

Dakota County Workforce Investment Board News and Notes

August 2003 Edition, Vol. 1-6

Mission: Providing comprehensive, professional, and timely services for jobseekers and employers.

Welcome to the Dakota County Workforce Investment Board's (WIB) News and Notes. The newsletter's purpose is to provide you with an update of workforce and economic development activities.

Upcoming Events

Job Fair – October 2nd. See story.

Dakota County WIB Meeting – Sept. 19th at the Northern Service Center, West St. Paul

Job Fair Update

Here are some of the jobs that were available at the Aug. 7th Job Fair, according to Dave Niermann, Job Service Program Manager.

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|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| - Systems Analyst | - Administrative Assistant |
| - Backroom Office | - Customer Service Rep. |
| - Bank Teller | - Financial Analyst |
| - Financial Planner | - Maintenance Technician |
| - Call Center Rep. | - Sales Representative |
| - Marketing Coordinator | - Media Acquisition Rep. |
| - Business Services | - Sales Manager |
| - Caretaker | - General Warehouse |
| - Leasing Consultant | - Assistant Manager |

About 1,600 people attended the fair in Eagan, which featured more than 30 employers. The next job fair is Oct. 2 at the Minnesota Workforce Center in West St. Paul. For information www.mnwfc.org/dakota/jobfair.htm

Latest Workforce Investment Board News

For the latest in WIB news, meeting minutes, etc... go to <http://www.mnwfc.org/dakota/wib/index.htm>. The WIB is comprised of 21 members... 11 of which represent companies in Dakota County.

LaDonna Boyd Wins Award

Congratulations to LaDonna Boyd, Dakota Electric Association, who received the Economic Development Practitioner of the Year award from The Economic Development Association of Minnesota. Boyd is the chairperson of the Dakota County WIB and a member of the Governor's Workforce Development Council.

Dakota County Businesses in the Top 25 Lists...

The Business Journal's Top 25 List for Metro-area restaurant companies ranked by revenue include:
#1 - Buffets Inc., Eagan - \$985,000,000

The Journal's Top 25 List for Metro-area franchisors ranked by franchise-related revenue includes:

- #11 - Floor to Ceiling Corp., Burnsville - \$4,645,938
 - #15 - Protocol Inc., Mendota Heights - \$2,542,011
 - #18 - Jet-Black International, Burnsville - \$2,100,911
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Rehabilitation Services Recognized

The Federal Regional Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) conducted an audit in Minnesota in the summer of 2002. During its audit it was looking for assurance that the Minnesota WorkForce Center system was effectively serving individuals with disabilities, particularly youth. RSA recognized the excellent work the Dakota County Rehabilitation Services team was doing serving high school youth transitioning from school to work.

The RSA Regional Office was so impressed with Dakota County's Rehabilitation Services efforts, they are making a return visit in September of 2003. Plus, they're bringing along Federal Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services staff from Washington, D.C. to showcase Dakota County Rehabilitation Services' accomplishments.

Local innovations that were recognized included:

- Rehabilitation Services brought youth to the WorkForce Center to introduce them to the community resource for career and job information.
- The agency provided placement activities for the Rehabilitation Services youth served in the Tree Trust and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Summer Youth Employment Program. Rehabilitation Services funded job coaches, or applied for and utilized School to Work grants to pay for job coaches to support youth in this employment.
- Rehabilitation Services staff provided pre-classes to prepare students to take the Creative Job Seeking and Resume Writing classes taught at the WorkForce Center.
- Rehabilitation Services provided one to one attention to students in the resource room at the WorkForce Center. These efforts increased the students' comfort level and sense of independence and helped resource room staff learn how to work with the students with disabilities.

Help to Start A Business is Available

If you are interested in starting a business, then visit the Workforce Centers Resource Room in the Northern Service Center (NSC) in West St. Paul. The NSC is one of six Minnesota sites for Project "GATE" ... Growing America Through Entrepreneurship. GATE is a partnership between the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) designed to help people start and expand their own small business.

Participants will be given access to special training and assistance in applying for small business loans. Services will include one-on-one business assessment; formal classroom training; individual business counseling; and assistance in applying for SBA micro-loans. People interested in registering, should go to the kiosk in the resource room or online at www.projectgate.com.

Minnesota is one of three states selected by DOL for the project. In Minnesota, there are 1,600 openings. Of those 1,600, 800 people will be randomly selected to receive services. The remaining 800 will be in a control group.

In Minnesota, 13.3% of all employed people either own or work for a business with fewer than four employees.
www.minnesotaruralpartners.org

Apple Valley Higher Ed Partnership

The Partnership began in 2003 in response to a community demand for more accessible higher education options. Housed in the former Apple Valley City Hall building, the Partnership is the result of a public-private agreement between Dakota County Technical College, Inver Hills Community College, and Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

All three Partnership members will host a variety of courses in Apple Valley, including undergraduate, graduate and customized training classes. The facility has eight classrooms ranging in capacity from 15-50 students, and four "smart" rooms. All rooms are computer compatible. The site also is home to a strength training facility in cooperation with the United States Olympic Committee. www.higher-ed-partners.com

Good Work Kids!

Tree Trust held their annual summer picnic on Aug. 20th at Alimagnet Park in Apple Valley to recognize the work crews that worked on projects within the county. The Minnesota Youth Program funds Tree Trust activities within Dakota County. This year approximately 4 work crews involving more than 70 youth were recognized.

Youth working in this program are generally 14-15 years old. They gain valuable work experience while earning a wage, and learn numerous skills. Crews worked on a variety of projects at sites including building footbridges,

installing docks, and fixing fences. Eight youth were also recognized with a Governor's Leadership Award. Presenters of the awards included Rep. Chris Gerlach and Sen. David Knutson. www.treetrust.org

The Next Big Thing is Really Small...

Mike Opp, Dean of Transportation and Industry, at Dakota County Technical College (DCTC) was the guest speaker at the WIB's August meeting. He spoke about Nanotechnology, which is the science of manipulating matter at the atomic and molecular level. A nanometer is 1/80,000th the diameter of a human hair. By 2010, the market for nanotechnology products and services is expected to reach \$ 1trillion and generate from 80,000 to 2 million new jobs.

DCTC is developing a "Nanoscience Technician" program, which provides a career pathway from high school to graduate school. Applications for nanotechnology range from use in established industries such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals, microelectronics data storage and optoelectronics, to newly created industries.

Looking for Work?

If you're looking for a job, one of the valuable tools to use is your local workforce center. There you will find resource rooms with computers, fax machines and helpful staff to assist your job search. In July 2003, there were 3,987 visitors to the Dakota County Workforce Center resource rooms in Burnsville and West St. Paul. That brings the total for the year to 27,274 visitors. In July 2002, there were 3,208 visitors and a year-to-date total of 24,740.

Additionally, there is special funding available to help people laid off from certain industries/companies. For example, if you're laid off from a non-profit company, a school, a city (or local unit of government), or Northwest Airlines, there are special opportunities for you. For more information, call 651 554-5955 (West St. Paul) or 952-997-4850 (Burnsville).

Dakota County Growth in Housing

Between July 2000 and July 2002, there were 6,178 new housing units in Dakota County, which is a 4.6% increase. Within Minnesota, only Hennepin County added more housing units in that time frame.

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