



MWCA Best Practices

SUBMISSION FORM

WIB Name/WSA Central Minnesota Workforce Investment Board/WSA 5

Submitted by Barbara Chaffee, CEO, Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services

**Attach a description (no more than two pages) describing the innovative best practice.
Please address the following:**

- Overview describing the innovative best practice
- Jobseeker impact (i.e.: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)
- Community impact (i.e.: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)
- Identification of those involved, including collaborators
- Leveraging/alignment of outside resources
- Ideas for replication/lessons learned

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Tour of Manufacturing

Submitted by Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services – July 24, 2009

Overview describing the innovative best practice:

The Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association (CMMA) is a newly formed trade association and sector initiative. CMMA's many activities include networking, industry tours, strategic planning, identification and prioritization of cluster issues and solutions and educational presentations. CMMA provides a forum for sharing ideas and information and assists in a dialog regarding the economic and social value of manufacturing to the public, educational institutions and government entities. CMMA and its Workforce Development Committee also focus on the preparation and delivery of skilled labor to meet current and anticipated needs and opportunities in area manufacturing. The committee collaborates with industry, primary, secondary and post-secondary education partners to achieve this goal. The committee serves to promote and advance manufacturing career awareness to citizens, schools and communities.

On April 25, 2009, CMMA and partnering entities facilitated a successful large scale public "Tour of Manufacturing." Our manufacturers are concerned about finding qualified workers when the economy improves and as older worker retire. The purpose of the tour was to increase interest in manufacturing careers, to educate the general public about what manufacturing is really like, and to dispel thoughts that all the jobs are going overseas and are dark, dirty, boring and dangerous. Manufacturers need skilled workers who can implement and utilize leading edge technology. Like other industries, they need some of the best and brightest to choose careers in manufacturing.

(Below are excerpts from the widely circulated event promotional magazine)

Why a tour of manufacturers?... *"Been to a theme park lately? Loads of fun by yourself; even more so with someone special. Heck, take the whole family! Been to a manufacturer lately? Also, loads of fun for everyone! Any difference between the two? Oh, yeah: the Tour of Manufacturing is free! And it will change your mind about a few things! And it could impact your economic future-or- that of your children-in a very positive way. Bet you've driven by one of central Minnesota's manufacturers many times. Ever been inside? Ever wondered what they do? Here's your chance. Have your kids ever been in one? Not hard to imagine one of your children thinking, "Oh, wow! Cool!"*

Looking ahead... *Has it ever been more clear how everyone's future is connected to jobs? Jobs-good jobs-can no longer be taken for granted. While manufacturing in central Minnesota has been, is, and will be a powerful source of good paying jobs, manufacturers also need the availability of a highly trained workforce. Yes, it is a two-way street of opportunity. Workers for jobs. Jobs for workers. Some people have not had the opportunity to experience, first hand, how impressive our modern manufacturing facilities are. They are clean, bright, intelligently managed and have—in many cases—very expensive, very impressive, very cutting edge equipment. Good places to work; good places for a successful career. We want people to see some of our manufacturers so they will be able to consider manufacturing as the employment opportunity that it is. We think people, especially young people who will soon be thinking about a career, will be amazed-even WOWED! Area educational institutions offer programs of instruction leading to jobs in machining, welding, engineering, automated systems, robotics and more. There are seats available in these classes. But even if you have no plans to seek a job in manufacturing and don't know anyone who could build a wonderful future right here in central Minnesota manufacturing, take the tour. You will be welcome. You will find it interesting and enjoyable-do not be surprised to find a free snack and a beverage some places along the way."*

Job seeker impact:

Job seekers gained rare, first hand, on-premise insight into careers in manufacturing. They witnessed advanced technology complexity and utilization in addition to modern world-class manufacturing practices. Job seekers learned of techniques to improve their marketability and earning potential by observing in-demand and high-wage occupations. Job seekers learned of the broad range of careers within manufacturing as well as skill training and advancement resources, options and facilities. Job seekers gained resources, information, hope and inspiration.

Community impact:

Communities were able to recognize and celebrate their manufacturing members as critical contributors to their economies and crucial threads of the ties that bind them together. Communities gain jobs, tax base and additional business opportunities with dollars earned and spent locally. Communities gained a better understanding and appreciation of their “industrial park”, business leadership, and pride in their skilled labor force and amenities. Workers experienced pride in their employers, their workplace, and the craftsmanship invested in globally marketed products and services. Students gained dynamic exposure to gainful career possibilities, some even received academic credit for their attendance and participation.

Identification of those involved, including collaborators:/Leveraging/alignment of outside resources:

CMMA Board of Directors and its committees are composed of volunteer stakeholders sharing common vision compelled to contribute time, talent and resources for the furtherance of area manufacturing interests. Project collaborators include business and industry, service, suppliers, education, economic and workforce development entities, DEED FIRST Grant funds, WorkForce Centers (St. Cloud/Monticello), CMMA, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical College, Initiative Foundation, St. Cloud Times, area chambers of commerce, three area radio stations, and others invested in and supported this successful initiative. Eleven manufacturing companies participated and 5000 visits were made by tour participants.

Ability for use or replication by others:

This model is replicable in that the components are not unique to central Minnesota. Manufacturing is present statewide as are many similar supports, resources and related stakeholder entities. By design, the event magazine and related materials have evolved into teaching, career exploration and promotion resources. CMMA invites all to adapt and utilize this proven tool and offers implementation experience and skilled assistance to all interested. CMMA has learned that with resolve, focus, and determination it is entirely possible to support manufacturing, even in tough times, by putting rubber on the road. CMMA convenes, concentrates, innovates and connects people, places and opportunities.