



## Erick Ajax

Vice President, E.J. Ajax and Sons  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

*Partner of National Skills Coalition*

Erick Ajax is the Vice President and Co-Owner of E.J. Ajax and Sons, a third-generation company providing innovative metal forming solutions. Erick joined the family business in the early 1980's. He is responsible for human resources, employee safety, education, professional development and sales and marketing for his company. Under his leadership, The Ajax plant has been recognized as one of the top ten safest companies in America and has received many national awards, as well as the Governor's highest award of honor for plant safety for the past eighteen years from the Minnesota Safety Council. He instituted policies requiring at least 100 hours of professional development and education for every employee every year. The company invests more than 5.5 percent of its annual payroll in employee education. As a result of the commitment to worker education and productivity, E.J. Ajax was able to operate profitably during the economic downturn, acquiring new customers. The company now exports approximately a third of its total production to China, Saudi Arabia and the Caribbean.

In addition to a range of other civic positions, Erick is a board member and past chair of the Minneapolis Public Schools Learning Center for Economics; a trustee of the Precision Metal Forming Education Foundation; a member of the board of advisors for Minnesota's Occupational Safety and Health Administration; and a board member for "M-Powered," a sector project involving employers, foundations, Minnesota trade associations, HIRED, and Hennepin Technical College to train entry and incumbent level workers for careers in precision metal forming.

**E.J. Ajax and Sons**, located in Minneapolis, MN, received the 2011 U.S. Chamber of Commerce Blue Ribbon Award, given to only 75 small businesses throughout the country that "have shown tremendous dedication to restoring jobs and prosperity despite a challenging economy." In December 2011, E.J. Ajax and Sons was among the first three companies to receive the "Metalforming Pioneer" Award from the Precision Metalforming Association Education Foundation (PMAEF). The award recognizes "companies whose success fosters and is driven by skill enhancement and advancement opportunities for their production employees." #

---

*Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships is comprised of employers from a range of industries who are concerned about our nation's skills gap, who are working with local partners to train and hire community residents for skilled jobs, and who want our country's policymakers to follow suit and invest, aggressively and effectively, in the skills of America's workers. BLU is an initiative of National Skills Coalition, National Fund for Workforce Solutions, Skills for America's Future and Corporate Voices for Working Families. Learn more at: [www.nationalskillscoalition.org/BLU](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/BLU).*