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large business bosses who want a sooner- rather-than-later escape from the fiscal cliff.

Dec. 31, 2012

Count Intertech owner/CEO Tom Salonek among the swelling ranks of small-and-large business bosses who want a sooner- rather-than-later escape from the fiscal cliff.

The uncertainty resulting from the House Republicans' rejection of President Obama's proposal earlier this month that would include spending cuts and a slightly higher marginal tax rate at \$400,000 of household income has spooked financial markets and cast doubts on optimistic projections for the economy in 2013.

Business owners, judging by the growing followers of Fixthedeat.org and hundreds of CEOs who have asked Washington for a balanced package of spending cuts and revenue increases, want some certainty before they will sign off on expansion plans. The fiscal cliff anxiety also is lowering consumer confidence.

"I'd like to see [a short-term 2013 deal] and some good long-term decisions, that may include me paying more taxes," Salonek said. "We must address the debt. This problem will not be solved by an either-or solution. It will take a combination of entitlement reform, spending cuts and there may be people who pay more tax."

Intertech, which grew revenue by 14.5 percent to \$11.8 million this year, purchased and recently renovated a 13,000-square-foot Eagan facility for its expanded company headquarters. The company is banking on a better economy and common-sense solutions from Washington.

Aaron Moriarity, an independent toy designer who grew up in the shadow of the since-abandoned Tonka Toys factory in Mound, is getting traction with his

Tetragon2 strategy game at Games by James and nearly 40 other specialty retailers.

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A big toy company representative liked it but doubted it would produce the requisite millions in sales. So Moriarity burned through several thousand dollars of savings and a loan from his brother to produce the first 1,000 games that sell at retail or at his website, www.hotgames-puzzles.com.

“It’s as little as \$21.99 for a lifetime of fun and a game of strategic creation,” said Moriarity, who signs every box cover. “My goal is to grow the business diligently, probably not rapidly and to continue my inventing. I’m talking to more retailers and I’ve got additional products in mind.”

Tetragon2, the parts of which are made in America, is a game of geometric strategy, a race among players to build squares that is easy to learn but hard to master, Moriarity said. And designed as nonviolent, social competition where nobody gets shot, on screen or off! Imagine that.

Moriarity, 50, started designing and tinkering with toys as a teenager when his dad worked as a toolmaker at Tonka in the 1970s.

“He would bring parts home for us kids, and my two brothers and I would put them together,” Moriarity recalled.

UnitedHealthcare has become the latest business to join forces with the Mayo Clinic on a “living lab,” a practical research effort to help seniors stay at home, and to enjoy good health and a high quality of life as they age.

Other participants in the project, which launched in September 2011, are Best Buy, General Mills and Sioux Falls, S.D.-based Good Samaritan Society, the nation’s largest nonprofit operator of nursing homes and senior housing. The partnership with Mayo brings together the strengths of each organization to test new prototypes

or find new ways to use existing design, technology or services, said Dr. Nicholas

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UnitedHealthcare, the nation's largest insurer, brings a key player to the table with a shared goal of establishing more effective and cost-controlled care, such as preventing rehospitalizations, LaRusso said.

"To deal globally with the challenges of health care, you need patients, you need providers, you need payers," he said. "Everybody needs to be at the table ... because so much of the health care dollar goes to support the care and chronic conditions and pharmaceutical needs of senior citizens.

Hats off to CEO Jim Welford and the crew at Atomic Data for putting up a \$50,000 matching grant this month to help finish the year strong for the American Refugee Committee (ARC), an entrepreneurial nonprofit that has found innovative ways to help distressed people help themselves to a sustainable future in hot spots around the globe.

Minneapolis-based Atomic Data has been recognized for its growth and a culture that encourages financial support of and employee-driven engagement with a number of nonprofits.

ARC won the prestigious 2012 Peter F. Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation for its "I Am a Star" program that taps Somalis here and around the globe to shape and support ARC's work in Somalia.

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