

# Grants will aid Minnesota workers

Job Skills program will fund training at Crookston plant, local freezer factory

Times staff report

State grants are helping a Crookston bus plant and a St. Cloud freezer factory improve worker skills.

The state Tuesday awarded a \$199,000 Minnesota Job Skills Partner-

ship grant to Northwest Technical College for work with 250 New Flyer of America employees.

The Crookston plant is a sister factory to the New Flyer USA plant that opened in 1999 in St. Cloud.

Managers, engineers, production-line workers and quality-control workers at Crookston will be trained at the factory.

New Flyer also will pay a portion of the training cost.

New Flyer plans to increase production and create more than 20 new jobs by the end of the year as a result of the partnership, state development commissioner Matt Kramer said.

Kramer heads the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Kramer is chairman of the Minnesota Jobs Skills board, which also has ap-

proved a \$100,000 grant for training work at Electrolux Home Products, St. Cloud.

St. Cloud State University, Ridgewater College and St. Cloud Technical College will work with the freezer manufacturer.

The project is intended to improve skills for 680 workers at all levels so the plant can compete with manufacturers worldwide.