



## **Business Services/Economic Development Meeting**

**Date:** March 12, 2020

**Time:** 9:30-11:30am

**Location:** AMC

**Attendees:** Mark Jacobs, Becky Accettura, Jackie Buck, Craig Nathan, Deb McMillan, Eriann Faris, Betsy Hill, Leslie Wojtowicz, Bridgett Backman, Dan Solomon

### **Notes**

**Agenda item:** Craig Nathan

**Discussion:**

This is Craig's last meeting with MAWB Business Services before he retires. "It's noble work and you are greatly needed because there are so many people who need your help" – Craig Nathan.

**Agenda item:** Updates

**Discussion:**

*Chamber*— Deb McMillan: The Workforce Solutions Forum will be on April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Golden Valley Country Club from 8:30 AM – 1 PM. Their keynote speaker will be talking about bringing untapped talent pools into the workforce. This event promotion will go out through to the Workforce Board directors.

*EDAM* – Adam Kienberger has a standing conflict with this meeting. We are looking to get someone else to represent EDAM on this committee.

*MAPCED* – At the past meeting, guest speakers included Cheryl Glaeser on [Launch Your Future Today](#), Commissioner Kiscaden on [Governor's Task Force on Housing](#), and various other programs. MAPCED will have their next quarterly meeting this summer.

*DEED* – Minnesota Tech Month is May 2020. This event is intended to increase statewide awareness of tech career pathways. An activities list will be distributed to the committee. They are requesting a Governor's proclamation to announce Tech Month in Minnesota.

- Mark suggested doing one theme per month and creating a calendar of events for the state. Collaboration across MAWB, DEED, DoLI, Chamber, etc. to cross-promote events. Could also look at what happens nationally to see if that aligns.

*DoLI*— [Pipeline and dual-training](#) grant applications are going to open on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and close on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Will share the application when it becomes available. They are also holding a grant writing webinar. A few "intro to apprenticeship" events are going on in the next few months. US Department of Labor announced Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAP).

- [WorkforceGPS](#) has [a webinar](#) on March 26<sup>th</sup> titled "Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs General Overview Webinar."
- Pipeline grants are awarding up to \$2.7 million in grants. Application process is yearly. Last year was the first time they had more requests than money available.

- Minnesota did get Minnesota Registered Apprenticeship Expansion which will get rolled out in the next year. Smaller pot of money, broader categories.

### *Local Areas—*

Craig Nathan: Entering the season of job fairs but the future is uncertain. Craig is finishing up regional plan which will then go through several approval processes. Inclusive Employer Designation pilot project: worked closely with workforce strategy consultant in the past and that individual will carry forward this project. They have a lot of small employers in the region who could benefit. They are hoping for the development of a toolkit at the DEED level.

Eriann Faris: Held a well-attended regional workforce development forum a few weeks ago. They asked employers to fill out a survey and had 104 respondents! Youth programs are a big topic in the region. Some employers are better teachers/trainers/mentors than others, so they are trying to be more diligent about expanding those partnerships. The Workforce Board has developed a Marketing Committee to advertise services that CareerForce locations provide. They have also started to work with some secondary schools to create shared positions – such as a full-time work-based learning coordinator – which is held through the Private Industry Council. LYFT program has helped increase engagement with employers. Youth Skills Training grant also is available to be used this year. There is still a need to increase awareness and exposure with immigrant and refugee community.

Leslie Wojtowicz's region had the EPIC event recently that some Dakota-Scott staff attended. Dakota-Scott would like to replicate it on a smaller scale. Youth Skills Training folks from DoLI also attended the EPIC event. Brainerd has held the [Bridges Academy](#) for about 10 years which is where the idea for EPIC got started. The Bridges event is very successful and features a high level of engagement among local higher education and employers.

Betsy Hill, Duluth: Recently held an event with a diversity and inclusion focus on recruiting and retention of employees. Jodi Pfarr was a speaker. She gave employers some tools when thinking about hiring/onboarding practices and provided recommendations on reviewing policies with an inclusive lens. Workforce Development Board has a subcommittee on construction career pathways. They added an evening construction career night to their [Construct Tomorrow](#) program which is like an information fair. Duluth is also doing a Chamber of Commerce pop-up event, which has no cost for chamber members, and will help provide clarity on resources available.

Bridgett Backman: The Anoka Tech Career Fair is still scheduled for April 8<sup>th</sup>. They are expecting a good turnout. They are amid a continuous improvement process for individuals who walk into CareerForce locations (regarding who they talk to, how they are triaged, etc.)

Mark Jacobs: Dakota-Scott is meeting with chamber presidents every 2-3 months to identify their recent projects. So much of the work is just sharing who's-doing-what and identifying opportunities. AMC has a presentation about cannabis legalization that was given to the Dakota-Scott board.

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**Agenda item:** DEED – Jackie Buck

**Discussion:**

- Changes have been made to Jackie's area in DEED. The Commissioner decided to move Jackie's branch into Economic Development. She is reporting to Kevin McKinnon as of yesterday, March 11.

- Workforce Strategy Consultants will move with Jackie. Those in rural Minnesota will stay in their regions.
  - Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Foreign Labor Programs will report to CareerForce unit under Lorrie Janatopoulos
  - Rapid Responses are staying in Employment and Training and reporting to Marc Majors on a temporary basis
  - Going to one Workforce Strategy Consultant per region. One metro Workforce Strategy Consultant, Liz, will work with Lorrie on CareerForce locations statewide.
  - Core job description of the consultants hasn't changed. They will just be adding economic development activities to their roles.
  - Craig Nathan asked a question on whether the consultants would continue to assist with regional planning to the same degree that they have been. Jackie replied that most of the economic development projects that she knows of are based in the metro area, which means there will likely be less impact in greater Minnesota.
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**Agenda Topic:** Counting Employers Served

**Discussion:**

- Didn't have a chance to connect with Lorrie or Mary Rothchild on this. Mark will follow up.
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**Agenda Topic:** COVID-19

**Discussion:**

- Dakota-Scott is partnering with Jobs HQ on a job fair in March. Mark is guessing that it will be delayed.
- The State Chamber had a webinar on the whole state's situation. They are working on contingent plans: virtual conferences/virtual meetings?
- Craig Nathan they are probably following the state (DEED's) perspective of "wait and see." They will be building off what they did the H1N1 era in terms of emergency plans.
- Eriann: Duluth is having internal conversations as far as what they are responsible for. They've had some conversations with school administrators around events they are hosting and whether they should be cancelled or delayed.
- Leslie Wojtowicz: Discussions but no firm plans. They are updating their pandemic plan. They are also part of a job fair on the 24<sup>th</sup> and are trying to identify how to reel in their events with so many invitations already sent out.
- Betsy Hill: The general plan is to monitor advice from the CDC and connect local employers to resources.
- Bridgett Backman: Looking at a business continuity plan – getting phone numbers up to date. Struggling to get news out to youth programs and to other folks in workplace settings. Do we default to county, state, or the employer's position? Do we stop/delay those or just let them happen?
- Anoka and Hennepin have instituted a non-essential out of state travel ban for staff.
- Jackie Buck, DEED: They are getting updates every day from state perspective and holding calls with agency commissioners every day. They have been asked to do updating of contingency planning: identifying employee's main responsibilities and how essential they are

to the running of the organization. The Minnesota Office of Management and Budget will determine the protocol for all state employees.

- Mark Jacobs: Dakota-Scott is wrestling with hiring events. Eligibility programs that must meet one on one like MFIP: will DHS relax those requirements or no?
- MAWB Executive Committee is meeting with DEED to talk about response today at 10 AM. Hopefully we'll see some info on that.
- Dan Solomon, DoLI: Agency is monitoring situation. Not currently at a point of remote work option. Pipeline is having a speaker series today and they are doing webinar-only instead of coming in person. They are just waiting for direction.
- Mark Jacobs has heard that some industries are being affected in Minnesota.
- Several meetings with 25+ people are getting canceled or put online.
- NASWA's website will have [some updates](#) from workforce boards across the nation.

NEXT STEPS: Deb will check to see if she can share the link to the webinar.

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**Next meeting: April 9, 2020**