



## Champion Report

Theme Area: **Education and Workforce Development**

Dr. Larry Lundblad (President) Central Lakes College

Craig Nathan (Regional Director) Rural MN CEP

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

Cheryl Lee Hills (Executive Director) Region Five Development Commission

**Date: January 14, 2014**

<b>Theme Goal</b> <small>AS: Action Step            Rec:            Recommendation</small>	<b>What success have you had in moving your theme goals forward over the past year?</b>
<b>AS:EW4E</b>	<b>Technology Training</b> - \$3.7 million to Central Lakes College- part of \$18.1 from DOL for workforce training for information technology industry. The Rural Informational Technology Alliance (RITA) grant. <b>\$3,200,000.00</b> to CLC for manufacturing training – Part of \$13.5 from DOL to 3 colleges.
<b>AS: EW4C</b>	<b>Ag Instructor</b> – Little Falls School District and NJPA & Central Lakes College(pending approved funding of the CLC Center of Excellence grant application)
<b>AS:EW1B</b>	<b>Early Childhood provider education</b> - National Joint Powers Alliance® (NJPA) fiscal host to the early childhood professional development project “Centers of Excellence.” The goal of the Centers for Excellence Project is to design a regional system incorporating input from the field, to provide early childhood professionals with technical assistance, support, mentorship and coaching sufficient to improve practice.
<b>Rec-EW2</b>	<b>K-12 Education teacher development</b> - In 2011, NJPA rejuvenated our focus on professional development services in education with the introduction of NJPA Education Solutions. School districts and educational entities are able to access a growing venue of educational services in professional development for teacher leaders and administration; collaborative educational opportunities; and educational contract purchasing.
<b>AS:EW2A</b>	\$250,000.00 to <b>Bridges Career Academies</b> from Otto Bremer
<b>AS:EW2B</b>	\$78,000.00 to DEED for NCRC training from Otto Bremer
<b>AS: EW3A &amp; EW5H</b>	<b>Tele-presence/ITV Services</b> – NJPA is coordinating/leading a Tele-presence/ITV initiative that was funded by a RUS-USDA grant. The twelve participating schools all have the technology installed and ready to use. A regional Superintendent and NJPA staff are working on a system to coordinate/collaborate to <i>leverage this technology to facilitate shared learning experiences between the schools.</i> This initial coordination is the first step in a more “regional” effort that will begin soon.
<b>Rec- EW3 AS- EW4H</b>	<b>RMCEP grants</b> - \$280K Minnesota Adult Work Force Competitive Grant Award – “ <i>Minnesota Works</i> ” will train 120 Adults in the Career Pathways related to Transportation, Warehousing and Manufacturing. \$150K Minnesota FastTRAC Career Pathway Award – “ <i>FastTRAC to the Construction Trades</i> ” will train 50 low skilled workers for entry into Construction Trades Careers.
<b>What are you excited about around your theme for the coming year?</b>	
Improving alignment of the new DOL – RITA grant at CLC with the BLADC IT group.	
Working on a “ <i>FastTRAC to Industrial Maintenance</i> ” Career Pathway Training in collaboration with M-state Wadena and the Wadena Adult Basic Education	
Entering into an agreement with Cass Co Health and Human Service and the Cass Lake Family Centers to bring the “ <i>Family Development Credential</i> ” Training” to Central MN.The training was developed by Cornell University to better serve families on Public Assistance in breaking through barriers related to Self Sufficiency.	
“ <i>Youth Career Exploration</i> ” – proposal submitted to expand the Brainerd High School Career Exploration Model to 12 Area Rural Schools. “ <i>Youth Career Connect</i> ” – proposal to DOL to expand Bridges, and High School Career counseling.	
CLC – <i>Center for Excellence Application to MnSCU for Agriculture and Energy “food &amp; fuel”</i>	

# 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 EW2F

**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 EW2B

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

#### 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 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 EW2H

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

#### Action Step EW2D

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

#### Action Step EW2I

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

#### Action Step EW2E

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

### 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.

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.

### 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 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.

#### 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

**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.

## 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.