

Dakota County Workforce Investment Board News and Notes

June 2004 Edition, Vol. 2-4

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 – August 20, 2004

WIB News

- **Steve Ditschler**, CEO and President of ProAct, Inc., Eagan, was named to the State Rehabilitation Council. ProAct is a private, non-profit organization serving persons with disabilities.
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Do you know someone who has helped young people find and keep jobs?

The Dakota County Youth Council in partnership with Dakota Electric Association is pleased to announce a request for nominations for the Excellence in Youth Employment Services Award to be awarded to an organization or program, an employer or an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to and effectiveness in preparing young people, ages 14-21, in Dakota County for the world of work.

Who may be nominated?

An organization or program within that organization or an employer or an individual who has made an outstanding contribution in the field of youth employment. Self nominations will be accepted.

Go to the Youth Council web site and download a complete set of instructions and a nomination form.

<http://www.mnwfc.org/dakota/wib/youthcouncil.htm>

The recipient of this award of \$500 will be announced on Friday, November 5, 2004.

Regional Economic Profiles Available

The new Labor Market Profiles are now up and live at <http://www.mnwfc.org/lmi/regional/>. The profiles offer a wealth of information on Minnesota's 13 economic development regions.

Increasing Employment Among People With Disabilities

At its June meeting the Workforce Investment Board reviewed **Focus on Ability**, a web-and CD-based education and training initiative produced for Minnesota WorkForce Center staff and for employers to help them better understand, serve, and work with people with disabilities.

The initiative has three components:

Training: Most people with disabilities want to work, but for a variety of reasons are unable to find jobs that match their abilities. The Focus on Ability training modules will help co-workers and employers to better understand and work with people with disabilities.

Disability Basics: The database is a collection of information about specific disabilities. Each entry includes a brief definition of the disability, myths and facts surrounding the disability, typical job accommodations for a person with the disability, and causes and characteristics of the disability.

Services Directory: Use this directory to find individuals and organizations that offer employment-related services to people with disabilities in Minnesota.

If you would like more information, go to www.focusonability.net or contact Jay Hancock at 952 431-9418. CD's with a short video are available for employers. The video is also a great presentation item for service group meetings.

Next Job Fair September 16th

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

Computer Training Available

Recently, WorkForce Center Resource Room staff indicated that many people were coming in to search for employment, but lacked basic computer skills. In response, Inver Hills Community College and the Dakota County WorkForce Centers are hosting a series of Introductory Computer classes in the computer lab at the WorkForce Center in WSP. The four hour classes cover the basic steps of operating a computer and navigating the internet. Each four-hour class is designed to help those who have had minimum exposure to computers, with the goal of helping these people find jobs. Space is limited.

Upcoming classes are from 8 a.m. – noon July 14 and 28; Aug. 11 & 25; and Sept. 15 & 29. Call 651 554-5667 for more information.

***From the Twin Cities Business Journal
Eight Dakota County Private Companies Among State's
Top 100***

The Twin Cities Business Journal published their annual list of the Top 100 largest Minnesota private companies ranked by revenue in its June 25, 2004 issue. Dakota County companies in the list included: #16 Buffets Inc., Eagan; #20 Northern Tool and Equipment Co., Burnsville; #27 Smead Manufacturing Co., Hastings; #56 Dart Transit Co., Eagan; #64 Cemstone Products Co., Mendota Heights; #65 Telex Communications inc., Burnsville/ #66 Norcraft Cos., Eagan; and #87 Spectro Alloy Corp., Rosemount.

Dakota-County Based Cooperative is Largest in Nation

According to the Business Journal, CHS based in Inver Grove Heights is the nation's largest co-op. The article notes that Cenex and Harvest States merged in 1998 to create CHS.

Three County Firms Among Top 25 Minority-Owned Businesses

The Business Journal's list of Top 25 metro-area minority-owned business ranked by revenue included three from Dakota County. They are: #2 Shaw-Lundquist Associates Inc., Eagan, MN; #7 Taj Technologies Inc., Mendota Heights, MN; and #23 Aero Assemblies Inc., Burnsville

Diversionsary Work Program Starts

On July 01, Dakota County, along with the rest of the State will implement the Diversionsary Work Program (DWP). DWP is the direct result of the Temporary Assistance for Families (TAF) pilot that was initiated, written and piloted in the County. TAF received legislative authority during the 2000 session and was piloted for new Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) eligible applicants from October 2001 through December 2002. TAF was a short term (maximum of 4 months with intensive services) Work First Diversionsary Program intended to modify how MFIP (including cash assistance and employment services) would be delivered in Dakota County. Early evaluation results of the TAF pilot reflected that the pilot was successful in diverting over 70 % of these families from ongoing MFIP. The final TAF evaluation should be completed by Fall, 2004.

TAF was selected by Governor Pawlenty to be included in his 2003 welfare reform legislative proposal. Since the legislation was passed.

Unemployment Information

County Unemployment Rate 3.3% in May

This compares to 3.8 % for the state and 5.3% nationally. This is the lowest rate for Dakota County since Dec. 2002. Numbers in May of 2003 were 3.9% for the county; 4.4% for the state and 5.8% nationally.

<http://data.mnwfc.org/lmi/laus/detail.asp?geog=2704000037&adjust=0>

Great Resources if You:

Are looking for work

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

Are a Veteran looking for work

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

Have unemployment questions

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

Need information on Rehabilitation Services

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

Are a young person looking for work or career resources

<http://www.mnwfc.org/dakota/zone/index.htm>

Pathfinder - On-line Tool Connects Educators, Employers, Students, Parents, Teachers and Community Organizations

The Dakota County Business and Education Partnership teamed up to develop an online tool to connect the schools in the county with business resources. Employers will have a single point of contact to provide opportunities to the students within the county including: internships, job shadowing experiences, summer jobs, teacher tours and career speakers. The project is a partnership of the Burnsville, Hastings, Northern Dakota County and River Heights Chambers of Commerce as well as six school districts, Inver Hills Community College and Dakota County Technical College.

http://www.ndcchambers.com/index.php?id=pathfinder_instructions

For past newsletters and information on the WIB and local WorkForce Centers <http://www.mnwfc.org/dakota/>

Contact Mark Jacobs at 651 554-5622 or via e-mail at mark.jacobs@co.dakota.mn.us if you have questions and/or comments about contents of this newsletter.