

Dakota County Workforce Investment Board News and Notes

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

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

Upcoming Events

Dakota County WIB Meeting – March 19, 2004
Minnesota Employment Expo - March 4, 2004, Radisson Hotel, www.alumni.umn.edu/expo

WIB News

Mike Cook, Vice President and Business Representative for the Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local Union No. 1 Minnesota, and WIB member, was one of the many volunteers who helped construct the Ice Castle in St. Paul. **Dan McElroy**, Chief of Staff for Governor Pawlenty, was the guest speaker at the February WIB meeting.

Interesting International Trade

Medical Care – BusinessWeek's, Feb. 16, 2004 issue reports that U.S. citizens are traveling to Thailand, India and Singapore for medical care. Hip replacement surgery costs \$7,500 - \$8,750 in Thailand/India compared to \$25,000 - \$35,000 in the U.S. Heart by-pass surgery reportedly costs \$8,000 - \$15,000 in Thailand/India compared to \$25,000 - \$35,000 in the U.S.

Headstones – The February issue of "Fast Company" notes that black granite tombstones are being imported from China. It reports, "In 1999, China exported 26,000 metric tons of worked granite at an average price of \$740 per ton. Three years later, it exported 105,000 at \$443 per ton."

Eagan Job Fair Set for Thursday, March 25

This job fair is a great opportunity for employers looking to hire and for people looking for work.

<http://www.mnwfc.org/dakota/jobfair.htm>

What is Your Business Outlook for 2004?

According to Twin Cities businesses responding to Jeane Thorne's Financial Staffing Resources division survey: 11% project strong growth, 24% project slight growth, 26% foresee a continued slow pace, and 28% forecast below average growth.

<http://www.jeanethorne.com/aboutus/>

Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Info

DEED analyst Anthony Schaffhauser reviews business attraction literature for a report in "Minnesota Economic Trends." He finds that low taxes and incentives can influence the final decision on site selection. Making it to the "final elimination round" though requires a complete package of competitive factors: low operating costs, quality of the workforce, and availability of the workforce. www.MnWFC.org/lmi/trends/jan04/location.htm

The latest **Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey** provides mixed news for jobseekers. Overall hiring demand remained at low ebb: 50,100 job openings in 4th Quarter 2003, down 9% from a year earlier. On the plus side, fields on the rebound include blue-collar production and construction occupations.

www.MnWFC.org/lmi/jobvacancy/

Market Conditions Faced by Job Seekers... Supply and demand conditions can vary greatly from field to field. Jobseekers suffer in occupations tied to layoff-hit businesses. Some other fields may provide opportunities for career changers. Briefings on the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota markets identify occupations at the two extremes. www.MnWFC.org/lmi/e7.htm

Statistics of workforce availability are used by employers to develop **Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity** plans. Regional and local area datasets tailored to AA/EEO planning are available at www.MnWFC.org/lmi/aapacket/.

Transportation Forum – March 11th

Co-sponsored by the seven area Chambers of Commerce, this forum is designed to educate community and business leaders on the area's transportation situation, including plans, trends, projects and ideas. Information from the forum will help you make and influence decision-making on transportation-related issues. Representatives from Dakota County, the Met Council, and local businesses will speak and address the issues. The event runs from 7:30 – 10:00 a.m. at the Inver Hills Community College. For more info, contact: info@dakotafuture.com or call 651 491-2551.

For latest information on the WIB and Workforce Centers in Dakota County, <http://www.mnwfc.org/dakota/>

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