

OVERVIEW

One of MWCA's Goals for 2006 was to encourage and share best practices among members.

In addition to setting aside time to share ideas and discuss innovative initiatives at the Annual Meeting in Duluth, MWCA will honor up to three Workforce Investment Boards whose innovative efforts and collaboration had a positive impact in their Workforce Service Area. These awards will recognize efforts to think innovatively, leverage resources, and benefit both jobseekers and the greater community.

NOMINATION GUIDELINES

MWCA encourages each WIB to submit at least one nomination.

Please complete the attached nomination form, and no more than two pages describing the initiative. Include a discussion of how the Board's efforts support MWCA's goals of ensuring that both employers and workers have the resources and skills Minnesota needs to remain competitive.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Judges will be selected and announced shortly. Judges will evaluate each nomination and award points based solely on the information you provide in the nomination information. The categories and possible points are:

Criteria for Selection of Outstanding Best Practices	Maximum Points
Overview describing the innovative best practice	25
Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)	25
Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)	20
Identification of those involved, including collaborators	15
Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	10
Ability for use or replication by others	05

DEADLINE: *Please submit nominations by close of business Thursday, July 27, 2006.*

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

Trish Taylor phone: (612) 770-8934 e-mail: ttaylor818@yahoo.com

Anne Olson phone: (651) 224-3344 e-mail aolson@mncounites.org



MWCA 2006 BEST PRACTICES RECOGNITION NOMINATION FORM

WIB Name/WSA [The Central Minnesota Workforce Investment Board](#)

Submitted by [Barbara Chaffee, CEO of Central MN Jobs & Training Services](#)

Attach a description (no more than two pages) describing the initiative.

Please return via e-mail or fax to Anne Olson by **Thursday, July 27.**
aolson@mncounties.org or (651) 224-6540

(Leave this section blank -to be completed by judges)

Judge # _____

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Overview describing the innovative best practice	25	
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TOTAL:	100	

MWCA 2006 Best Practices Recognition Award

The Central Minnesota Workforce Investment Board (WIB) respectfully submits their candidacy for nomination for the first annual **MWCA 2006 Best Practices Recognition Award** for the board's Marketing efforts in Year 2005-06 impacting WSA 5.

I. Overview describing the innovative best practice

The Central Minnesota Workforce Investment Board developed a rigorous marketing plan for Year 2005-06 and hosted a number of special events to engage the community in the workforce challenges for our region and enlist their support in solving them, in addition to identifying how the Workforce Center System will serve communities experiencing change, growth and diversity within the business environment. The board also wanted to increase the awareness of Workforce Center Services offered in WSA 5 and the importance of the Central Minnesota Workforce Investment Board as conveners in workforce development.

Special WIB marketing events included:

- Small Business Town Hall Meetings
- Regional Industry Roundtable events focused on the Manufacturing Sector
- Business Expos/Job Fairs implemented in new areas throughout Region 7E, 7W, and 6E.

SMALL BUSINESS TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The Goals Identified: To have a minimum of 15 area small businesses represented at each WIB Marketing Town Hall Meeting to (1.) receive information from the WIB and WFC Partners concerning the importance of the Central Minnesota Workforce Board as conveners in Community Workforce issues and concerns; (2.) to determine current economic and business issues in order to work on initiatives, provide resources and information for practical solutions; and (3.) to schedule follow-up community meetings in order to address small business and community identified concerns, if any existed. Businesses in attendance had the opportunity to inform the WIB about what they perceived as main issues or problems facing small businesses in regards to economic and workforce development. The agenda template required small businesses to respond to 3 key questions concerning (a.) obstacles in operating a successful business in their community or region, (b.) ideas or solutions to overcoming these obstacles and (c.) challenges small business face in regards to employee situations. **Outcomes:** Approximately 128 business representatives attended in Region 7E (Mille Lacs, Kanabec, Isanti, Chisago, Pine); 43 businesses in Region 7W (Sherburne, Wright); and Region 6E had 25 businesses to date and two communities have not completed their events (Meeker, McLeod, Renville, Kandiyohi).

MANUFACTURING/INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE EVENTS

The Goals Identified: Regional Industry Roundtable events were developed in three identified regions in WSA 5:

- Region 7E (Mille Lacs, Kanabec, Isanti, Chisago, Pine);
- Region 7W (Wright, Sherburne); and
- Region 6E (Meeker, McLeod, Kandiyohi, Renville).
- (The Workforce Investment Board chose Manufacturing as their targeted industry sector)

The Region 7E Manufacturing Roundtable event was held in conjunction with the Region 7E Annual Employer's Conference held at the Hinckley Grant Casino on April 26th, 2006. Twenty-two Manufacturers attended. Region 7W Manufacturing Roundtable event was held in conjunction with the Wright County Economic Development Conference in June 2006 and touts over 40 manufacturers from Wright and Sherburne Counties in attendance. Region 6E Manufacturing Roundtable event was held in Willmar in December of 2005 and supported 32 local manufacturers. Commissioner Kramer was the facilitator of this event.

The goals of the Industry Round Table project included:

- Invite 10 targeted demand industries to attend the Round Table event in each region
- Focus on a demand industry (Manufacturing) in the 3 regions and determine common business issues that may be addressed through Workforce Center services and resources.
- Provide data from the Regional Economic Profile completed by the Central Minnesota Workforce Investment Board to demand industries to assist with needs presented.
- Identify the top 5 greatest needs in the targeted demand industry across the 3 regions and find solutions to address them, followed by another scheduled Round Table event in Year 2007 which will present a solution to the need(s). For example, the number one concern in all three regions for manufacturing and small business is "rising health care costs". In Year 2007, the WIB will invite legislator(s) or other consultants in the state that are currently working on health care costs to address community businesses and enlist their support in solving this important issue.

Outcomes: The results of the Manufacturing Round Table events resulted in gathering the top issues and concerns of business, including:

- Rising Health Care Costs
- Employee pool's lack of technical skills; Need qualified skilled workers
- Employee's Lack of Soft Skills (Communication, written and verbal communication, time management, how to speak to one's supervisor, interpersonal relationship skills, etc)
- Lack of good transportation in the rural areas (no bus system in rural Minnesota; people do not have cars or driver's licenses; or employees do not have reliable transportation)
- How to motivate Generation X employees

- Drug Testing (drugs are playing a significant negative factor in today's work environment; affecting production and costly down time)
- More technical skills training implementation needed in high school curriculum

BUSINESS EXPOS/JOB FAIRS

The Goals Identified: The goals of the Business Expo/ Job Fair events were as follows:

- To select three new sites to host or co-host job fairs and/or business expos, including one (1) in the Metro Region and two (2) in WSA 5, one in the northern region and one in the southern region
- To create opportunities for at least 15 high-demand, hi-wage businesses to participate in these events.
- And create an evaluation form for businesses and job seekers to complete and express satisfaction/suggestions for improvement ideas.
- To find positive employment options for job-seekers
- The purpose of this activity is:
 - ✓ Help rural Minnesota communities identify high-demand needs in their communities and encourage young people who have left their home-towns to return to rural Minnesota and strengthen local economies
 - ✓ To attract educated, trained, skilled workers for local businesses in greater Minnesota communities experiencing high unemployment.
 - ✓ To match job-seekers skills with employer's needs

Outcomes: Over 81 Businesses attended the Central Region Monticello Job Fair with approximately 1,500 job seekers in attendance as well. Many found jobs or solid job leads. In the Southern Region, 30 business exhibitors attended the Litchfield event and only 200 job seekers were present. In the Northern Region, 25 exhibitors attended Anoka-Ramsey Community College at the Cambridge Campus with 150 jobseekers receiving career exploration assistance. Prior to the Cambridge event, community business representatives received a workshop on hiring/selecting the best applicants for the job. Job Seekers were presented a workshop on effective job search strategies.

II. Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

All the aforementioned events have either a direct or indirect impact on jobseekers. The Business Expos/Job Fairs have a direct impact as they created opportunities for jobseekers to meet with high-demand, high-wage industry representatives to find immediate job leads. Thousands of jobseekers were able to find positive employment options and received workshops on effective job search strategies. The Town Hall and Manufacturing Round Table events have an indirect impact as they clearly identify concerns of finding qualified workers for local businesses, while addressing training issues.

III. Community Impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

Best Practices and Lessons Learned: The more WIB members scheduled and implemented the Town Hall and Round Table events, the better we became at the process itself, including partnering and collaborating effectively with key community groups; understanding how our communities function; finding appropriate places in the community to have events; collaborating with WFC partners who just recently began to understand their value and service to the WIB; and creating a partnership with small businesses and key industries sectors.

WIB members found that the smaller the Town Hall group, the easier it was to manage the data gathered. Co-sponsoring a Town Hall event with Economic Development, Chambers or Community Groups worked well when it was specifically for the purpose of determining business needs and not in conjunction with community monthly meetings. On the other hand, for the roundtable event it was more beneficial to schedule it during an existing conference held for businesses to draw on regular attendees and encourage new business within the targeted industry to come to the event. Data was easy to collect as well. Business participants were excited to contribute their unified concerns to the WIB, identifying at least 3-5 major employee concerns.

The most important lesson learned by the WIB and WFC Partners is that we need to collaborate more successfully with Economic Development, Chambers, Businesses, Education, Counties and Community groups in order to effectively meet the economic needs and workforce demands of our communities. We need to learn more about "them" (the community member groups) and the way they connect with business and industry so we can become better partners in meeting the economic needs in our region. Already existing community groups, in most cases, have a vested interest in their areas already. The WIB must find a way to collaborate more effectively with these identified groups and convene them to address and solve workforce issues together in the WSA 5 region. This is a tremendously difficult job when there are 11 counties. We possibly need to look at resource mapping as a viable option to finding all the players in the workforce development game in order to be a successful player.

IV. Identification of those involved, including collaborators

The Central Minnesota Workforce Investment Board developed the marketing plan, its goals and objectives. All Workforce Center partner staff had the opportunity to participate in the aforementioned events. WFC Managers from JS, RS, SSB, CMJTS were selected by the WIB and JPB to lead out in specific projects, but WIB and JPB members always participated in the facilitation of the events and marketing to the community. Additional community partners were selected to be a part of the collaboration and help support the WIB initiatives, including the Chamber of Commerce, County and City Economic Development professionals, Ridgewater College, Pine Technical College, Anoka-Ramsey Community College, County

Workforce Development officers, and other community-based organizations. Their collaborative efforts made each event a success. Pre-existing relationships between local organizations was a key factor in the success of this project.

V. Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

Much to the surprise of WIB members, the community stepped up to the plate and offered funding to support the WIBs marketing efforts. The WIB received \$14,174 from the state to complete this intensive initiative, yet collaborative partners insisted on supporting the WIB's initiatives through financial and collaborative resources, such as paying for center rent, food, newspaper articles, mailing efforts, etc. This helped to successfully complete the projects in all three regions of 7W, 7E, and 6E.

VI. Ability for use or replication by others

The WIB created a template for these events in order to replicate them in all regions of WSA 5. Reports can be accessed by contacting Barbara Chaffee. These projects are easily replicated across all regions.

VII. How this initiative supports MWCA's Goals

In conclusion, the Central Minnesota Workforce Investment Board initiatives outlined in this application support the Minnesota Workforce Council Association's (MWCA) goals of ensuring that both employers and workers have the resources and skills Minnesota needs to remain competitive by asking local small businesses and industry sectors what they need to be competitive in today's market and what skills jobseekers need to be hired in their business and industry sectors. We are learning much as a Workforce Investment Board about our communities and their needs to stay competitive and viable in the 21st Century.