

SATURDAY  
MARCH 1,  
2008



Mostly  
cloudy

High | Low  
**34** | **25**

Complete  
forecast, **10A**

# ST. CLOUD Times

WWW.SCTIMES.COM | ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE @ M.SCTIMES.COM

## Firm boosts Atomic

By **Britt Johnsen**  
bjohnsen@stcloudtimes.com

Private equity firm Granite Equity Partners announced Friday it is investing in Little Falls-based Atomic Learning so the software tutorials business can continue to expand.

The two companies completed the deal Friday afternoon. Terms were not disclosed.

Since Atomic Learning started in 2000, it has grown to 51 employees and now serves about

12,000 schools across the U.S. and in 46 countries, Chief Executive Officer Dan Meyer said.

Atomic Learning provides 35,000 tutorials on how to use more than 110 software applications, including Microsoft Office, Photoshop and Dreamweaver.

The company expects to continue growing. Its 2008 business plan calls for 12 new jobs paying

See **EQUITY, 2A** ▶

**FROM PAGE 1A**

## **Equity**

an average of \$25 per hour, Meyer said. Most jobs will be based in Central Minnesota; due to telecommuting some jobs will not be generated locally, he said. But all jobs will stay in Minnesota.

Atomic Learning started with a vision of helping teachers and students, Meyer said. From 1985 to 1989, he taught business at Cathedral High School. For four years in the

late 1990s, Meyer worked as a director of operations for a software development at a company in Brainerd, where he lives.

With the new partnership, Meyer said he hopes Atomic Learning can begin marketing software tutorials to businesses. That way, the company can expand its customer base of educators and students in the K-12 and higher education sector.

"It's a very positive stage in our evolution," he said.

He also said the company now has access to knowledge

and expertise it didn't have before.

The new board of directors consists of two current Atomic Learning board members and three current Granite Equity investors. They include Meyer and founding member Brian Westerberg of Atomic Learning, and Granite Equity investors Bill Pelfrey, Rick Bauerly and Gary Marsden.

Marsden is former chief executive of St. Cloud-based Marco.

This is the third company that Granite Equity has invested in so far in 2008. In

January it announced it had acquired an Iowa-based trailer manufacturing company. Later that month, it announced it was partnering with St. Cloud bioscience company MicroBioLogics.

Bauerly, managing partner of Granite Equity, said he thinks Atomic Learning will continue its rapid growth.

The challenge — and opportunity — will be to continue to stay ahead, competing in different and new markets.

"It's an exciting opportunity because it's meaningful work," he said.