

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE) COMMITTEE
MINUTES
July 19, 2019
EDC Board Room, Willmar

Present: Sam Bowen, Les Heitke, Roger Imdieke, Les Nelson, Ranae Rahn and Kelly TerWisscha

Excused: Aaron Backman, Jim Ellingson and Dean Steinwand

Absent: Dan Temple

Guest: Jennifer Mendoza, CLUES

Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Manager

Secretarial: Diane Beck, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chairperson Sam Bowen called the meeting to order at approximately 9:04 a.m.

AGENDA—Chair Bowen presented the agenda. Les Heitke asked to add under New Business discussion of the County Board’s denial of a housing complex tax abatement.

IT WAS MOVED BY Les Heitke, SECONDED BY Les Nelson, to approve the Agenda with the addition of denial of tax abatement under New Business. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED BY Kelly TerWisscha, SECONDED BY Ranae Rahn, to approve the Minutes of the June 7, 2019 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS

Next Steps for CLUES Program-Diverse Soldering Program. Jennifer Mendoza reported the welding class, which will include a section on soldering, is ready to go and she is waiting for a signed contract from the head office. Currently, five students are enrolled and noted ten students is a full class. Mendoza shared five students are interested in the next CNA class; however, no start date will be set until the contract is signed. An inquiry was made if CLUES will hold other training opportunities. Mendoza would like input from the EDC and other entities on other training needs. Schmoll inquired if Early Childcare and Childcare Certification classes could be a possibility. Schmoll will send Mendoza clarification between the two childcare classes. Heitke asked if Craig Johnson, President of Ridgewater College, is supportive of the CLUES program; Mendoza shared he is very supportive.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

EDC PLANNING SESSION GOALS

Workforce Development Objectives. Schmoll distributed and reviewed the 2019 Action Planning Workforce Development Worksheet developed at the EDC Strategic Planning Session in March (see attached). Chair Bowen suggested forming a subcommittee to work on the workforce development objectives. Mendoza and TerWisscha offered to serve on the subcommittee along with Dan Temple as project coordinator. Chair Bowen suggested contacting Eric Day for interest in serving on the BRE Committee. Discussion held regarding the Bring Them Home campaign; TerWisscha suggested forming a subcommittee. Chair Bowen suggested working on the issue with the EDC Marketing and Public Relations Committee and include other entities, i.e., class reunion groups, etc. Schmoll will have Nancy Birkeland research the history of the former Bring 'Em Back' campaign; Ranae Rahn volunteered to also research the issue. Information will be shared at the next meeting. The Workforce Development Objectives and Business Support Objectives will be placed as standing agenda topics on future agendas. Chair Bowen will report on Workforce Development Objectives and Dan Tempel will report on the Business Support Objectives.

Kandiyohi County/Community Video. Schmoll shared Torrey Norling met with Aaron Backman and subcommittee members TerWisscha, Rahn and Heitke on June 13th and received new direction for the video. Norling sent out a draft video with narratives. Aaron Backman provided Norling with aerial business photographs for possible use in the video. The video will include all seasons. The subcommittee will provide updates at future BRE Committee meetings.

Business Support Objectives. Schmoll reviewed the objectives: 1) Several one-on-one visits have been made; 2) Ongoing support continues; 3) see below; 4) EDC's Marketing and Public Relations Committee is also involved in this effort (see attached). Flyers have been prepared along with a video and are ready to be sent to interested business prospects.

Business Support Objectives—Banker/Accountant Meeting. Schmoll suggested collaborating with the Kandiyohi County Child Care Innovation Program to discuss with bankers/accountants the possibility of identifying childcare as a business.

Retail Business Design Workshops Follow-up. Schmoll provided an update on the successful workshops and shared that four businesses that received technical assistance to work one-on-one with a University of Minnesota graduate student are now eligible for some of the remaining funds to implement projects that assist in business success.

NEW BUSINESS

State of Manufacturing Event, June 18th, at Ridgewater College. Chair Bowen gave an update of the event sponsored by The Enterprise Minnesota which consults with small/medium manufacturing companies to help them compete and grow profitability (see attached). During the event, a manufacturing panel, comprised of local manufacturing executives and other companies, shared

perceptions and opinions about issues, challenges and opportunities that impact their businesses. Schmoll and Chair Bowen shared information from the following graphs: workforce shortage; financial confidence; economic expansion sentiment and optimism. Chair Bowen is hopeful Ridgewater College can host the event in the future.

Chancellor's Announcement of Workforce Development Scholarship Program at Ridgewater College. Chair Bowen shared Minnesota State Chancellor, Devinder Malhotra visited Ridgewater College on July 10th to announce a new scholarship program. Ridgewater College will be able to offer more than two dozen \$2,500 scholarships in the coming year for students studying in high-demand fields, i.e., agriculture, information technology, manufacturing, health care, early childhood and transportation. Discussion held regarding Ridgewater's enrollment percentage. Schmoll shared an article regarding workforce in the *Minnesota Economic Trends* magazine and encouraged members to subscribe for the free magazine.

Housing project denied tax abatement. Heitke inquired if this would be a competitive disadvantage impact for other developers that apply for tax abatement. Imdieke explained the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and the Tax Abatement criteria.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:11 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., Friday, September 6, 2019**, at the EDC Office, Willmar. Note: There will not be a BRE Committee meeting in August.

2019 Action Planning Worksheet

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Priority Area	Workforce Development
Priority Summary	Help build a skilled workforce that meets the needs of the local economy in order to grow and support businesses.
Project Coordinator: (A person of interest/ champion to help EDC Staff)	Sam Bowen, Dean of Customized Training and Continuing Education, Ridgewater College
Phone/Email:	320-905-2269 / sam.bowen@ridgewater.edu

Strategic Priority (Stated as a goal with measurable results, not just effort)	Building a base of support and implementing innovative strategies that expand opportunities for building a skilled workforce that meets the needs of our local economy and helps businesses grow.	
Mission Connection (How this goal aligns with the mission of the EDC)	EDC would be a catalyst, providing leadership for workforce growth which increases potential for prosperity, international competitiveness and enhanced quality of life.	
Objectives How might we address this goal? (i.e. What actions/milestones might be pursued?) What resources may be needed? S – Specific M – Measurable A – Attainable R – Relevant T – Timebound	Potential Objectives	Resources Needed
	1. Establish a Workforce Development Committee to focus on specific initiatives.	People and approval
	2. Promote Ridgewater College, working with partners to improve enrollment and student success.	Planning, Details, Funding
	3. Continue to expand diverse workforce training programs like Diverse CNA/Welding	Funding, Support, Partners
	4. Establish a Teacher of Color pipeline program	TBD
Expected Outcomes: The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?	OTHER NOTES: Insights from planning session (some could be tasks under the above Objectives) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring similar industries together (focus groups by industry sector) to discuss workforce needs and explore additional employer-driven initiatives such as MAP that might be supported/started • Video highlighting businesses of Kandiyohi County and the workforce skills/needs; Host on EDC website and promote via social media • Develop a “Bring Them Back Campaign” – positive messaging of opportunities in the area; telling the stories of why they should want to return 	
	These efforts will help grow and support businesses by addressing a major need in our regional economy—skilled workers. We will develop and implement innovative recruiting and training strategies that will set our region apart as a workforce development leader. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill enhancement of potential labor market • Higher levels of people gaining greater employment • People entering pathways that lead them to career with greater earning potential • Helping to fulfill local job market needs 	

Who are the people who may be interested in supporting/working together on this goal?

Name	Skills/Resources	Email	Phone
Eric Day, Business Service Coordinator, CMJTS	Funding, People	eday@cmjts.org	320.241.1747
Sam Bowen, Dean, Ridgewater College	Customized Training and Continuing Education	sam.bowen@ridgewater.edu	320.222.5206
Dayna Latham, Training and Outreach Manager, Ridgewater College	Customized Training and Continuing Education	dayna.latham@ridgewater.edu	320.894.5169
Craig Johnson, President, Ridgewater College	Leadership, Administration	craig.johnson@ridgewater.edu	320-222-5202
Jason Duinick, Director of Business Development, Duinick Inc.	Business Development, Legislative	jasond@duinick.com	320.212.9330

As you move further along, identify the key strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats for achieving this goal...

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ridgewater College • Kandiyohi County labor force growing faster than the region • Immigration/New diverse populations • Short-term growth of high school class sizes • Diverse economic landscape 	Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight labor market (.7 person available for each job vacancy) • Language barriers—comprehension and fluency • Labor market participation rates less than state average for some populations • Skills gap
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrant workforce • Growth of labor force participation rate for some populations • Seniors/Retirees opportunities for additional careers/skills 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automation, technology and robotics may eliminate some jobs and increase skill sets needed for new jobs • State/National policy decisions • Cultural norms related to Higher Ed/Post-Secondary • Lack of diversity in immigrant careers; lack of aspirations for different careers

2019 Action Planning Worksheet

BUSINESS SUPPORT



Priority Area	Business Support
Priority Summary	Supporting existing businesses through access to information and awareness of the EDC's services.
Project Coordinator: (A person of interest/ champion to help EDC Staff)	Dan Tempel, Broker/Owner, Glacial Ridge Realty
Phone/Email:	320-403-5404 / glacialridgerealty@gmail.com

Strategic Priority (Stated as a goal with measurable results, not just effort)	EDC works to build relationships with area business, with a key intent to inform them of available resources through the EDC, better understand their challenges/needs, and help them share their successes.		
Mission Connection (How this goal aligns with the mission of the EDC)	EDC catalyzes economic growth by supporting area businesses so that they can prosper, innovate and be competitive.		
Objectives How might we address this goal? (i.e. What actions/milestones might be pursued?) What resources may be needed? S – Specific M – Measurable A – Attainable R – Relevant T – Timebound	Potential Objectives		Resources Needed
	1. Engage in focused one-on-one visits with existing businesses to inform of resources and streamline complications/challenges they may have		TBD
	2. Develop a business support group of “like-minded businesses” and/or “emerging entrepreneurs;” consider the 1 Million Cup model; specific mention of support for businesses started within past 5 years and those in the retail sector		TBD
	3. Invite bankers/accountants to a gathering to learn of EDC resources and share business needs		TBD
	4. Develop a “community” marketing campaign to distribute EDC offerings broadly in the area		Center of influencers; marketing plan
Expected Outcomes: The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?	Businesses owners are able to streamline operations or resolve barriers they may have and learn from each other's successes and challenges. Our communities know and understand how the EDC can help businesses.		

Who are the people who may be interested in supporting/working together on this goal?

Name	Skills/Resources	Email	Phone
Jesse Gislason	Business support	jessegislason@gmail.com	320.295.6938
Melissa Knott	Marketing	mknott@christiansoncpa.com	320.212.9505
Fernando Alvarado	City Government/Business support	falvarado@willmarmn.gov	320.235.2577

As you move further along, identify the key strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats for achieving this goal...

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDC Marketing Committee • EDC Staff 	Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many businesses are not aware of what the EDC has to offer • Need to break down into smart goals; specific action steps
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break down barriers with other groups • Programs like SCORE, 1 Million Cups • Mentoring/coaching arrangements 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate time/capacity • Insufficient financial resources

OTHER NOTES: Two remaining task in notes that did not fit neatly into this strategy could possibly be brought to the Marketing Committee:

1. Doing research and gathering data/demographics needed to market to restaurants and national retail so that they are drawn to Kandiyohi County
2. Being strategic in collaborating to promote the quality of life in Kandiyohi; mentions of Greg Harp's photos, PWELC as resources; mention of "Bring Them Home" campaign that was also added to the Workforce Strategy



2019 State of Manufacturing®

Tuesday, June 18, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Ridgewater College
2101 15th Ave NW
Student Center – Room A240
Willmar, MN 56201



PARTNER



SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE
FOUNDATION

AGENDA

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Registration and Networking

9:30 a.m. – 9:40 a.m. Welcome

- Diana Anderson, *President/CEO* – Southwest Initiative Foundation
- Dr. Craig Johnson, *President* – Ridgewater College

9:40 a.m. – 10:10 a.m. 2019 Survey Results Presentation

- Bob Kill, *President & CEO* – Enterprise Minnesota

10:10 a.m. – 11:10 a.m. Manufacturing Panel

- Bruce Bergeson, *Director* – Minnesota River Valley CTE Collaborative
- Allan Cronen, *CEO* – GVL Poly
- Rhonda Gass, *General Manager of Minnesota Operations/ Director of Administration & Finance* – Falcon Industries, Inc.
- Tara Onken, *Economic Development Director* – City of Marshall
- Jeff Pattison, *President/CEO/Co-Owner* – West Central Steel

11:10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Networking

PLATINUM SPONSORS





WHO WE ARE

Enterprise Minnesota consults with small and medium size manufacturing companies to help them compete and grow profitably. We also serve as the “voice” for the industry, raising visibility and appreciation for the value manufacturers provide our communities and the state’s economy. Our affiliation with the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) further positions us to offer clients leading-edge services to improve manufacturing operations and strengthen business.



OUR CLIENTS

We work with a wide variety of manufacturing companies in Minnesota employing 10 to 500+ employees. From plastics to food, to computers to metal castings, if you are a manufacturing company or in a related industry in Minnesota, we can help.

“J&B would highly recommend other manufacturers engage the services of Enterprise Minnesota to run a kaizen event for them. We appreciated having an outside sets of eyes and viewpoints that their consultants provided.”



Marc Cote
Inventory Control Manager
St. Michael, MN

“Enterprise Minnesota helped us create a structured revenue growth plan and process to move forward. It pulled our team together and helped clarify our value proposition. The plan helped us establish goals and strategic focus, and it broadened our thinking related to our customers. This is what we were looking for.”



Annette Lund, Vice President
Diversified Plastics, Inc.
Brooklyn Park, MN

OUR SUCCESS

In the last five years alone Enterprise Minnesota has helped over 510 Minnesota manufacturing companies. These companies have:

- Invested over \$289 million in modernization.
- Added or retained over 6,600 jobs.
- Increased sales by over \$696 million.
- Reduced costs by \$131 million.

“With Enterprise Minnesota’s help we were able to take a step back and look at the ISO project as a whole. Using the input of key managers, we developed a road map to better define key aspects of our business. Their consultants brought ease to our transition to the new ISO 9001:2015 standard.”



Mike Jensen, President and CEO
Gauthier Industries, Inc.
Rochester, MN

“The Learning to Lead content from Enterprise Minnesota was exactly what our leadership team needed to prepare us for the upcoming changes in our organization and business.”

Jeremy Smolich, Vice President of Manufacturing
Iracore International, Inc.
Hibbing, MN



Iracore International, Inc.



OUR WORK WITH MANUFACTURERS

Enterprise Minnesota consultants are trusted advisors who deliver valuable, measurable and sustainable business results. To learn more about how to grow your business go to enterpriseminnesota.org.

◆ BUSINESS QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The dynamic complexities of today's business environment make it more challenging for manufacturers to address current and future business needs.

To address these complexities Enterprise Minnesota recommends the ISO system. Whether this is your first experience with ISO or you are upgrading from ISO 9001:2008 to the new standard, Enterprise Minnesota experts will help your team integrate the ISO 9001:2015 strategies and processes throughout your business.

Instead of being about traditional "quality" topics, the new ISO standard can cover your entire business. Anything is fair game: finance, safety, security, regulatory, sales, marketing and/or any other area of your company that matters to the success of your enterprise.

We will be with you every step of the way to help you improve your business, and we guarantee you will achieve certification or recertification, and that your business will pass the registrar's audit.

◆ STRATEGY FOR GROWTH

Growing your business requires that you know where your business is today and where you want it to be in two, three, or five-plus years. Having a strategy, an implementation "road map," and the commitment of your people to realize your strategic goals and objectives is paramount to growing your business.

Enterprise Minnesota's strategy experts use their deep knowledge and extensive experience to help your team assess your business and create a strategic road map to formulate and achieve your growth goals. We will help motivate your team to "row the business boat" in the same direction.

Increased revenue and profit is integral to any growth strategy. Enterprise Minnesota's "7 Smart Steps to Revenue Growth" enhances your strategy by helping you connect with and influence your customers.

◆ TALENT AND LEADERSHIP

Manufacturers are increasingly challenged by their inability to find and retain qualified, skilled and productive talent.

Enterprise Minnesota's talent/leadership specialists will help you develop strategies to attract, engage, invest and retain your workforce, to maximize productivity and promote a positive work culture. They will determine the competencies you need now and into the future; empower your staff to solve problems at every level of your organization; identify employees who may be ready to become your next supervisors or leaders; and help your leaders effectively communicate with co-workers and employees at all levels.



Enterprise Minnesota leads manufacturing peer councils throughout the state, exclusively for manufacturing executives. We provide a structured forum to speak candidly and confidentially about business challenges and opportunities, and you will learn about key topics to better manage your manufacturing enterprises.

◆ CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Although Lean Enterprise has been helping manufacturers become more productive since the early '90s, continuous improvement processes are more essential than ever because they offer a major solution to the labor shortage.

Enterprise Minnesota's continuous improvement consultants will help your employees increase capacity and maximize productivity by eliminating waste in time, energy, motion, materials and equipment. More productive employees work smarter, not harder or longer, which helps your business meet customer demands while improving the bottom line and providing career opportunities for your employees.

THE VOICE OF MINNESOTA MANUFACTURING

Enterprise Minnesota serves as the “voice” of Minnesota’s manufacturing industry and brings together an important and diverse coalition of interests that value, support and celebrate manufacturing.

THE STATE OF MANUFACTURING®

The State of Manufacturing® is the most comprehensive survey of Minnesota’s manufacturing executives. It provides a detailed view of manufacturing executives’ perceptions and opinions about the issues, challenges, and opportunities that impact their business.

The
State
of Manufacturing®

ENTERPRISE MINNESOTA EVENTS

Enterprise Minnesota’s events offer outstanding professional expertise and practical business solutions to improve competitiveness and growth opportunities for Minnesota’s manufacturers and related industries.



BUSINESS EVENTS



MANUFACTURING WORKSHOPS

ENTERPRISE MINNESOTA PUBLICATIONS

ENTERPRISE MINNESOTA® MAGAZINE

Enterprise Minnesota® magazine showcases unmatched insights and remarkable stories celebrating the leaders and innovators who shape Minnesota’s manufacturing industry.

THE WEEKLY REPORT

Enterprise Minnesota’s digital newsletter offers timely manufacturing news, insights and trends on the people and companies driving our manufacturing economy.



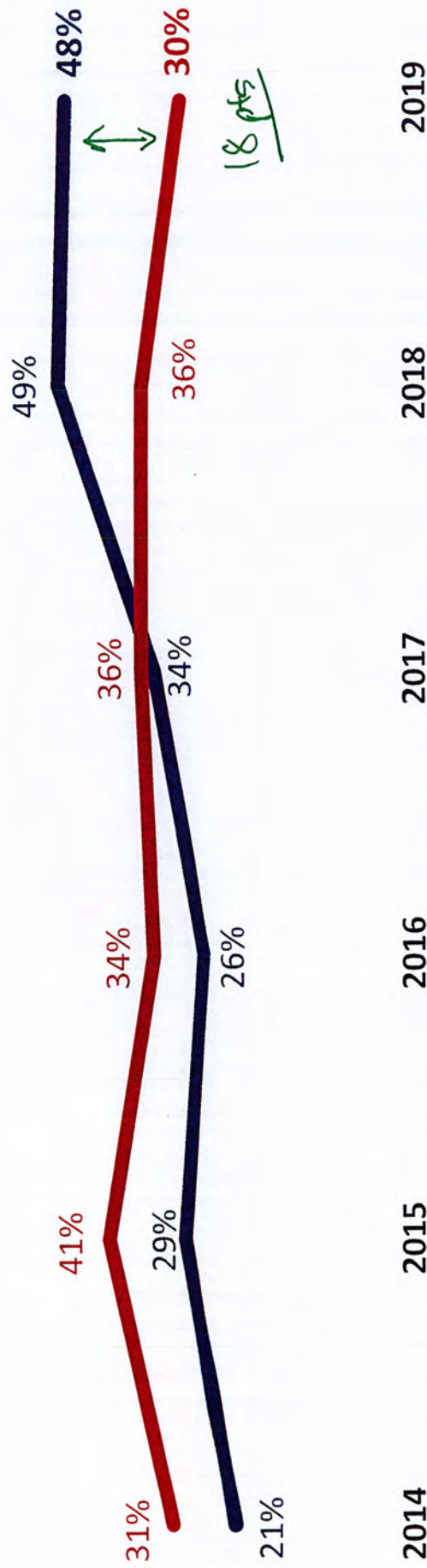
2100 Summer Street NE, Suite 150, Minneapolis, MN 55413
www.enterpriseminnesota.org



And, the worker shortage has its biggest lead than ever before in our tracking.

“What would you say are the one or two biggest challenges your company is facing that might negatively impact future growth?”

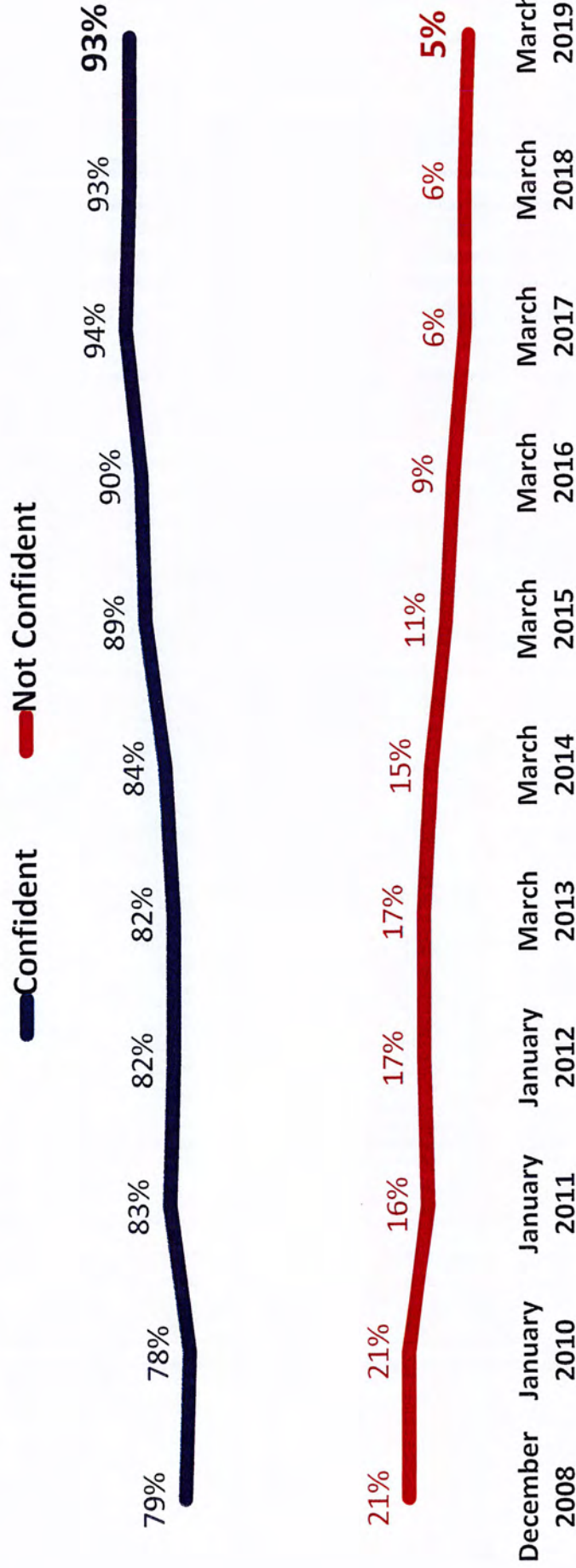
— Attracting and retaining a qualified workforce — Cost of health care insurance



Financial confidence remains near record high levels.



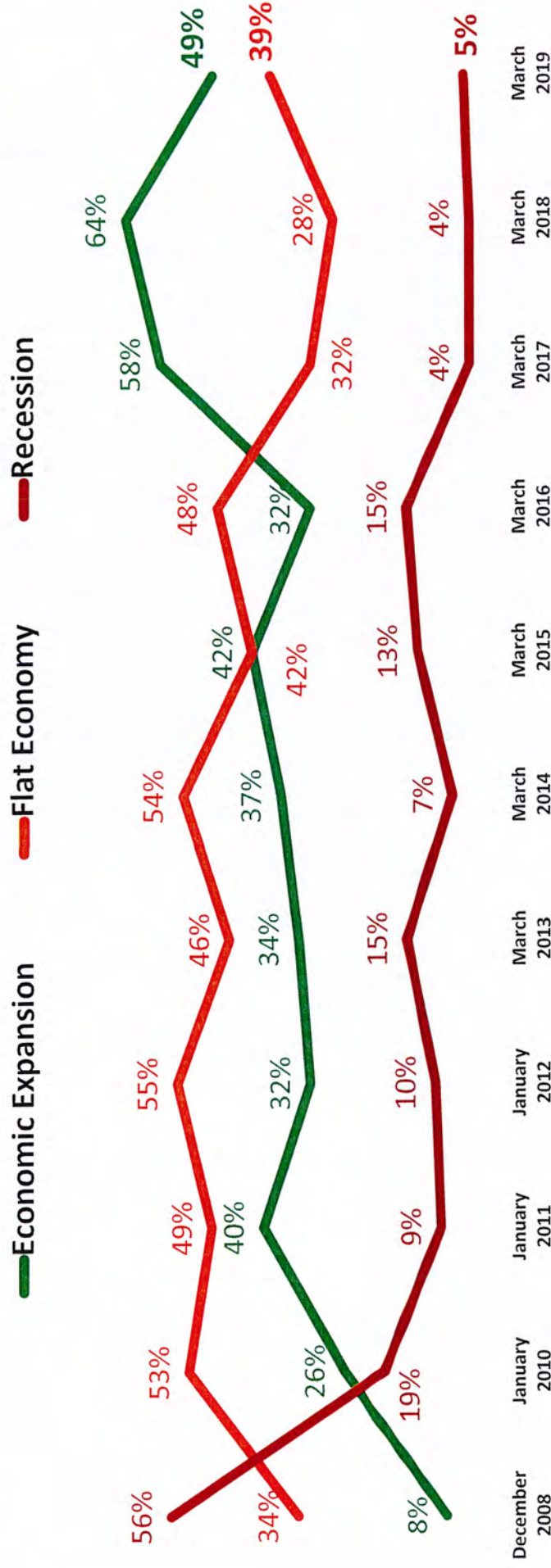
“From a financial perspective, how do you feel right now about the future for your company?”



Economic expansion sentiment has fallen, though few worry about a recession.

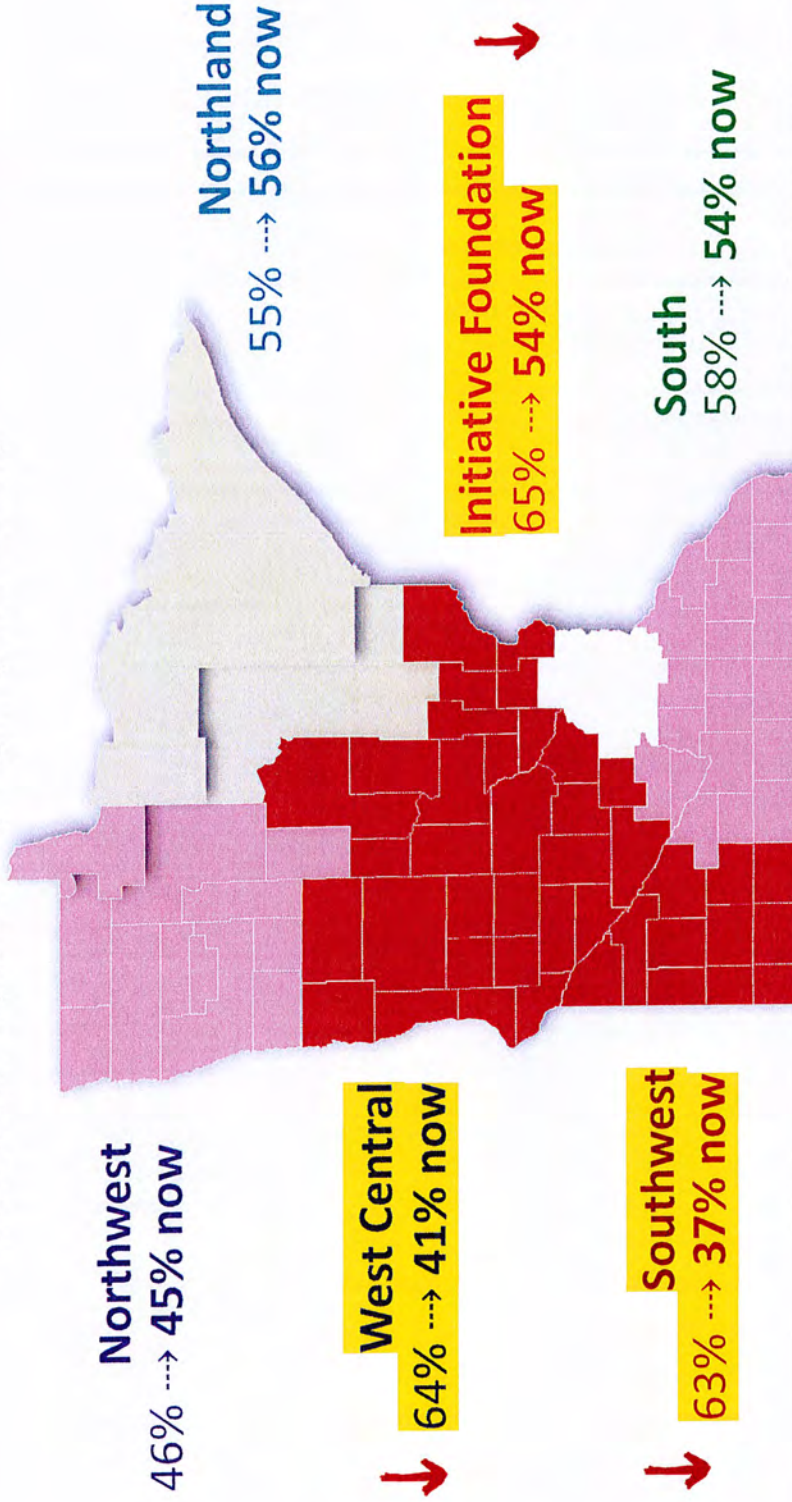


"Thinking about the upcoming year, in 2019, do you anticipate economic expansion, a flat economy, or a recession?"



There are three regions where we saw a sizeable drop-off in optimism.

% Economic Expansion By Region (2018 – 2019)



Among all manufacturers statewide, 49% say 2019 will be a year of economic expansion

2019 State of Manufacturing[®]

Willmar • Panelist Biographies



Rhonda Gass, General Manager of Minnesota Operations/ Director of Administration & Finance – *Falcon Industries, Inc.* (Cosmos, MN)

Rhonda Gass is the general manager of Minnesota operations and the director of finance and administration for Falcon Industries. Falcon is a leading supplier of custom augers and auger flighting, utilizing various materials for many industries, including agriculture, concrete/asphalt paving, wastewater, mining, and process equipment. Falcon's 15 biggest customers represent 12 different industries. Falcon employs 75 workers in Minnesota and Ohio and is 40% employee owned. Over the last decade, Falcon has received several awards for business growth. Rhonda started her career with Falcon over 30 years ago as the receptionist and has moved up the ranks to be one of the three leaders of the company. She also serves as a trustee of the ESOP. Rhonda holds an Associate in Arts degree in Business Management from Ridgewater College.

www.falconindustries.com



Tara Onken, Economic Development Director – *City of Marshall* (Marshall, MN)

Tara Onken is the Director of the Marshall EDA, serving the city to create greater wealth primarily through retention, expansion, and recruitment of jobs to the area, new capital investment, and business creation and attraction. Tara implements various tax abatement programs to drive local investment in rural communities, partnering with private developers on various projects. She has worked on single family and multi-family housing additions, industrial park recruitment, business expansions, and many other community development projects. In addition to her EDA work in Marshall, Tracy and Balaton, Tara has also been a licensed realtor for 7+ years.

Before EDA work, worked for the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership; working on multi-family real estate and LIHTC projects. Tara is involved with Marshall Area Young Professionals, Southwest Economic Development Pros, Economic Development Association of Minnesota, and most recently was appointed as a board member of Greater Minnesota Partnership (GMNP). Tara is a graduate of South Dakota State University with B.A. degrees in Geography and Sociology.

www.ci.marshall.mn.us



Jeff Pattison, President/CEO/Co-Owner – *West Central Steel* (Willmar, MN)

Jeff Pattison is the president/CEO/co-owner of West Central Steel, Inc. a steel service center specializing in the distribution of carbon steel and the manufacturing of steel parts for a wide array of original equipment manufacturers in the upper Midwest. Jeff joined West Central Steel in 1980, and has overseen seven expansions, ISO 9001 certification, and numerous innovations that help manufacturers grow their businesses - the latest being an 85,000 square foot parts production facility designed to save customers time and money from a simplified parts supply chain. Jeff holds a bachelor's degree from St. Cloud State University and an MBA from the University of St. Thomas.

www.wcsteel.com



Panel Moderator

Bob Kill, President & CEO – Enterprise Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN)

Bob Kill is president & CEO of Enterprise Minnesota and leads the organization's efforts to achieve its strategic, growth, and operational goals. A long-time manufacturing executive, Bob is passionate about helping manufacturers grow and is recognized as a spokesperson for Minnesota's manufacturing industry and is regularly quoted in national and regional media on manufacturing trends and industry outlook. Prior to leading Enterprise Minnesota, Bob served as CEO and chairman of the board of Ciprico Inc., a manufacturer of high-performance data and networking systems. Bob serves on the Minnesota Agriculture and Economic Development Board, University of Minnesota-Morris Chancellor's Advisory Board, and the Minnesota Center for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence Advisory Council. He holds a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Minnesota.

www.enterpriseminnesota.org



Bruce Bergeson, Director – Minnesota River Valley CTE *Collaborative* (Willmar, MN)

Bruce Bergeson is the director of the Minnesota River Valley CTE Collaborative (MRV CTEC.) The collaborating schools are Lakeview (Cottonwood), MACCRAY (Clara City), Montevideo, Renville County West (Renville), and Yellow Medicine East (Granite Falls). These five schools work closely to connect students to career paths that align with local workforce needs and the MRV CTEC partners with the Minnesota River Valley Education District, the Southwest Private Industry Council, the SW/WC Service Co-op, Minnesota West Community College and Technical College, and DEED. Prior to this position, Bergeson was a career educator in Minnesota – working as a PE teacher, biology teacher, football and basketball coach, and for the last 30 years has been a principal serving K-12 students. Most recently, Bruce retired from the Montevideo school district after serving for the last 20 years as the high school principal. Bruce has a B.A. in Biology and Physical Education from Concordia, Moorhead, and M.A. and Specialist degrees in education administration from St. Cloud State.

www.lyftpathways.org/domain/29



Allan Cronen, CEO – GVL Poly (Litchfield, MN)

Allan Cronen is CEO of GVL Poly, a Litchfield-based manufacturer of specialty polyethylene attachments for agricultural machinery. The company is widely known for making the world's first polyethylene corn headers, or "snouts," which are placed on the front of combines to harvest corn. GVL also offers 3-D drafting/design, engineering, rapid prototyping and rotational molding services to its OEM customers. Allan purchased the company from its founder in 2002 and he became a director and shareholder. Before joining GVL full time in 2007, he worked as a commercial loan officer and bank executive. Allan holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from North Dakota State University in Fargo, ND.

www.gvlpoly.com

Chancellor praises new scholarship program during Ridgewater visit West Central Tribune

By: Linda Vanderwerf | Jul 11th 2019



Erica Dischino / Tribune Devinder Malhotra, chancellor of Minnesota State, left, and Craig Johnson, president of Ridgewater College, share a laugh Wednesday at the Ridgewater campus in Willmar where Malhotra spoke about the Workforce Development Scholarship Program available to students. Ridgewater is able to offer more than two dozen \$2,500 scholarships in the coming year to students studying in high-demand fields.

WILLMAR – Ridgewater College will be able to offer more than two dozen \$2,500 scholarships in the coming year for students studying in high-demand fields.

Students who meet requirements could receive the scholarships for a second year while studying agriculture, information technology, manufacturing, health care, early childhood and transportation.

Workforce Development Scholarships are part of a \$2 million appropriation from state government to the Minnesota State system of public colleges and universities. Next year the statewide total will jump to \$6 million.

Minnesota State Chancellor Devinder Malhotra was at Ridgewater's Willmar campus Wednesday to raise awareness of the program. The college also has a campus in Hutchinson.

Students have until July 30 to apply for the scholarships, said Ridgewater President Craig Johnson. To apply, students should go to www.ridgewater.edu/scholarships to fill out an

application form. To streamline the process, the college foundation uses the same application for all scholarships, he said. Students planning to study in high-need fields will be considered for the scholarships.

The program is a continuation of a pilot project that brought eight scholarships to Ridgewater.

Jodi Phillipp of Eden Valley received the scholarship to study agriculture. She said she started her agribusiness program when she was a senior in high school through the Post-Secondary Options Program. Her plan was to reduce college debt that way.

Receiving the scholarship after high school “allowed me to take more classes and walk away with less debt,” she told the college and community officials who were meeting with Malhotra.

She has graduated with an associate degree in agribusiness, and is planning to use the second year of her scholarship to complete an associate degree in farm operations and certificate in precision farming.

“I’m really thankful for this scholarship,” she said. “It helped me a lot, and it has pushed me really far.”

Malhotra said the program will provide 668 scholarships systemwide in the coming year and 2,400 the year after that. Students who go on to study at a Minnesota State university could be awarded another \$2,500 in their third year.

In the 2020-21 school year, 80 to 100 more students could receive scholarships.

About three-quarters of jobs in the high-demand fields require some post-secondary study, Malhotra said, and the new program could open the door to students who never thought college was a possibility for them.

The program will not be the ultimate solution to labor shortages and inequality, Malhotra said, but it could spur business, industry, civic leadership and philanthropic communities to become involved in the effort.

Of Minnesota State’s 400,000 students, 80,000 come from low-income families, 65,000 are from communities of color or native communities, and 10,000 are veterans, he said.

In the pilot project, early information indicates a student retention rate of nearly 90 percent was achieved, about 25 percent higher than the general student population, Malhotra said.

Malhotra urged the college and its communities to work together to provide additional resources for students, whether through additional scholarships or through on-the-job training opportunities.

State Rep. Dave Baker, R-Willmar, said, "I know in our community, a couple folks are now wondering if we can try to match what (the college) is doing, so if Ridgewater is doing 80 to 100, no one is saying our community can't reach out and try to match that."

Baker said he would like to see community efforts in Willmar and Hutchinson that could keep the programs going, even if state funding runs out. He also urged faculty members to do even more to reach out to businesses to find ways to cooperate.

Johnson said businesses that want their workers to finish their degrees have been willing to have them work part-time until they graduate.