



## Champion Report

Theme Area: **Education and Workforce Development**

Dr. Larry Lundblad (President) Central Lakes College

Craig Nathan (Regional Director) Rural MN CEP

Dr. Chad Coautte (Executive Director) National Joint Powers Alliance

Cheryal Lee Hills (Executive Director) Region Five Development Commission

**Date: April 15, 2014**

Goals/Strategies or Action Steps:	What NEW success have you had in moving your theme goals forward over the reporting period?
<b>AS: EW4C</b>	The Ag Instructor Pathway project that was previously reported as approved. This is a collaboration between Little Falls, CLC, and NJPA...and will have an impact on the region.
	NJPA has hired a Director of Regional Services (Paul Drange) to help oversee/focus time and efforts on providing more NJPA services within Region 5. This should help with multiple components of the RR Plan.
<b>AS: EW2C</b>	Regional Superintendents are responding to the statewide law requiring them to develop "Worlds Best Workforce" plans. This work directly connects to the Education/WF Development component of the RR Plan.
<b>AS:EW5C</b>	Rural Minnesota CEP has implemented an expansion of the Career Advisor Program to 12 regional high schools. This is a 2 year project to help area High Schools to develop additional capacity in Career Advsing. And transition to Post Secondary Activities.  The Connectivity Theme is working toward some interesting IT training opportunities with The Shop through what they call the GOO-IT program...that add value to Rural MN CEP and CLC IT programs.  The CEO program in Staples with funding support of the Initiative Foundation connects students to employers
	<b>What future activities has your theme prioritized for the coming year?</b>
<b>AS: EW3</b>	<b>Expansion of apprenticeships for manufacturing.</b> CLC is in conversation with Hennepin Technical College about replicating the Empower. This is a joint conversation with Rural MnCEP, DEED, and the two colleges. The goal is to replicate the program to the Central Minnesota region.
<b>AS:EW4H</b>	<b>Expansion of information technology training.</b> The Rural Information Technology Alliance (RITA) grant is moving forward in implementation. Programs are being developed, faculty hired, and work on student

	recruitment is underway. Michael Amick is the project lead for CLC.
AS:EW4H	<p><b>Advance Manufacturing Education Reorganization.</b>A search for a number of positions for the Advanced Manufacturing Education grant (AME) are underway. The grant manger search and accounting positions have just closed. The marketing, college-lab, and CLC assistant director searches are in progress.</p> <p><b>FasTRAC Applications</b> - CLC, Brainerd ABE, Mstate Wadena, Lakes and Prairie ABE and Rural Minnesota CEP - Propsals to develop additional workforce training program to engage low skilled adults in Manufacturing. Information TYechnology and Industrial Maintenance and Contruction Electricity have been developed and submitted to DEED. Regional Business are in support of this model.</p>

# Education and Workforce Development

## Education and Workforce Development Issue I (EWI)

**Educating and retaining workforce:** Facets of this issue include; understanding the demographic and skill make-up of the people in the region’s major employment sectors. Other key components of this issue include lifelong learning aspects: how to keep young workers in the region, how to attract & retain talent, and how to best utilize an older workforce. Collaboration between private/public/non-profit sectors is of paramount importance for recommendations and actions to be successful under this theme.

## Education and Workforce Development Issue I Goal

**Educated workforce:** Our region provides affordable and multiple educational opportunities to effectively employ the current and future workforce, and to improve our knowledge of how to live a sustainable life as individuals and as a community at large.

### Recommendation EW1

**Lifelong learning:** Prioritize and promote lifelong learning for all residents of the region.

#### Action Step EW1A

**Workforce training:** Create a WPA-like (aka transitional jobs) workforce training effort.

#### Action Step EW1B

**Early childhood education:** Prioritize early childhood education and maintain consistent educational pathway options.

#### Action Step EW1C

**Education resource center:** Consider developing a one-stop shop and education center site where people can learn about resources and how they can be a part of the solution.

### Recommendation EW2

**Educational system improvements:** Improve the educational system to provide a well-qualified future workforce.

#### Action Step EW2A

**Experiential learning:** Foster advanced placement opportunities, promote entrepreneurial

skills, and involve students in hands-on work experience, on-the-job training and paid internships. Expand upon the “Bridges Academy”

initiative administered by the Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce.

#### Action Step EW2B

**Assessment:** Create a technical assessment of interests and skills.

#### Action Step EW2C

**Connect students and employers:** Promote the skills that employers are looking for and where the jobs opportunities are to high school and college-aged students.

#### Action Step EW2D

**Critical thinking skills:** Teach critical thinking skills.

#### Action Step EW2E

**4-year degrees:** Seek to have four-year college degrees delivered from within the region.

#### Action Step EW2F

#### Recommendation EW3

**Non-college pathways:** Promote options in addition to college for pursuing education, job advancement, and higher pay. This may include additional workplace training, achieving advanced certifications and licenses, or seeking other non-traditional pathways to climb the ladder of success.

#### Action Step EW3A

**Senior workforce:** Retool and engage the senior workforce. Access retired talent as educators. Encourage seniors to maintain competency with emerging technologies.

#### Recommendation EW4

**Role of business in workforce development:** The business sector should be proactive in preparing the region's future workforce.

#### Action Step EW4A

**Hire locally:** Encourage employers to hire locally.

#### Action Step EW4B

**Welcome teachers:** Create open doors to teachers in the workplace.

#### Action Step EW4C

**Engineering and agricultural careers:** Develop more educational opportunities for engineering and agriculture careers.

#### Action Step EW4D

**STEM:** Focus on Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) training.

#### Action Step EW4E

**Focus economic effort:** Concentrate on a specific economic cluster for the region such as creating a hub for agriculture or a green job training center.

#### Action Step EW4F

**Various types of degrees:** Create areas of excellence but allow for a broad range of learning opportunities (liberal arts as well as engineering). Allow for flexibility of learning when needed.

#### Action Step EW2G

##### Teacher engagement and accountability:

Teachers often have excellent ideas of how to improve performance, allow for 180-degree evaluations that come from colleagues, students and parents. Let performance be evaluated, not length of employment. Set higher standards and give higher pay for exceptional performance. Keep practices and ideas that are working.

#### Action Step EW2H

**Home schooling:** Expand upon and grow homeschooling and social networks of homeschooling locations.

#### Action Step EW2I

**Charter schools:** Expand charter school options as an additional option to delivery of education.

Capitalize on experienced professionals to mentor others. Encourage employers to recruit across the experience spectrum. Create distance at-home learning opportunities while allowing experienced workers to "test out" of training modules.

**Employer/student correlation study:** Complete a study on which employers are hiring and correlate the findings with information on students taking classes, going to college, or graduating from high school in the state. Consider instituting programs where employers pay for relevant certifications.

#### Action Step EW4G

**Employer/worker correlation study:** A survey should be sent out to all employers in the region to find out where job opportunities may be as a result of people retiring, future business expansion, etc. and this information should be shared with citizens seeking employment.

#### Action Step EW4H

**Educational pathways:** Develop an educational pathway for varied stages of business development with associated resources.

#### Action Step EW4I

**Training and technical assistance for businesses and entrepreneurs:** Expand business training and technical assistance. Offer workshops and other technical assistance to educate prospective and current entrepreneurs on how to locate and apply for loans for new or expanding businesses. Assist in educating people in finding capital.

## Recommendation EW5

**Affordable workforce education:** Reform our education and workforce development systems by making education affordable for all learners.

### Action Step EW5A

**Build on current efforts:** Build on existing education and workforce development collaborations such as the Public Work Force Development System, MnSCU, and Adult Basic Education.

### Action Step EW5B

**Agricultural workforce:** Emphasize and promote agricultural education along with gardening.

### Action Step EW5C

**Training:** Combine the concepts of on-the-job training (training at the work site) and lateral training (career path – next level of training). Institute additional apprenticeships that will enhance job creation and enhance skills.

### Action Step EW5D

**Skills assessment:** Conduct an assessment of the demographic and skills makeup/aptitudes in the region's major employment sectors, including incumbent workforce sectors and the unemployed and underemployed workforce. Use this information to identify gaps and gain a better understanding of what education is needed to fill these gaps. Assess and improve soft skills.

### Action Step EW5E

**Skills assessment connected to education:** Inventory existing skills, compare these to needed skills in key industries, and address the gaps. Focus on evaluating skill sets of high growth industries to determine which incumbent workforce sectors may be transitioned into higher growth industries. Develop core educational disciplines at basic levels to provide greater flexibility for workers throughout their career.

### Action Step EW5F

**Distance learning:** Promote community-based distance learning via global interconnectivity. For example, integrate home-based learners at the community level for social activity along with an advanced online learning experience.

### Action Step EW5G

**Work-at-home:** Provide more work-at-home employment opportunities. This can be accomplished through the expansion of telework and home-based services and businesses.

### Action Step EW5H

**Affordable, accessible training:** Provide affordable and accessible training in promising fields. For example, online courses are more accessible for people without transportation options.

## Recommendation EW6

**Coordination of economic development efforts:** Businesses and government should work closely with local economic development and community development agencies to attract new employers and small businesses to the area.

### Action Step EW6A

**Livable wage jobs:** Focus efforts on attracting employers that will provide a variety of jobs that pay livable wages.

### Action Step EW6B

**Minimum wage jobs:** Discuss minimum wage standards and area jobs in our community with state government and public office.