



Dakota-Scott Counties Workforce Investment Board News and Notes March-April 2006 Edition, Vol. 4-1

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

Welcome to the Dakota-Scott Counties 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

- The WIB's next meeting is May 19th at the Northern Service Center in West St. Paul.
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WIB Members and Updates

- The WIB recently added two new members. **LeeAnn Cox** is the Business Development Manager for Express Personnel in Eagan. **Ann Glaves** is Vice-President of Human Resources for St. Francis Regional Medical Center in Shakopee.
 - **Steve Ditschler** is the Chairperson of the Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council.
 - The WIB's April meeting featured an update on avian flu and what businesses can do to prepare. Two useful sites are: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/tab4.html> www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/pandemic/index.html
 - The WIB's April "Eye on the Future" speaker was Jon Gilbertsen, who spoke on Gangs. His presentation covered the different gangs operating in Dakota and Scott Counties and the types of activities they're involved in.
 - The Burnsville WorkForce Center will open in June.
 - The WIB was selected to provide services to individuals laid off from Anchor Glass in Shakopee.
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Job Fair Draws 3,000+

The March 23rd Job Fair at Eagan Civic Arena featured 65 exhibitors and over 3,000 attendees. Local businesses helped by providing mock interviews for job seekers to help their interviewing skills. The next job fair will be in the fall. Peggy O'Neill ...651-554-6571.

www.mnwfc.org/dakota/jobfair/index.htm

March Unemployment Rate 4.0% in Dakota & Scott Counties

The March unemployment rate was 4.8 % for the State and 4.8% nationally.

<http://www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/laus/display.asp?geog=2704>

May is Hire a Veteran Month

A variety of resources are available for Veteran's ranging from job-seeking help through the WorkForce Center and/or financial and other assistance through County Veteran's programs. Contact the WorkForce Center and ask for the Veteran's Representative.

www.mnwfc.org/veterans

Dakota County Statistics

\$763 - Average Weekly Wage – Private Sector Employee in Dakota County – 2004

54% - Percent of total employees employed within County's top 5 industry sectors - 2004

16.05% - Retail jobs as percent of total jobs in Dakota County – 2000

14.85% - Retail jobs as percent of total jobs in Dakota County – 2004

15.15% - Manufacturing jobs as percent of total jobs in Dakota County – 2000

13.03% - Manufacturing jobs as percent of total jobs in Dakota County – 2004

Top Metro Chambers of Commerce

The following Dakota and Scott Counties Chambers of Commerce were listed in the Business Journals' list of Top 25 metro-area chambers of commerce ranked by dues-paying business members.

#7 – Burnsville (628 members)

#8 – Northern Dakota County Chamber (620 members)

#13 – Lakeville (430 members)

#16 – River Heights (401 members)

#22 – Hastings Area Chamber (310 members)

Workforce Related Forecasts

Futurist Magazine provided the following workforce-related forecasts in their Outlook 2006. www.wfs.org.

- Nanotechnology will be used for everything from monitoring the health of soldiers in the battlefield to transforming waste into edible material.
- U.S. public education will face an uphill battle for survival.
- Science in Latin America will rise considerably.
- There will be a job boom in solar industries, with some 42,000 new U.S. jobs by 2015.
- The open-source phenomenon will transform employment.

Business Resources

The State of Minnesota has the three following resources available on cd-rom or in book form.

- A Guide to Starting A Business in Minnesota
- A Guide to Biotechnology Finance
- Loan Documentation For Small Businesses.

All are available free of charge. Contact local business specialists, Joe Klein or Samantha DiMaggio at 651 554-5955. Or, call the State's Small Business Assistance Office at 651 282-2103.

Local Individuals and Businesses Receive WIB Awards

Youth Employment Services Award:

Dakota Electric Association presented the award for 2005 to the **City of South Saint Paul** for its work as an employer of youth.

South St. Paul employs youth in many positions including building attendants, lifeguards, playground leaders, Imagination Station actors, Municipal airport interns and zamboni drivers. Within the employment structure are opportunities to explore possible future careers, develop leadership skills and build community. Opportunities exist for additional responsibilities and advancement within the entry-level positions. One such success is the current head of the recreation department who began his career as a youth employee at the entry level.

Friend of Workforce Development Award:

Rep. Denny McNamara and **Rep. Katie Sieben** received the award for their support of youth programs.

Funding for the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) has steadily decreased in recent years. In the 2005 legislative session, the Governor's budget plan completely eliminated funding for MYP, which at the time was serving approximately 4,000 at risk youth, ages 14-15, across Minnesota.

McNamara and Sieben were among the representatives who introduced legislation to restore funding for this program. Additionally, McNamara personally advocated for the program at the Governor's office. Due to these efforts, some funding was restored for the program, which had a direct impact on hundreds of kids in Dakota and Scott Counties.

Business Champion Award:

The Business Champion award was given to **UPS** for its innovation in workforce practices and its use of the workforce center system and services.

UPS has 5,300 employees in Minnesota and 1,300 employees in Eagan. UPS provides a variety of innovative benefits to their employees. Additionally, they actively participate in job fairs and are often the Employer of the Day in the resource rooms.

As for benefits, the company provides all employees, even part-timers, with full medical, dental, and prescription drug plan coverage. Plus, the company has programs that can provide up to \$23,000 in tuition assistance to promote having a trained workforce. Their Earn and Learn program reimburses \$1,500 a semester and its forgivable loan program provides another great funding resource for employee education... all the student pays is the interest.

Bob Killeen Award:

Killeen was a former WIB member who was actively involved in promoting quality practices in the workplace.

The WIB recognized two firms, **Uponor-Wirsbo**, Apple Valley and **Regina Medical Center**, Hastings.

Uponor-Wirsbo has North American headquarters in Apple Valley and a distribution center in Burnsville for a total of 400 employees in Minnesota. The company is the nation's leading manufacturer of cross linked polyethylene tubing used in plumbing, fire sprinkler and hydronic radiant floor heating systems.

The company has nearly completed a 3-year process to implement the Oliver White Sales and Operational Planning Excellence Methodology. This initiative fully integrates with workforce planning and development and is deemed to be the tool to proactively operate the business. As part of its quality workforce initiative, the company has formal individual development plans for employees, which align with a variety of training resources with the company's business objectives.

Regina Medical Center includes a hospital and surgery center, long term care division and clinics. The hospital offers 24-hour emergency care, critical care, medical/surgical units, obstetrical and gynecology services and an inpatient geriatric behavioral health unit.

Regina was recognized for its work to implement Six Sigma in the workplace. Six sigma, a program initially developed in the manufacturing industry, is now being utilized in the service industry. Regina is a leader in applying the program in the health care industry with the focus on providing better client service, reducing errors and streamlining processes.

The West St. Paul WorkForce Center is at 1 Mendota Road West in West St. Paul (651) 554-5955. The Shakopee Workforce Center is at 752 Canterbury Road South in Shakopee. (952) 445-7087. For questions and/or comments on information within this newsletter, contact Mark Jacobs at 651 554-5622.