



Business Services/Economic Development Meeting

Date: January 9, 2020

Time: 9:30-11:30am

Location: AMC

Attendees: Rick Roy, Mark Jacobs, Craig Nathan, Jeanna Fortney, Deb McMillan, Leslie Wojtowicz, Becky Accettura, Lorrie Janatopoulos, Marie Larson, Mary Rothchild

Notes

Agenda item: Updates

Discussion:

Chamber—Deb McMillan, head of Minnesota Chamber workforce initiative. The Chamber has released initial data from MN 2030 economic study. The second phase will look at regional work and that will come out in late spring/early summer. Also, they are planning the agenda for the 2020 Workforce Forum in July. Fundraising efforts are underway.

- A question was asked whether the study was available on the Chamber website. The benchmarks were released a few months ago, but there is no plan yet to disseminate the information. Once the study is ready it will be shared with this group. The Chamber would also like to promote the Workforce Forum event with anyone interested.

MAPCED— The Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers is an affiliate of AMC. They met in December in St. Cloud. The director of Launch MN, Neela Mollgaard, spoke at the meeting. Launch MN has some grant opportunities available. Also, an individual from the census was there.

DEED— Lorrie Janatopoulos: There is a DEED-wide committee focused on employers. Natasha Jerde from State Services for the Blind is leading the group. The committee works with employers to increase communication between them.

DOLI— Department of Labor Industry. Not present—currently conducting a series of pipeline workshops.

Local Areas—

Craig Nathan, Rural Minnesota CEP: Strong regional focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity. An Inclusive Employer Designation pilot project is currently running and will gather information about how to improve. Many people view the diversity, equity, and inclusion as a 10-year effort – trying to keep it going over time. They hope to be able to roll this out with other regional events. Also, the CEP is staying cognizant that their regions are different, and this project might not work everywhere. They will be releasing a new American study based on the Fargo/Moorhead area.

Marie Larson: Going to speak at EDAM conference on workforce topics in June. Also, she is part of a stakeholder group which covers diversity issues in the utility workforce statewide. They will create a written report to the legislature. There might be follow-up recommendations and funding changes on utility workforce development. Civil engineering firm WSB has started a new program for surveyors or construction materials technicians. The classes are running at a North Minneapolis CareerForce. There has already been some interest in hiring from this group and they would appreciate any advertising to interested employers or students.

Leslie Wojtowicz: They are focusing on expanding diversity and inclusion in regional planning. They are working on a toolkit for older worker engagement which they will pass along once it is ready. There have been some layoffs in a southern county, and they are trying to get information out to businesses. There is an EPIC (Exploring Potential Interest in Career) event in St. Cloud on Feb. 28th. Leslie's group has been developing presentations to high schools that are interested. The goal is to include preparation and follow up to the one-day event, so it is a longer-term engagement. EPIC is hoping to have 5,000 students there. The event will include hands-on employer-led clusters to do a variety of activities with students. Part of the process will be to ensure students are doing a career assessment, identify top three career fields, and then pursue them at EPIC. Employers are not doing recruiting but are focusing on career exploration. They are open to having visitors from other areas attend the event. Rural Career Counseling Coordinator infographics have been shared. Going to have all career pathways developed. Angie and Leslie have been working on infographics with statewide data. Once these are done, they will be shared with the group.

Rick Roy: Working on healthcare career pathway partnership. Soon, they will set goals for the next 6-12 months for a cohort starting in the summer. They will look at manufacturing next and added some board members from the manufacturing industry. Rick has a meeting this Friday with an insurance broker who thinks he has some solutions for home health aides. He also has a broker who wants to work on benefits cliff and help businesses understand how they can be more flexible with pay increases.

Mark Jacobs, Dakota/Scott: Met with Dakota and Scott county Chamber folks to discuss workforce from the macro-level: what they're hearing from their members, education, and an upcoming symposium on workforce. All Chambers want to connect employers with K-12 educators, and they are working for solutions for that. Last August, they did a tour with some K-12 superintendents and administrators to visit some local colleges and employers. Job fairs: DEED used to do job fairs but ran out of resources, so they partnered with Jobs HQ for a job fair. DEED has concerns about the private entity's engagement.

- Other notes: there will be an LGBTQ job fair on June 26th Radisson Blu in Bloomington.
- The US Census is trying to find workers throughout the state. Anecdotally, people have applied but it has been a long time before they've heard anything back. The Census is looking to do several days of training and are calling around CareerForce centers looking for space. Mary mentioned that the Census could be recruiting college students with the kind of wages they're offering.

Mary Rothchild, Senior System Director of Workforce Development:

- The recently-completed Minnesota State Equity 2030 plan positions equity as a "moral imperative and economic imperative." The goal of the plan is, "By 2030, Minnesota State – together with our partners – will eliminate the educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State

college and university.” There are a number of strategies for achieving this goal, including strengthening partnerships with K-12. Another strategy is increasing guided learning pathways for student academic success. Research says that students are more successful when there is a solid career objective and a straightforward path to achieving that objective. This indicates a change for the Minnesota State colleges because it suggests narrowing the possible student pathways vs. allowing students to choose their own paths. Another strategy is to focus on supporting students’ basic needs, including telehealth and other remote access care.

- The strategic K-12 connections are going through the Perkins program. Also, Minnesota State has gotten several grants recently to assist with adult learners. They are also changing Accuplacer benchmarks to be more adult-learner friendly as well as investigating other instruments that might be more effective for adult learners.
 - Minnesota State did a study this past year around comprehensive workplace solutions, including customized training in industry. Trying to align business and industry connections.
 - RealTime Talent is still an Minnesota State partially-sponsored program. Talent Pipeline Management (sponsored by US Chamber of Commerce) is a way to work directly with employers to create pipeline through employer associations. TPM also helps employers refine recruitment strategies. One topic includes educational requirements for jobs and assessing whether that level of education is needed or whether it presents an unnecessary barrier to applicants. An example employer is the Minnesota Broadcasters Association. They need people to work in rural media outlets (sounds engineers, software, digital marketing, even on-air sometimes) so they are starting a new project to connect colleges to local media outlets.
 - WIOA and Perkins plans are due to be submitted to federal government. Board will be considering plan for approval in January. The Comprehensive Needs Assessment requires employer engagement. Local plans are due by Perkins consortia on May 1 to the state.
 - 6 million dollars are available next year (Fall 2020) for workforce development scholarships. These are available to recent high school graduates and adults in six areas: agriculture, IT, healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, and early childhood education. The individual must be enrolled in a high-demand industry area. The scholarships are \$2500 per year and are not financial aid dependent. The total dollar amount levels out to 4 million annually after this year. The money goes to colleges and then Minnesota State works with them to make sure they comply to state government law. Awarding one of these scholarships to an average, middle-of-the-road high school student might help them attend college when they might otherwise not. Please help publicize it. Mike McGee is working on the employer engagement piece – Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association donated \$30K last year and this year. He is working on other associations to raise match funding. 3M is very interested in “3M scholars” as a co-branded option.
 - LIFT program has \$3 million grant from legislature – it’s a good example of career programs in high schools. We are seeing more schools interested in technical programs.
-

Agenda item: CareerForce Updates**Discussion:**

- Lorrie Janatopoulos: CareerForce MN online launched in September 2018.
 - Commissioner Grove wants them to focus on business and employer engagement by enhancing the available content on the site. They'd like to integrate careerforcemn.com with minnesotaworks.net, a federally mandated job bank which was launched in 2007. They are working towards having careerforcemn.com as the public-facing platform for the job bank. There are currently 467 employers on the site.
 - The CareerForce website is more commonly visited by job-seekers. They would like to balance this out and include more employers.
 - Employer profile pages are available. There is a diversity/equity/inclusion guide, focused on racial and ethnic diversity, in progress. CareerForce is working with a LGBTQ nonprofit to enhance resources on the LGBTQ community for employers.
 - Other possibilities include virtual career fairs and gathering more input from employers and businesses, especially on questions they might have post-integration with minnesotaworks.net.
 - Lorrie is DEED's representative on project regarding older individuals in the workforce.
-

Agenda item: New AMC Committee: Economic Development, Workforce, and Housing**Discussion:**

- This is a policy subcommittee at AMC focused on economic development, workforce, and housing. These topics previously fell under a general government policy committee.
 - The committee is comprised of 7 MAWB directors, 7 MAPCED members, and 25 county commissioners. The kickoff meeting in St. Cloud focused on landscape overview of challenges. Members completed a survey about pressing challenges. Common themes included the housing shortage, childcare shortage, lack of workforce, attracting workers, broadband, transportation.
 - Another meeting in February will focus on housing. What are the terms we use? Can we decide on some terms when we talk about affordable housing? What do they mean to everyone across the state?
 - NACo has a parallel committee and they talked about housing yesterday about entry-level housing and housing for retirees. Housing is a country-wide issue. Homelessness and a lack of affordable housing are other major problems.
-

Agenda Topic: Plan of Work**Discussion:**

- Marie asked whether we could we get the Society of Human Resources Management involved in these meetings. She has a contact there.
- Marie also recently was in a meeting with an individual coming out of Department of Corrections who is doing some work with returning citizens.

- Minnesota State just worked with the Department of Corrections to reissue Step Ahead, an employment handbook for people with criminal convictions.
 - Marie mentioned a pathway to apprenticeship model: jobs that people could start right away and fold in training programs. This might be applied to line workers or utility jobs, etc.
 - Mary suggested that Goodwill Easter Seals and Volunteers of America, plus other nonprofits that work with formerly incarcerated individuals, might be able to assist on projects with people who have been previously convicted.
 - Mary raised a point about funding and suggested that partnership connections could support our mutual goals. Minnesota State received money from the legislature for the Local Partnership program which allowed people to apply for projects on workforce development.
 - It was suggested that the workplan be changed to focus on developing partnerships.
-

Agenda Topic: Statewide Employment Data

Discussion:

- Mark sent out some statewide employment data before the meeting which included some analysis on unemployment gaps relating to race, gender, and ethnicity.
 - A question was raised about where to find more detailed information on employment data among Native Americans and other racial/ethnic groups. Lorrie suggested that it was in the Workforce and Economic Development part of the state plan. Kirk Crowshoe with DEED assists with meeting with the 11 tribal nations statewide and helps advise our work in veterans services. Goal of increasing outreach to Native American veterans.
-

Next meeting: February 13