



**MAWB Business Services/Economic Development Committee Minutes**  
February 10, 2022

**Summary of Special Presentation**

Krista Jech, President of the Lakeville Area Chamber of Commerce, gave a presentation about their Lakeville Works initiative. [See slides.](#)

**Employer-Related Updates: Items Pertinent to Employers or Employer Services**

- M State
  - Today is the deadline to submit [Good Jobs Challenge](#) grant applications. M State is also working with the National Skills Coalition to support financial assistance for non-credit, high-quality, industry-recognized or employer required credentials.
- Economic Development Association of Minnesota (EDAM)
  - Recently held conference January 27-28. The event was well-attended with 140 registered. They held a session at the conference on the development of workforce housing. The session was led by the Dakota CDA and Baker Tilly.
- Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers (MAPCED)
  - Recently partnered with the U of M Extension, AMC, and LMC on a Leading Economic Transformation cohort. The sessions were well-attended. The [Initiative Foundation is partnering with First Children's Finance](#) to provide community facilitation to engage employers, parents, and other stakeholders impacted by a lack of childcare. The Initiative Foundation can support up to three \$10,000 grants annually to communities that complete this strategic planning/goal setting process. [First Children's Finance](#) can also offer business consulting and financing to childcare providers.
- Minnesota Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD)
  - Event coming up on February 25<sup>th</sup> on small business topics. Will be posted on their [events and news page](#) soon. To stay informed about MCCD events, email [events.mccd.org](mailto:events.mccd.org) to get on the mailing list.
  - MCCD can also help childcare providers with technical assistance and loans. [Thinksmall.org](#) is another resource for childcare providers. The Minnesota Department of Human Services also offers [childcare stabilization grants](#) to offset the impact of the pandemic.
- State Agencies
  - DEED
    - Hired a new Workforce Strategy Consultant for Northeast Minnesota. They will be reposting the open position for Northwest Minnesota soon.
    - You can watch past Workforce Wednesday livestreams on the [DEED YouTube channel](#). You can also find business update videos on the channel. Those will re
    - The next [Workforce Wednesday](#), "Realizing the Value of Untapped Talent Pools: Strategies for Engaging with Minnesota's Workforce with Disabilities" is coming up on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. [Register here.](#)

- During Workforce Wednesdays, employers have been sharing best practices with talent attraction and retention, and these best practices are shared in a follow-up blog post by the Workforce Strategy Consultant team.
    - DEED has been working with CMJTS, the Kandiyohi County EDC, and others on a West Central Job Fair, scheduled for February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Seven businesses have joined so far. [Registration here](#).
    - February will feature a weekly series of free virtual events around [Exploring State Government Careers](#). There are 600+ openings for all locations, job types, educational backgrounds, and industries.
    - DEED and MAWB have partnered to apply some of the unutilized Regional Planning Funds which were allocated for I-WE efforts to have the U of M develop a scoring rubric.
  - DoLI Upcoming Events
    - [February 15<sup>th</sup>, Pipeline 101 webinar](#)
    - [February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Introduction to Apprenticeship Webex Event](#)
    - [March 15<sup>th</sup>, Pipeline Speaker Series: How to Build Effective Teams](#)
- Local Areas
  - Rural Minnesota CEP
    - Held a successful job fair at Alexandria Technical and Community College with 200 jobseekers and 50 employers. Six in-person job fairs are planned for this spring. On the Job Training (OJT) contracts continue to be a successful strategy for a mass layoff in the area – they have already had 57 contracts. At the end of March, they will be hosting an event which includes a high school student deer stand construction competition as a way to give youth exposure to construction career paths.
  - Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS)
    - Have been writing letters of support for various Good Jobs Challenge grant applications. April 6<sup>th</sup> hiring event planned in Willmar. They have also found that job fairs at colleges tend to have much better attendance.
    - CMJTS did a lot with January’s Healthcare Month.
    - Replicating Career Solutions’ award-winning best practice of Discovery Days. CMJTS will be holding an IT Discovery Day in late April.
  - Duluth
    - They have been working with the City of Duluth Economic Development department who received ARP dollars to fund a childcare program in partnership with the Northland Foundation and Child Care Aware. They are offering training classes in the evening with hybrid format to help get people into childcare careers. The goal is to equip participants with everything they need so by the end of the course they are ready to step into a job. They have eight students and held their first class recently.
    - A major employer in the area, Cirrus Aircraft, is expanding and they are assisting with that effort.
  - Southeast/WDI

- Applications are live for the [2022 Best Places to Work](#). Their Good Jobs Challenge grant application focuses on BIPOC women in construction and trades.
- Two of the businesses from their original I-WE cohort have recently applied for the designation.
- Ramsey
  - Ramsey is the lead applicant on a metro-area Good Jobs Challenge grant application for \$21 million.
  - Ramsey County is offering 20 scholarships for employers to use the Center for Economic Inclusion's [Racial Equity Dividends Index](#), which is designed to help employers assess how they're doing on racial equity.
- Dakota-Scott
  - Mark mentioned the kittywampus numbers on the labor exchange, given that there are 133,272 open jobs but only 14,054 resumes. The numbers don't seem to change much and it's unclear how accurate they truly are.
  - Dakota-Scott's survey of jobseekers shows that many prospective employees are frustrated by employers (lack of) communication. Jobseekers have reported applying to jobs and not hearing anything back for six months.

#### **Thoughts on committee structure**

The committee discussed their thoughts and preferences on the meeting length, frequency, and style of the Business Services/Economic Development Committee.