

Leading regional resources to build and maintain a world-class workforce



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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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### NE MN WIB MEMBERS

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## Workforce Investment Board (WIB) Updates

This e-mail newsletter offers an effective way to stay in touch with our area business and education communities. It will be used to keep you informed of what's happening in regional workforce development and empower you with tools and information you can use in your own organization. This newsletter also aims to strengthen our relationships with existing partners as well as promote the work of the WIB to those unaware of the important impact this board makes in Northeast Minnesota.

## Announcing the IRR Wage Subsidy Program

The Workforce Investment Board is pleased to announce a new program designed to assist businesses headquartered within the Taconite Assistance Area hire new full time employees. The program is funded through a \$1 million grant from Iron Range Resources and will be administered through the Workforce Centers of Northeast Minnesota. Participating businesses will be reimbursed for 50% of the hourly wage up to \$5.00 per hour for up to \$5,000 or 6 months, whichever occurs first. Businesses may hire up to 5 new workers for a maximum reimbursement of up to \$25,000. Eligible businesses are those categorized as manufacturing, wholesale trade, retail trade, transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, professional and technical services, and management of companies and enterprises.

Applications are available through the Workforce Center of Virginia, Hibbing, Grand Rapids, and Aitkin, and from AEOA offices in Lake and Cook Counties. The Wage Subsidy Program will be available through June of 2010. For more information or an application contact:

Aitkin: Kari Paulsen, 218-927-5623, [kpaulsen@charterinternet.com](mailto:kpaulsen@charterinternet.com)

Hibbing: Bob Hocking, 218-262-6797, [rhocking@aeoa.org](mailto:rhocking@aeoa.org)

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Lake County: Dawn Horne, 218-834-2280, [dhorne@aeoa.org](mailto:dhorne@aeoa.org)

Applications are also available at [www.jobtrainingmn.org](http://www.jobtrainingmn.org)

## On the Job Training Program

The On the Job Training (OJT) Program is another great program offered through Workforce Centers and has recently been more fully funded through the Recovery Act. OJT is also a wage reimbursement program and is based on a full 50% of the hourly wage for a variable period of time. The length of an OJT is determined by the difficulty of the position and the experience of the new hire, but ranges anywhere from 8 – 26 weeks. OJT is available to businesses who hire eligible new employees who perhaps require a little extra training. If you are interested in hiring someone through the OJT program, contact the Office of Job Training office nearest you BEFORE hiring by visiting [www.jobtrainingmn.org](http://www.jobtrainingmn.org), click on 'About Us' and 'Location'.

## COMMITTEE UPDATES

The WIB operates in part through the work of four active committees:

- Industry Cluster Committee
- Outreach Committee
- One Stop Committee
- Youth Council

*Future editions of this quarterly newsletter will report on Committee activity as relevant to our partners and stakeholders.*

If you are interested in getting involved with the Northeast Minnesota Workforce Investment Board, please contact Michelle Ufford, Executive Director  
(218)-748-2243  
michelle.ufford@state.mn.us

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## The Northland Works Regional Innovation Grant

The \$250,000 Regional Innovation Grant (RIG), The Northland Works, awarded in conjunction with the WIBs of Duluth and Northwest Wisconsin is well underway. The Leadership Steering Committee has been meeting regularly to align economic and workforce development resources to create a common vision, goals, and viable regional economic development strategy. The Leadership Group includes Craig Pagel and Bud Stone from NE Minnesota WIB, members from the Arrowhead Growth Alliance, and each region's Regional Development Commission among others. The Leadership Group has most recently been engaged in a regional SWOT analysis, including gaining an in-depth understanding of key industries and prioritizing those with the greatest potential to benefit from this precedent-setting collaboration. They have also cataloged the mission, vision, and research of over 40 regional economic development, workforce development, and educational entities in order to identify commonalities and maximize all the resources available within the region. More information can be found at <http://www.tnwregionalstrategy.org/> including meeting minutes and industry research.

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## Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee is about to embark on a WIB membership campaign to recruit private sector members. Although everyone who participates on the WIB is highly valued, we rely on our private sector members to keep us tuned in to the needs of business and industry in Northeast Minnesota. Our aim is to recruit new members from industries that are currently under-represented on the board, including manufacturing, forestry, and healthcare, among others. The WIB is responsible for oversight of the public workforce development system in our region and as such have the opportunity to shape workforce policy and influence programs and initiatives to ensure they meet the needs of our business community. If you are interested in exploring what it means to join the Northeast Minnesota Workforce Investment Board, please contact Michelle Ufford, Executive Director, at (218) 748-2243 or michelle.ufford@state.mn.us.

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## Youth Council

The newest of WIB committees, the Youth Council is a combination of WIB members and representatives from youth organizations. Recently the Youth Council conducted a research project to become educated on a number of topics and issues facing youth in Northeast Minnesota. The report details demographic information, school enrollment and educational data, teen pregnancy rates, juvenile offense rates, and poverty rates. Highlights include graduation rates (94%) at higher than the state average yet lower than average reading and math proficiency, a teen pregnancy rate that is in decline, and how youth account for nearly half of the total homeless population. The Youth Council will use this document to guide their future work and serve as a benchmark for future research to gauge on a continual basis how our youth are faring. If you would like a copy of the report or are interested in becoming part of the Youth Council, contact Michelle Ufford, Executive Director, at (218) 748-2243 or michelle.ufford@state.mn.us.