

Northeast Minnesota
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD MEETING
Iron Range Resources – Eveleth MN
Wednesday, February 25, 2015

Regularly scheduled meeting called to order by Chair Stone at 10:05 a.m.

WIB members present:

Bud Stone, Jill Anderson, Darik Carlson, Paul Carlson, Sue Collins, Betsy Harmon, Dave Hart, Tom Jamar, Jeff Lee, Terri Nystrom, Allen Rasmussen, Roland Root, David Ulrich, Mike Valentine

Excused: Barb Hilde, Craig Pagel, Jason Quiggin, Al Rudeck

Absent: Stan Paczynski, Kelly Zink

Guests: Lee Bloomquist, Joy Ruedeusch, IRRRB; Trent Janezich, NHED; Marla Beatty, Erik White, DEED

Staff: Michelle Ufford, Renee' Marconett

Motion was made by Ulrich, supported by Root to approve the December 3, 2014 minutes as written; motion carried unanimously.

State and Federal Legislative Update

Michelle Ufford

Director Ufford distributed three handouts regarding legislative bills related to workforce development. Senate File 472 would appropriate \$10 million statewide for high school career counseling services, a result of the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training's demonstrated Career EdVenture initiative, and would allow all workforce service areas across the state the opportunity to replicate Career EdVenture activities. Senate Bill 707 proposes funding to provide the same career counseling activities for school districts with the addition of rural workforce system coordinators to coordinate workforce development programs. Authored by members of a rural senate caucus, this bill has bi-partisan support and expands the Minnesota Youth Program from just over \$2 million statewide to \$10 million and allocates \$2,250,000 in 2016 for 9 rural workforce program coordinators. This expansion of the Minnesota Youth Program would allow all workforce service areas to provide employment and career counseling services to school districts as well as expanded opportunities to provide work experience for eligible youth. Members of the Minnesota Workforce Council Association Operations Committee, consisting of the WSA directors from all 16 workforce service areas and chaired by Ufford, support both bills but would prefer an increase to the MN Youth Program and the flexibility to determine what portion of those funds could be spent on Career EdVenture-type activities. Senate Bill 525, authored in part by Senator Tomassoni, relates to providing on the job training grants to employers for hiring new employees, and is proposed at a level of \$5 million in 2016 and \$10 million in 2017. As written, these funds would go to DEED for distribution to employers but the MWCA has proposed that if funded, program dollars be allocated to local Workforce Investment Boards for distribution to applicable businesses in each local area.

Labor Market Information Update

Erik White

Erik gave a presentation on current unemployment information in the region which included local area unemployment statistics, recovery from the recession and the changing environment. Unemployment rates are greater in northern Minnesota due to seasonal variation and industry mix. He also outlined hiring difficulties caused by a mismatch between job requirements and the training, skills, and experience of applicants; along with problems that are unrelated to candidates' qualifications, such as unattractive work hours, wages, and geographic location.

MnSCU Initiatives

Charting the Future, Sue Collins
AdvancedMN, Trent Janezich

Charting the Future is an initiative spanning all 31 colleges and universities in Minnesota State Colleges and Universities intended to enable fundamental change so the system can meet significant challenges facing all of higher education and continue to fulfill three fundamental commitments - ensuring access to an extraordinary education for all Minnesotans; being the partner of choice to meet Minnesota's workforce and community needs; and delivering to students, employers, communities and taxpayers the highest value, most affordable higher education option. Recommendations include increased access, affordability, excellence, and service by forging deeper collaborations among our colleges and universities to maximize our collective strengths, resources, and the talents of our faculty and staff.

Advanced Minnesota is the recognized regional leader in providing customized training solutions to meet the ever changing needs of business and industry. The goal is to provide innovative educational approaches to enhance workforce skills, to promote career and professional development opportunities, and contribute to the economic vitality of NE Minnesota. Courses are customized to fit an organization's unique needs and training is provide onsite or at a customer chosen location. Examples of occupational areas in which Advanced Minnesota offers high quality education solutions include Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), Fire Training, Health Occupations, Computer Training, Craft Training/Apprenticeship Program and Testing Services. Over 15,000 individuals received 197,000 hours of customized training in fiscal year 2014.

MN Youth at Work Competitive Grant Opportunity

Michelle Ufford

The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training is considering applying for the Minnesota Youth at Work Competitive Grants. The concept under consideration would provide eligible/at-risk students enrolled in the Applied Learning Institute programs of study (pre-engineering, industrial technology, transportation/ automotive, healthcare, and construction trades through 20 schools across the region), with paid work experience in the related sector/industry during the school year and an education and private sector-lead project-based learning opportunity in the summer. **Motion was made by Rasmussen, supported by Valentine, allowing the Workforce Investment Board support for grant submission; motion carried unanimously.** Ufford will update the board when more information is received.

Upcoming Events

Northland Foundation Career Expo: October 27, DECC
Construct Tomorrow: March 10, DECC
Iron Range Job Fair: March 20 Miners Arena, Virginia
Northland Job Fair: April 1, DECC
Iron Mining Expo: September 16-17, MN Discovery Center
Science and Engineering: October 23-24, Range Rec Center

Meeting adjourned at 12:00. Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 22, 2015 at Iron Range Resources in Eveleth.