

MINNEAPOLIS ST. PAUL BUSINESS JOURNAL

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The Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal has announced its 2006 “Forty Under 40” award winners.

The award honors 40 Twin Cities professionals under 40 years old for their business accomplishments and community contributions.

Now in its 13th year, the “Forty Under 40” project received more than 300 nominations. Past recipients include Gov. Tim Pawlenty, State Auditor Pat Anderson and Minnesota Twins President Dave St. Peter.

This year’s winners were featured in a special insert in the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal’s May 12 print issue.



Scott Burns

Title/Company:
CEO, GovDelivery Inc.

Year of birth: **1975**

Family: **Wife, Sarah**

Education:
Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.

the public sector after earning an MBA and a brief stint in the business world.

But then his roommate and longtime friend, Zach Stabenow, presented him with an idea for the new business that would deliver electronic versions of employee labor-law posters. Stabenow asked Burns, then 24, to help get the idea off the ground.

Faced with a choice between school and startup, Burns chose the latter.

“Being young and being unafraid of bankruptcy were more valuable to me in starting a business than being older and more experienced,” he said.

The company, called GovDocs, soon shifted its focus to government-to-citizen communication services, sending out customized e-mail alerts to citizens when information is updated on government Web sites.

The service allows citizens to go to government Web sites and choose e-mail

topics ranging from snow emergencies to city council minutes.

GovDocs signed the city of St. Paul as its first client in 2001, Minneapolis and Washington, D.C., soon followed.

The company, which changed its name to GovDelivery in 2005, now has hundreds of clients, including the U.S. departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, State and Transportation; the Federal Aviation Administration; the U.S. Federal Reserve; and the British Parliament.

The company sends out more than 5 million e-mails a month, up from half a million a month two years ago.

Stabenow said Burns’ leadership played a key role in that growth.

“He was really good at building a team that could execute on taking nothing and building it into something,” Stabenow said. “And I don’t just mean employees, but also investors, board members, advisers. He recognizes good talent and surrounds himself with those people.”

Burns, now 30, said GovDelivery has helped create better communication between governments and their citizens. That’s why he doesn’t regret staying in the private sector.

“If the company grows and becomes highly profitable and a big success, that’s going to be an incredibly good thing for citizens too,” Burns said.

— JOHN VOMHOF JR. | STAFF WRITER

SCOTT BURNS DIDN’T PLAN TO be an entrepreneur. Things just worked out that way.

Burns, CEO of GovDelivery Inc., became involved in politics while attending Dartmouth college and planned to work in