

Northeast Minnesota  
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD MEETING  
Rustic Rock Chop House – Eveleth  
Wednesday, January 29, 2014

Regularly scheduled meeting called to order by Chair Stone at 10:18 a.m.

**WIB members present:**

Bud Stone, Jill Anderson, Paul Carlson, Sue Collins, Betsy Harmon, Jeff Lee, Allen Rasmussen, Roland Root, Mike Valentine, John Grahek, Tom Jamar, Craig Pagel, Root Roland, Mike Valentine

**Excused:** Dave Hart, Al Rudeck

**Absent:** Terri Nystrom, Barb Hilde

**Guests:** Chris Maddy and Anna Tennis (Northspan), Jan Saxhaug (DEED), Roy Smith (IRRRB/NHED), Joe Silko (ALI), Marla Beaty (DEED)

**Staff:** Michelle Ufford, Judy Carlson

**Motion was made by Valentine, supported by Rasmussen to approve the October 30, 2013 minutes as written; motion carried unanimously.**

**Northforce**

*Chris Maddy and Anna Tennis, Northspan*

Northspan staff gave a presentation on *Northforce.org*, a pilot project designed to develop a ‘talent community’ site for the region: a tool designed for finding the right talent to pair with local employers. Access to the site is membership-based and currently 103 businesses are signed up.

Organizations involved in developing this tool include the City of Duluth, City of Superior, IRRRB, the Development Association of Superior/Douglas County, APEX and Northspan. This project hopes to attract experienced talent for area business clusters using a systems approach to ensure globally competency, with specific goals to establish and maintain this online tool to support talent attraction and marketing through intentional retention efforts. Northforce is also intended as a marketing tool for both job seekers who wish to the region and as a method of promoting our regional workforce to prospective employers.

The site includes an event calendar, latest news, job fair listings, and eventually pages dedicated to specific communities throughout the region. Anna explained the database where individuals can set up a career profile, attach resumes, and list their talents to form a comprehensive talent community that goes beyond traditional job banks. Member employers can then query the database to search for potential employees.

The site will be curated in the sense that actual staff will make matches between employer openings and job seekers, who can indicate varying levels of privacy that would protect identifying information. For job seekers who wish for privacy, if an employer expresses interest in the candidate, staff will contact that job seeker to ask if they would like their information released to the inquiring employer.

Discussion included how the site relates to MinnesotaWorks.net, which will populate Northforce with local job openings along with other prevalent job posting websites.

### **Regional Labor Market Update**

*Jan Saxhaug, DEED*

Jan Saxhaug, Regional Labor Market Analyst, presented an update for the region. Employment is growing statewide, with over 45,000 jobs added compared to December 2012. Statewide unemployment (4.6%) is lower than the US average (6.7%) but the UI rate is higher in the northeast than elsewhere in Minnesota, at 6.8%. In Workforce Service Area 3, not including Duluth, industries that grew between the second quarter of 2012 to the second quarter of 2013 (the latest available data) included retail; healthcare and social assistance; transportation and warehousing; manufacturing; public administration; professional, scientific and technical services; real estate rental and leasing; finance and insurance; and administrative/support and waste management and remediation services. Declining industries over the same period include management of companies and enterprises; construction; mining; agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; information; arts, entertainment, and recreation; wholesale trade; and accommodation and food services. Nine out of 20 sectors have recovered recessionary losses with healthcare, mining, public administration, finance/insurance, arts/entertainment as the biggest gainers. Eleven sectors, including manufacturing, construction and retail trade are still below pre-recession levels.

Job vacancies in the NE Region are at an all-time high but are for lower wage jobs such as the accommodation and food service, office and administrative support, and personal care services. Job growth in the Duluth/Superior MSA increased by 1.3 percent, adding jobs mostly in the leisure and hospitality sector.

New Labor Market tools will be debuting this spring, including new occupation projections and a cost of living tool. Jan will showcase the new data and tools at an upcoming meeting.

### **Business Services Report**

*Marla Beaty, DEED BSS*

Marla Beaty, DEED Business Services Specialist, reported on her activities from January 1, 2013 to January 28, 2014. The industries targeted included mining, health care and social assistance, manufacturing, wholesale trade, waste management and remediation service, retail trade, transportation and warehousing. Her service territory is Aitkin, Itasca, Koochiching, and western St. Louis counties, though 55% of her activity was based in St. Louis and 39% in Itasca counties. She provided 195 consultations and follow-up services (includes duplicate counts of more than one consultation per business). Of those consultations, 53% were about recruitment, 18% about listing jobs with MinnesotaWorks.net, and other topics including salary information, interviewing and screening candidates, and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. 48% of her contacts were with mining, manufacturing and healthcare employers. Of the total

consultations, 54% indicated immediate hiring activity and 8% hiring within 6 months. She also reported that businesses have a general sense of optimism about the future.

Marla continued with a report on Mining Industry Day at the MN Discovery Center on January 24. Twenty-two mining and related businesses attended to speak with 800 job seekers about immediate hiring needs in this industry. Over 100 people traveled over 50 miles to attend this event.

The meeting adjourned at 12:05. The next meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2014, with a visit from DEED Workforce Division Deputy Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly.