Workforce Notes from the Field is intended to inform members, partners, and policy makers about what is happening with Minnesota’s local workforce boards and service providers. If you would like to be added or removed from this email, or to provide content, please contact akilzer@mncounties.org

Northwest Minnesota Private Industry Council
(Counties Served: Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau)

Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Programs
(Counties Served: Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Todd, traverse, Wadena, Wilkin)

Project STRIVE - Students Taking a Renewed Interest in the Value of Education - is a Rotary sponsored mentoring program in Brainerd designed to help students most in need and at risk to graduate. The program brings Rotary volunteers and other professionals, including RMCEP youth service coordinator staff, into the school to present short topics including career exploration. Volunteers dedicate their time to help high school seniors graduate on time and transition to post-secondary activities. Students who maintain attendance and raise their GPA qualify for scholarships. In Brainerd, these scholarships are matched by the Central Lakes College Foundation. This is one of many innovative ideas developed in partnership with local communities and the Minnesota WorkForce Centers. See the Brainerd WorkForce Center Facebook page for more details.

Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (CMJTS)
(Counties Served: Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, Mille Lacs, Pine, Renville, Sherburne, and Wright)

One hundred seven low-income youth enrolled in CMJTS’ Great Lakes College Ready Grant are increasing their basic reading and math skills in preparation for college.

CMJTS Youth employment specialists worked with local high schools to identify low-income students who would benefit from this learning opportunity. The youth completed initial assessments and set up an online account on Skills Tutor™. Student time is tracked and stipends are issued for “countable” study hours. After students complete 50 hours of tutoring, they take a post-test to measure their academic improvement. To date, 11 youth have taken the Accuplacer® college placement assessment.

Unanticipated results of this successful ongoing grant program is the enthusiastic support it has received from the secondary schools. They volunteered school space, computer access, and staff who helped the students navigate the online program. One school hired an instructor to support the grant, which enabled the students to earn academic credit!
Participating youth are co-enrolled in the Minnesota Youth Program or the WIA Youth Program and receive individual case management, career guidance, and support services. For more information contact Rita Borchert, Youth Program Manager rborchert@cmjts.org or Leslie Wojtowicz lwojtowicz@cmjts.org.

Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (Counties Served: Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Swift, Yellow Medicine)

SW MN had a candy plant (Farley-Sathers/Ferrara) for many years in the small community of Round Lake, MN. Many of the employees commuted from a 30 mile radius of the community. In January of 2010, the warehouse and packing unit closed eliminating approximately 200 jobs, but the Corporate office remained open. In July, 2012, we received word that the company had been bought out and the Corporate office would be closing eliminating an additional 110 jobs. The loss of this many jobs in any community, especially a rural area, had a major impact across the region, since employment opportunities to absorb that many laid off workers were limited. As a result, the local school and local bank ended up closing. A TAA petition with the State of MN was filed on behalf of the workers. Once approved coordination with the TAA office began and information was provided to the workers. A Dislocated Worker grant was approved. On-the-Job contracts became a major activity resulting in 25 On the Job training contracts involving 18 local businesses. The contracts total approximately $557,000. A significant figure going back into the local economy in a rural area. In addition, 25 individuals were afforded an opportunity to learn a new occupation and remain members of the community.

For additional information on the Plant or OJT Development Contact: Sandy Demuth, Career Counselor - SW MN PIC sdemuth@swmnpic.org or 507-376-3116.

South Central Workforce Council (Counties Served: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan)

The South Central WorkForce Partners will be hosting several labor representatives on April 8th to speak to Workforce Center staff and high school counselors about how to access the variety of career opportunities available in skilled trades. There will be representatives from: Bricklayers, Carpenters, Cement Masons, Electricians, Elevator Constructors, Laborers, Mechanical (heating & cooling), Millwrights, Operating Engineers, Painters and Plumbers & Pipefitters. Anyone interested in attending should contact hgleason@workforcecouncil.org.

Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development, Inc. (Counties Served: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha)

Faribault/Northfield:
New LinkedIn group called Faribault/Northfield Workforce Connection has been started by Julie Olson (WDI), Evie Wold (Voc Rehab) and Gayle Tuthill (DEED), a great partnership, and within a month 72 members have joined.

- Utilizing Wanted Analytics for Dislocated Workers searching for openings.
- Partnering with ABE for a Health Care Academy starting on March 24.
- Scrubs Camp in Austin on May 27 for any person interested in the healthcare field.

**Owatonna:**

- Looking at a Transportation Logistics Career Fair that will cover all aspects of Transportation. Tentative date April 23 - To be held in Owatonna
- Collecting applications in house for Little Caesars, Fairway Foods, Aramark, and Viracon.
- Partnership with United Way and Salvation Army and Owatonna Shoe in a Boots to Work Program. Anyone who is below 200% of poverty level and lives in Steele can be referred to the Salvation Army for a voucher for a new pair of work boots.

For further information, contact Dari Sunderland at dsunderland@wfdi.ws or 507-252-6524.

**City of Minneapolis Employment and Training Program**

The fourth Annual Minneapolis PARTNERS for Youth Conference, held February 14 at the Minneapolis Convention Center, was an overwhelming success, attracting 350 youth work professionals from 90 organizations.

A diverse and dynamic group of speakers and panelists provided in-depth insight, as well as practical tools for youth work, during two plenary sessions and 15 workshops. The conference’s four themes included: “Strengthening the Field of Youth Work,” “Reframing Youth Violence Prevention,” “Equity & Cultural Competency,” and “Youth Worker Resources and Self Care.”

Mayor Hodges proclaimed Friday, February 14 as Youth Worker Appreciation Day to serve as a reminder of the great work done in Minneapolis to serve youth.

The conference was sponsored by Minneapolis Employment and Training, Minneapolis Health Department, Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

View pictures and Tweets from the conference and see the complete agenda and workshop materials here.

**Dakota-Scott Workforce Services**
• Get Jobs Job Fair is March 27 in Eagan. Traditionally, this event has 100+ employers and 2000 to 3000 attendees. http://mn.gov/deed/events/get-jobs/index.jsp
• Two of the area’s largest employers UTC, Burnsville and Thomson Reuters, Eagan have held recruiting/interviewing events at the Burnsville WorkForce Center in the past month.

What’s Hot In Training at Local Colleges?
Dakota County Technical College www.dctc.edu
• Railroad Conductor Technology (Public and Private) – Average Salary: $43,856; Class Length: 7 weeks
• Welding Technology (Manufacturing or Energy Jobs) – Average Salary: $38,340
• Electrical Lineworkers (Utilities, Public and Private) – Average Salary: $63,280
• Civil Engineering Technology (Public and Private) – Average Salary: $55,760

Inver Hills Community College www.inverhills.edu
• IT-Related Careers (Network & Security) – Average Salary: $50K-$90K
• Registered Nurse – Average Salary: $70K
• Business-Related Careers (Customer Service, Office Clerks, Accountants/Auditors, Marketing, Finance) – Average Salary: $30K-$90K

• Resource room staff recently presented information on WFC services and specialized programs for ex-offenders to approximately 20 inmates during Quiet Time at the Dakota County Jail.
• Burnsville High School hosted an evening Career Fair on Jan. 27th. The event provided students and their parents an opportunity to meet with local businesses to learn more about employment opportunities in the community and gain information about jobs for the future. Several employers and recruiters, along with representatives from the WFC, attended as part of Career Day at the school.
• WFC staff presented “Jobs, Careers + Other Fun Stuff” to 300 sophomores at Northfield High School Feb. 14th. In conjunction with colleagues from Southeast MN, staff also had a booth with career related resources and information.
• WFC staff met with District 917 Career and Tech Ed. staff and Alternative Learning Center teachers on Feb. 20th providing information on: current and projected workforce needs; new initiatives; and advice for young job-seekers.
• On Feb. 25th, WFC staff along with Jim Finley, Veterans Employment Director for the Department of Employment and Economic Development, appeared as guests on KDWA Radio (Hastings) speaking on the topic of employment programs for Veterans.
• Rep. Anna Wills visited the Burnsville WFC in February to learn more about employment and training programs and services.

Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council
High school students, parents, faculty and staff from seven Central Minnesota schools are receiving services through the Outreach to Schools Project of Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council (SBETC). These services to Albany, Sauk Rapids, Melrose, Paynesville, Foley, Rocori, and West Central ALC provide much-needed career services and support for student planning. SBETC has trained three post-secondary student interns from St. Cloud State University and the College of St. Benedict to help provide training related to researching career options and valuable labor market and workforce information for career preparation and transition planning. This project was funded in part by the Initiative Foundation a Regional Foundation.