a multilingual agency, we also cater to Asian communities, ensuring personalized and culturally relevant services.

Empowering and Advocating for Asian Community, Culture, and Business

Lawrence is deeply influenced by his Asian heritage and actively contributes to the community. He participates in local events, sponsors initiatives, and is a member of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, all with the goal of preserving and promoting Asian culture in the Twin Cities. This commitment extends to his business, where he focuses on supporting Asian-owned businesses. Recognizing the challenges faced by those who are not fluent in English, Lawrence ensures his clients are well-protected and fully informed about their insurance options. Today, about 65% of Stallion Insurance Group's clients are Chinese or Asian-speaking, reflecting his dedication to helping his community thrive.

Building from the Ground Up: Lawrence Tan's Journey into the Insurance Industry

Lawrence emphasizes the importance of being well-connected when starting a business. Having worked for four years selling wholesale food to restaurants in a previous job, he built strong relationships with local restaurant and business owners who later became his first clients when he launched Stallion Insurance Group in late 2007. By reaching out to his former connections and offering free quotes, he jump-started his business, although it was a slow start with small insurance premiums and modest commissions. He also took out a \$40,000 loan to hire staff and keep the business running.

He was inspired by a friend who worked as an agent at American Family and saw the potential in the insurance industry. Although he initially had doubts, he soon realized that insurance is essential for both individuals and businesses. He started his career with American Family but quickly recognized the need for more competitive options. This led him to start his own independent agency a year later. To prepare, he conducted extensive research, spoke with industry professionals, and completed coursework before passing the licensing exam.



From Market Crash to Success: Navigating Hardship with Perseverance

Starting Stallion Insurance Group wasn't easy, especially with the market crash in 2009. The economic downturn meant many people lost their jobs, including Lawrence Tan's wife, leaving him as the sole income earner. During this challenging time, his business wasn't generating enough revenue, and he even considered quitting. However, with the support of loyal clients and friends, he managed to push through. For example, one client suggested he start a real estate flipping business, which helped him generate extra income and stay resilient while building his own business.

Reflecting on his journey, he emphasizes the importance of being financially prepared before starting a business, as financial challenges are inevitable in the early stages. Consistency, perseverance, and networking were key to his success. He spent long hours—70 to 80 per week—cold-calling potential clients, creating proposals, and maintaining connections. Despite the difficulties, he stayed on track by balancing his personal and professional life and never giving up.

Lawrence Tan's Key Advice for Thriving in Business

Lawrence's advice for anyone looking to start a business in the insurance industry is to find a good mentor. He believes that having the right guidance can help avoid unnecessary hardships and lead to success more quickly. He also stresses the importance of "always ask questions" and learning from those who are more successful. In business, ups and downs are inevitable, but persistence is key. Many people tend to fail because they give up too soon. He encourages aspiring entrepreneurs to stay resilient, saying, "If I can do it, I think most people can do it." Additionally, he emphasizes the value of continuous networking and building a strong reputation, especially in community-based businesses, where trust and a good name are crucial.





Preface: The Asian American Business Resilience Network has teamed up with Asian Media Access to co-develop the St. Paul Sears Site, we will publicize a series of articles to highlight our progress.

Series of SEARS Redevelopment - Article #13

CONNECTING AMA'S SUCCESSFUL DUSK2DAWN EVENT TO THE PLAN FOR SEARS SITE PLAN FOR THE WALK/RIDE AUDITS

In 2017, Asian Media Access proudly supported the Dusk2Dawn “Bicycling Through History” event, organized by the Major Taylor Bicycling Club of Minnesota. This nighttime ride was more than a celebration of cycling—it was a journey through the historical transformations of Minneapolis, including areas deeply affected by urban renewal projects like the construction of Interstate 94. Similar to the Rondo neighborhood, which was devastated by the freeway’s expansion, the ride also passed through the area surrounding the Sears building, another site shaped by shifting urban development trends. By highlighting these locations, Dusk2Dawn provided participants with a deeper understanding of how past infrastructure decisions have disrupted communities, reinforcing the importance of thoughtful redevelopment efforts like those underway at the Sears site.

The Night Ride of Culture and History

The event took cyclists on a 50-mile night time journey through Minneapolis and St. Paul, offering more than just a ride—it was an immersive experience combining cycling with history, urban development, and cultural awareness. The route highlighted the displacement of African American communities and the lasting effects of these disruptions. Key stops included the Penumbra Theatre, one of the last remaining African American theaters in the U.S.; the Rondo neighborhood, where riders reflected on the destruction caused by Interstate 94 to a once-thriving Black community in the 1960s; and the Green Line's Victoria Street Station, where discussions focused on the importance of equitable, transit-oriented development. This unique and educational ride encouraged participants to engage with these historic sites and the deep, ongoing impact of past urban policies.



Beyond the Ride: A Powerful Turnout for Reflection and Action

The 2017 event seamlessly combined cycling, historical displacement narratives, and community engagement, making it a truly meaningful experience. A group of 32 riders, along with seven AMA youth, embarked on a journey through various neighborhoods, visiting significant landmarks and engaging in thoughtful discussions. Community leaders, including Darius Gray, provided valuable perspectives on proposed reparations aimed at reconnecting communities that had been historically divided. As Daniel Choma highlighted, the event was not only educational and inspiring but also underscored the importance of inclusive Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), ensuring that cyclists from all backgrounds have a voice in shaping the future of their urban spaces.

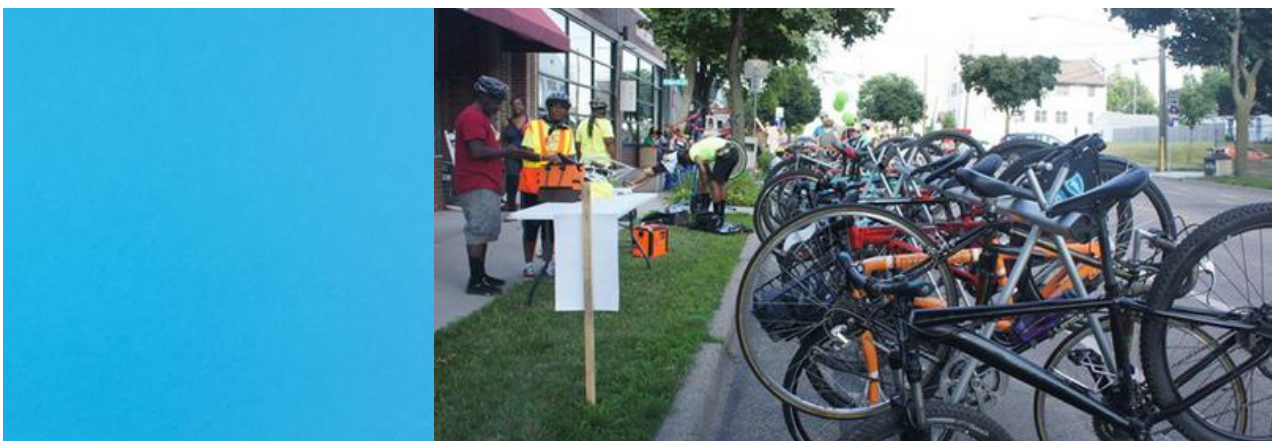
Strengthening Community Access Through Walk and Bike Audits

As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering active and connected communities at the Sears Site, AMA is excited to move forward with upcoming initiatives aimed at

improving walkability, bike access, and transit connectivity, along with acknowledgement of the Highway 94 traumatic impacts on the Frogtown/Rondo neighborhoods. In the coming spring and summer, AMA plans to conduct walk audits at the former St. Paul Sears parking lot and surrounding neighborhoods across the highway and engaging residents in evaluating the area's potential for a pedestrian- and bike friendly environment, food accessibility, and connectivity to key destinations

AMA also plans to partner with local organizations to organize a bicycle ride audit along the Blue Line Extension corridor, spanning from North Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park. This ride will give participants a firsthand experience of the transit route while offering valuable insights on safety and connectivity to inform station area design. These efforts mark just the beginning of our ongoing commitment to creatively engaging BIPOC communities in shaping a future where improved accessibility, connectivity, and a safer, greener environment enable everyone to participate more fully in physical activities.

Any interested parties to get involved in planning these walk/bike ride audits, please connect with AMA staff – John Yang at john.yang@amamedia.org. For more information and updated news about the Sears redevelopment, feel free to visit our website at <https://searsstpaul.info/> and facebook <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61572317395425>



SMART MONEY MOVES IN THE YEAR OF THE SNAKE

*By Aggie Tsetsgee - a Senior Banker
at Bank of America's Edina Financial Center.*



As we embrace this Year of the Snake, I encourage you to approach your finances with patience and wisdom. While last year may have pushed you toward hasty decisions, 2025 is the perfect time to make thoughtful choices with your money and change patterns that don't support prosperity. This year offers transformation, and practical wisdom will guide you toward positive change.

It's never too late to invest in yourself. Saving for retirement means caring for your future self. Take a moment to review your retirement strategy—could you increase your 401(k) or IRA contributions? The tax advantages of retirement plans are significant, and it's worth exploring all your options.

I've learned that having three months of living expenses saved can make all the difference when life throws you a curveball. Start building your safety net with just a few dollars per paycheck—it adds up. Keep this emergency fund separate from your daily spending account but accessible. I recommend an FDIC-insured, interest-bearing savings account.

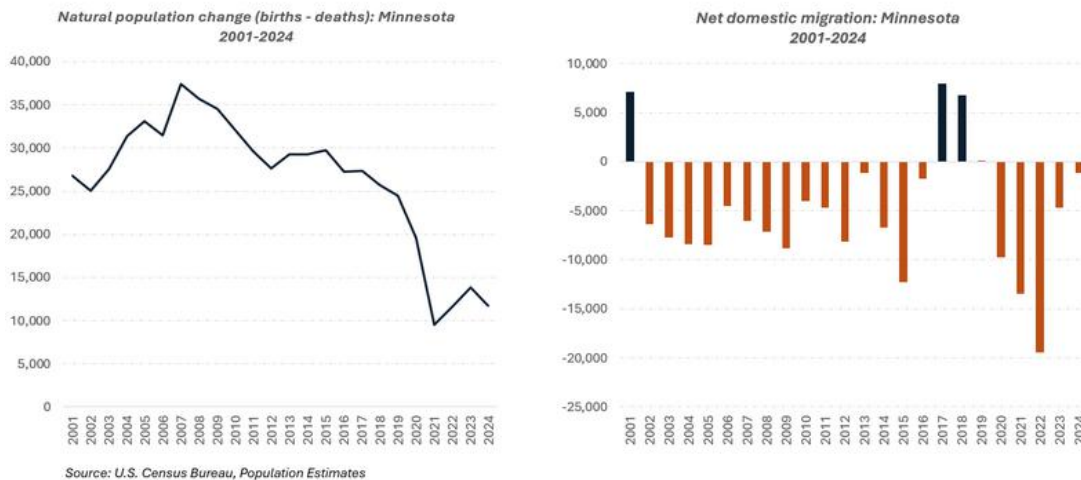
Understanding where your money goes is essential for anyone with a financial plan. Tracking expenses can be eye-opening, and you don't need to save every receipt. Banking apps and digital tools make it simple to spot patterns and identify areas to cut back.

I've found that breaking debt into manageable chunks makes it less overwhelming. When managed well, debt becomes less restrictive on your other financial goals. Two common methods for paying down debt are the Snowball and High-Rate methods. To determine which method suits you best, watch the ["Strategies for paying down debt" tutorial](#).

Financial education has been my passion throughout my career. I've witnessed how knowledge about budgeting, saving, managing debt, and planning for retirement transforms lives. Whether through online resources or community workshops, learning about money management builds lasting wealth. For more tips, visit Bank of America's free financial education website at [BetterMoneyHabits.com](https://www.bankofamerica.com/bettermoneyhabits)



Declining fertility rates and net domestic migration losses contributing to slow population growth in Minnesota



What does this mean for Minnesota's economy?

Minnesota's [November Budget and Economic Forecast](#) illustrates how these long-term population trends are impacting the state's near-term economic and fiscal outlook.

The report, which forecasts a \$5.1 billion budget deficit in the 2028-29 biennium, states:

"Payroll employment growth is expected to slow further to an average of 0.3 percent annually from 2025 to 2029, or approximately 10,200 jobs annually. This subdued employment trajectory reflects the constraints of an aging workforce and lower birth rates."

It goes on to say:

"Aging and lower birth rates will continue to put downward pressure on labor force growth in the coming years. Whether immigration will be enough to counter these trends remains to be seen."

Minnesota ranks 41st in GDP growth, 40th in labor force growth and 37th in job growth so far this decade. Immigration remains one of the key levers to improve the state's economic outlook going forward.

The Minnesota Chamber's Grow Minnesota! program will release a report in February further examining how immigration trends have changed in the first years of this decade and looks ahead to how Minnesota can leverage immigration as a strength for future economic growth.

January 25~26

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION AT ASIA MALL

We had a fantastic time attending the Traditional Lunar New Year Celebration at Asia Mall! It was incredible to experience the vibrant performances, engaging cultural activities, and delicious food. Grateful to be part of such a wonderful event celebrating tradition and community!



January 27

HUMANE NETWORK LUNCHEON

We had a great time attending the Hue-Man Luncheon and connecting with everyone to kick off 2025! It was inspiring to share ideas, enjoy great food, and be part of meaningful conversations about the year ahead.



January 31

MINNESOTA HMONG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2ND ANNUAL GALA

The Gala brought together community members, local businesses, and supporters for a memorable evening of celebration and connection. Guests enjoyed a vibrant atmosphere with networking, inspiring stories, a silent auction, and captivating entertainment.





**MINNESOTA HMONG
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

*Our Journey & Legacy:
Celebrating 50 Years of MN-Hmong Impact*

Master of Ceremonies **Keynote Speaker**

JAN 31, 2025
2nd Annual

Gala

6-11 PM

INWOOD OAKS EVENTS CENTER
484 INWOOD AVE N. OAKDALE, MN 55128



Chenue Her
FOX 9



Bee Vang-Moua
My Easy Hmong Educational
Consultation & Resources

SINGLE TICKET \$90 | TABLE OF 8 \$650 | VENDOR \$350-MEMBER \$450-NONMEMBER
SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

February 01~02

MALL OF AMERICA - NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

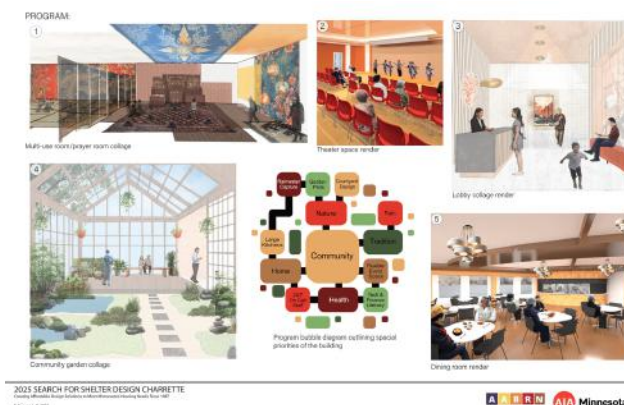
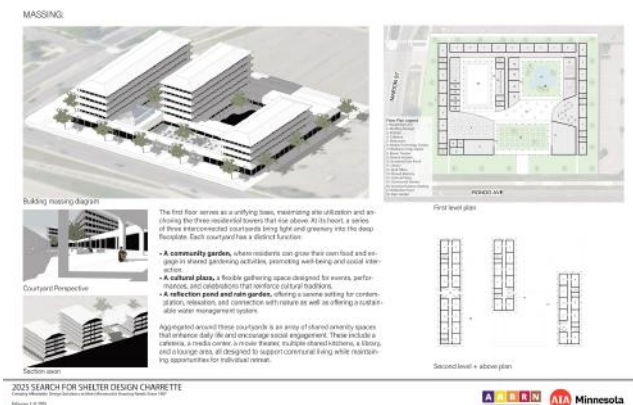
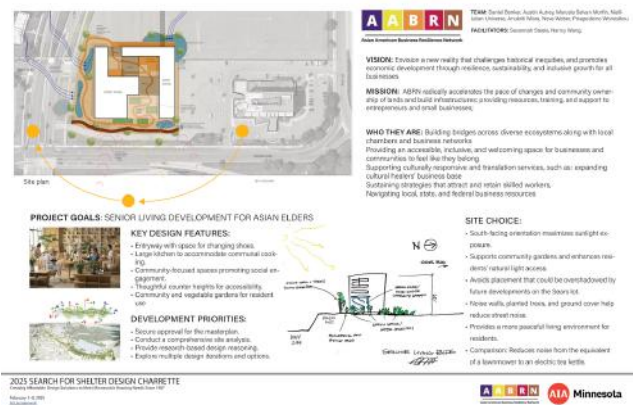
We participated in this MOA New Year Celebration, and this event showcased the rich cultural heritage of Hmong, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Lao, Thai, Vietnamese, and Chinese communities. From mesmerizing performances by renowned folk artists to meaningful cultural exchanges, the celebration highlighted the beauty of ancient traditions while embracing the vibrancy of modern life in Minnesota.



February 01~08

2025 SEARCH FOR SHELTER DESIGN CHARRETTE

Creating Affordable Design Solutions to Meet Minnesota's Housing Needs Since 1987.



February 08

4TH ANNUAL 2025 TWIN CITIES DUMPLING FEAS

ASANE and Minnesota Chinese World hosted a wonderful event at Legacy Adult Daycare Center, bringing the community together to celebrate Chinese New Year! Guests enjoyed a hands-on experience learning to wrap dumplings while taking part in cultural activities that honored tradition and togetherness.



February 15 ~ March 29

THE SERPENT'S CHARM: FASHION SHOW

A group of talented Asian American entrepreneurs (event designers, fashion designers, make-up artists, hair stylists, photographers, multimedia artists, models, etc.) coming together to host a series of creative events to celebrate the Year of Snake. The Serpent's Charm - a fashion show and photography exhibition project that commemorates the Lunar New Year through fashion and cultural inspiration. Learn more at: <https://www.facebook.com/theserpentscharm> Photo Courtesy: The Serpent's Charm





February 16

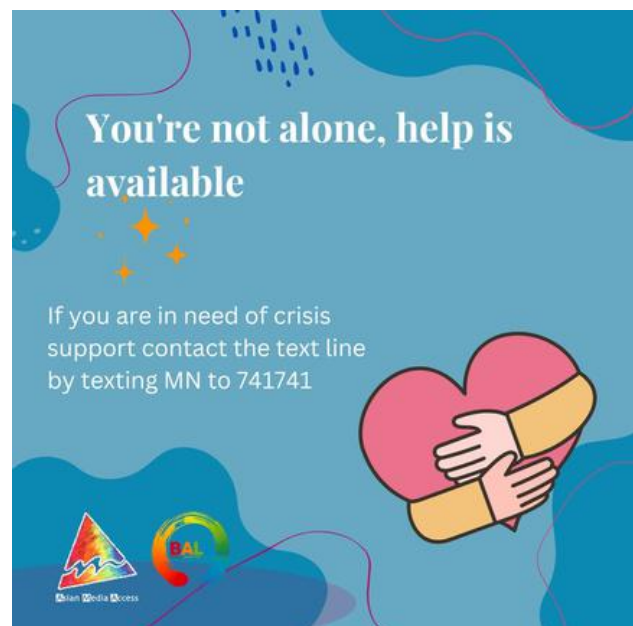
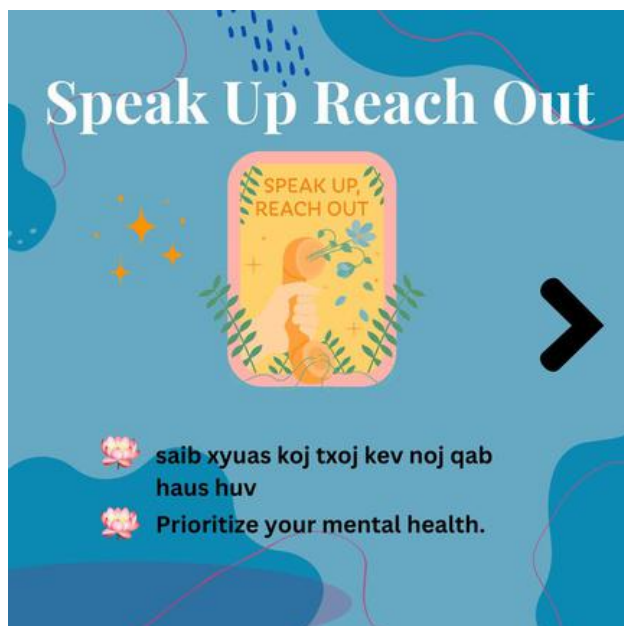
TET NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

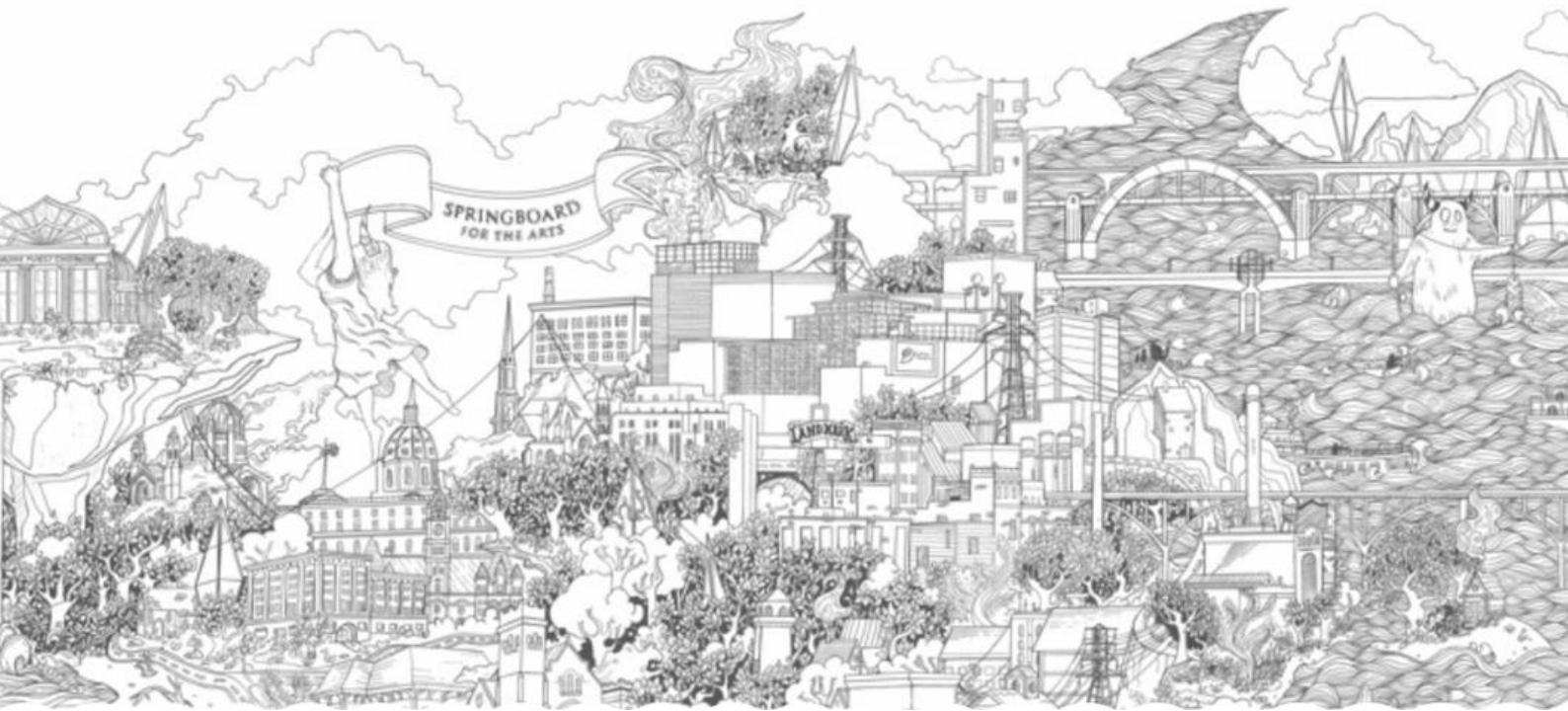
The New Year Celebration at Lien Hoa Pagoda and Buddhist Temple in Rochester, MN was a stunning display of culture and tradition. Attendees dressed in beautiful traditional clothing, capturing memorable moments through vibrant photoshoots while celebrating the new year with joy and community spirit. Photo Courtesy: Hung Huynh



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS FLYERS

Asian Media Access has created a set of mental health heritage story cards. If you are in need of crisis support contact the text line by texting MN to 741741.





Springboard for the Arts Calendar of Events - Professional Development

- February 22, 2025 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Artists Working in Community
- March 1, 2025 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Artist Statements
- March 4, 2025 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Work of Art: Promotions
- March 15, 2025 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - e-Commerce 1: Getting Started
- March 18, 2025 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Work of Art: Pricing

Learn more and register at: <https://springboardforthearts.org/events/>

Additional Resources

- Get connected to Artist Career Consultants here:
<https://springboardforthearts.org/professional-growth/career-consultations/artist-career-consultants/>
- Work of Art Toolkit: <https://springboardforthearts.org/woa>
- Handbook for Artists Working in Community:
<https://springboardforthearts.org/artists-working-in-community/>

Tax Tips from the IRS



- [Here's what taxpayers need to know about business related travel deductions](#)
- [Companies who promise to eliminate tax debt sometimes leave taxpayers high and dry](#)
- [Get an Identity Protection PIN.](#)
- [Tax Resources for Members of the Military](#)



FEB
26

11am~130pm

2025 Winter M&A Bootcamp

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

FEB
28

12pm~1230pm

Agile Accountability: A Leadership Workshop

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAR
4

11am~1230pm

Business Development Essentials

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAR
11

12pm~130pm

Growing Your Business with a CRM

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



MAR
13
10am~11am

QuickBooks Online

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAR
13
12pm~1pm

Continuous Experimentation Strengthens Data Models

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAR
18
9am~1030am

How to Project Cash Flow to Run or Save Your Business

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAR
18
12pm~130pm

Power of Capital

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



Visit Our Website for More Upcoming Events

[OFFICIAL WEBSITE >>](#)

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