April / May 2025 Bridget Paulson

Business and Business-Related News for Economic Development Region 6E:

DEED News: CMJTS, DEED, and Xcel Energy Celebrate Graduation of Energy and Construction Trades Students. This May, 71 Minnesotans graduated from the <u>Xcel Energy Power Up Program</u>, a public-private partnership with DEED and community-based organizations to provide training for energy- or construction-related jobs or union apprenticeships.

The graduates went through a two-part training program that prepared them for family-sustaining wages in energy-related and construction trades careers. Xcel Energy's \$4 million investment covered case management, training, support services, tools, work boots and union apprenticeship entrance fees for program participants.

Building Strong Communities provided the pre-apprenticeship training, with supportive and other services provided by Avivo, Career Solutions, **Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc.**, two years, a total of 132 Minnesotans completed the Power Up program.

Full article: https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/press-releases/#/detail/appld/1/id/682740

Hutchinson new business: Big news from <u>Bushwood Sports Club - Hutchinson, MN</u> in Hutchinson – now under new ownership! Scott & Heidi Stutelberg are bringing new energy to this local favorite.

Whether you're swinging for the fences in the batting cages or hitting the range, Bushwood is the place to play for a great price (see attached photo for pricing)! They also will be having Tacos La Catrina out serving delicious food on Tuesdays - so swing by for lunch and check out the space.

Hutchinson would like to welcome Les Schwab Tire Center to Hutchinson. They sell everything from tires, wheels, and batteries to expert alignments and brake repairs! Their tires are backed by America's Best Tire Warranty, giving their customers confidence on the road.

https://www.lesschwab.com/schedule-appointment/services

Renville Manufacturing growth: CelluComp, known for its innovative materials for fiber-based packaging, will open its very first commercial-scale facility in the U.S., in Renville, MN. Starting in May, the 15,000 square-foot facility will begin producing Curran, CelluComp's unique micro-fibrillated cellulose product.

Curran is made from the leftover pulp of root vegetables like sugar beets, serving as an alternative to plastic and harmful PFAS chemicals in packaging. In partnership with the Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative, CelluComp will initially use up to 7,000 tons of sugar beet pulp to kick off production with 800 tons of Curran, scaling up to 24,000 tons by next year. This innovative product is set to make its way to manufacturers around the globe who are looking to create biodegradable packaging.

Renville is the ideal spot for this endeavor, thanks to its access to a nearly unlimited supply of sugar beets.

Willmar Business growth: Congratulations to Greg and Rebecca Wierschke of Clean Chickens & Co on the groundbreaking of their \$3.6 million slaughterhouse located in Willmar's Industrial Park. The Happy Halal processing plant will increase local accessibility of fresh halal goat and lamb meat which is primarily imported frozen from other countries. Marcus Construction expects the project to be completed by spring.

April / May 2025 Bridget Paulson

There were **422** postings on Minnesotaworks.net for Region 6E. Down from last month of **463**.

Kandiyohi County: 176 posts (159 FT and 17 PT)
 McLeod County: 142 posts (127 FT and 15 PT)
 Meeker County: 87 posts (75 FT and 12 PT)
 Renville County: 17 posts (14 FT and 3 PT)

Committee/Project Involvement/Misc. Business Service Coordinator Activity Highlights I have been fortunate to participate in several EDA, Community based, and agency based virtual meetings:

- Hutchinson Tiger Path High School job fair. 400 students 32 businesses
- Power Up/LEAP customer job search in Trades.
- Meat Processor training enrollment and meetings.
- Mid-MN Regional Transportation Coordinating Council MMRTCC.
- Willmar High School job fair and vendor presentation and event. 1300 Students, 42 Businesses
- Ridgewater College Explore Your Future event. 700 students.
- LYFT committee Advisory Board meeting.
- Ridgewater College Explore Career Day planning committee.
- Building Strong Communities graduation. 14 CMJTS graduates from Power Up/LEAP.
- Work Wellness Committee Meeker County start up meeting.
- Clean Chickens/Happy Halal hiring event for business opening.
- Ticket to Work, Benefit Analysis and Placement Referral customer meetings and intakes.
- Monticello, Hutchinson, and Litchfield CareerForce staff coverage days.

Incumbent Worker projects:

Millerbernd Manufacturing: Industrial Maintenance. 4 Trainees. \$14,780. **Simonson Lumber:** CDL training Ridgewater College. 9 Trainees. \$25,000.

Von Ruden: Machine Programming. 2 Trainees. \$20,800.

Viking Engineering: Mechanical Assembly Principles. 13 trainees. \$12,100.

Haug Kubota: CDL training. Ridgewater. 1 Trainee. \$7,098.

Follow Up IW Projects:

SWIF: Leadership and Executive Training Purdue University. \$19,750. 2 Trainees.

Pact for Families: Interpreter Certification training. \$2,300, 3 trainees.

Career Solutions: Talent Optimization. 14 trainees. \$14,425.

Unlimited Ag: CDL Training Ridgewater College. 5 trainees. \$25,000. Modification to end date.

Southwest Initiative Foundation: DEI and Leadership training: \$21,600 with 22 trainees.

Minnesota DEED Unemployment Statistics posted are 30 days behind.

Local Unemployment Statistics April 2025.

https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/laus/

Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	En		Employment to Population Ratio	unemblovmeni	Unemployment Rate
EDR 6E- Southwest Central	63,370	NA		60,864	NA	2,506	4%
Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rat	е	Employmer	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
<u>U S</u>	170,622,0	62.5	5%	164,043,00	0 609	6,580,000	3.9%
<u>Minnesota</u>	3,155,3	68.2	2%	3,054,87	1 66.19	6 100,477	3.2%
U S Seasonally Adjusted	171,109,0	000 62.0	6%	163,944,00	0 609	7,165,000	4.2%
Minnesota Seasonally Adjusted	3,153,2	93 68.2	2%	3,053,25	4 669	6 100,039	3.2%

Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
Kandiyohi County	22,651	NA	21,832	NA	819	3.6%
McLeod County	20,196	NA	19,470	NA	726	3.6%
Meeker County	12,948	NA	12,411	NA	537	4.1%
Renville County	7,575	NA	7,151	NA	424	5.6%

May 2025 Rebecca Perrotti

Business Trends/Updates/Events

- Arrowhead Transit launched their new Ride Smart 2025 service which includes new routes, expanded service areas, weekend access, and clearer maps for rural riders. Their campaign also markets their updated service to employers to help employees with more reliable transportation. They expect this redesign to improve access to jobs, healthcare, education, and essential services in the region.
- DEED is hosting Labor Market Information Sessions geared for a variety of populations including education, employers, and some highlighting specific regions. They can be found at this link https://mn.gov/deed/data/regional-lmi/lmi-training.jsp and highlighted below.
- The Lindstrom Coffee Pot Water Tower will begin steaming again on June 21. This has been a collaborative effort and the residents and businesses involved hope it will help draw event more attention to their town and it's unique charm and cultural heritage.
- Aldi has opened a Pine City location as of May 15. The 315 Main Building (former courthouse and city hall) in Pine
 City has been slated for development into a boutique type hotel with dining, beverages, patio, etc. They plan to use
 historic tax credits to maintain historic integrity of the building. The project is using the same design company as is
 currently working on "The Rock" in Sandstone which is being converted into housing.
- **Pine County Updates** shared at the May 30, East Central Development Partnership Meeting, including City updates. Please see slide deck below. Happy to answer any questions. Exciting things are happening!

East Central Development Partnership – held its regular meeting Friday, May 30 at Pine Technical and Community College. Guest speaker, Randolph Briley, Deputy Director of Outdoor Recreation, provided information about the MN Outdoor Recreation Industry Partnership. https://outdoorindustrypartnership.com/ It is an inter-agency collaboration of the MN DNR, Explore MN Tourism, DEED, and Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation formed in the spring of 2023 as a result of recommendations made by the MN Outdoor Recreation Task Force and Governor's Council on Economic Expansion. Their goals include connecting people to resources, building community, and communicating the benefits of outdoor recreation. President Joe Mulford provided updates on the large-scale construction and remodeling projects taking place at Pine Technical and Community College. https://pine.edu/construction-project-update/ Pine County Economic Development Coordinator, Lezlie Sauter, provided updates on key developments across Pine County. The next ECDP meeting will be July 25 at Sapsucker Farms in Mora and will feature a Legislative Forum.

ECDP hosted the May CMMA meeting held at Glenn Metalcraft in Princeton on May 22.

Human Resources Cooperative – The HR group has met online in May. There is interested in having a guest speaker at a future meeting to discuss new rules, etc. There will be no meeting in June as the regular meeting falls on Juneteenth.

Mille Lacs County Child Care Initiative – Assisted the Mille Lacs County Childcare Coalition in hosting a childcare provider appreciation on May 12.

Pine City Chamber of Commerce – attended May meeting. Learned about potential development of pickle ball courts, and conversation on projects with Pine County Development Coordinator.

Princeton High School Perkins Advisory — attended advisory meeting. PHS has incorporated a Career Academies model and continues to add opportunities to its academic and CTE offerings. They are focusing on Health Science, IT, Manufacturing, Public Safety, Architecture & Construction, Finance. They are writing a grant for further development of Engineering & Robotics and Computer Science programs — looking to add buildable programmable robots. They have a Drones program already and are adding a Broadcasting Pathway. In healthcare, they have large tablets with cadavers on the to teach about body structures. They are working to develop their own CNA training program as well. Their district has a goal for their students to graduate with career direction and some industry experience. They call it "Diploma plus Promise" — every graduate earns more than just a diploma.

Registered Apprenticeship – Meeting with DLI RA Development representative to discuss potential resources for Career Navigator apprenticeships and attended the RA Cohort meeting at MN Department of Labor and Industry to help with CMJTS RA grant planning.

Incumbent Worker Projects

New

• Karlsburger Foods, Inc., Wright County, 12 trainees

On-going

- Advance Design and Systems, Pine County, 6 trainees
- Martens Farm, Kanabec County, 1 trainee
- Harris Hardwoods, Mille Lacs County, 12 trainees
- Sunrise Fiberglass, Chisago County, 6 trainees
- Life Fitness, Anoka County, 5 trainees

Enrollments collected and processed for new projects. On-going file management, close out of projects, and follow up for IW files in WF1.

Business Assistance – Working on OJT as a hiring tool for a business in Isanti - waiting on employer. Secured opportunity for welding work experience for Isanti county youth.

Grant Team – Assisting with editing and partnerships for multiple proposals.

Unemployment Rate Data and Information

Local Unemployment Statistics for April 2025

More Info	Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
$\Lambda \Lambda$	<u>u s</u>	170,622,000	62.5%	164,043,000	60%	6,580,000	3.9%
Λ	<u>Minnesota</u>	3,155,348	68.2%	3,054,871	66.1%	100,477	3.2%
$\Lambda \Lambda$	U S Seasonally Adjusted	171,109,000	62.6%	163,944,000	60%	7,165,000	4.2%
$\Lambda\Lambda$	Minnesota Seasonally Adjusted	3,153,293	68.2%	3,053,254	66%	100,039	3.2%

Local Unemployment Statistics for April 2025

More Info	Area - click name for historical data		Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate	
$\Lambda \Lambda$	EDR 7E- East Central	92,310	NA	87,755	NA	4,555	4.9%	

Local Unemployment Statistics for April 2025

More Info	Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
M	Chisago County	32,053	NA	30,887	NA	1,166	3.6%
₩	Isanti County	23,543	NA	22,521	NA	1,022	4.3%
$\Lambda\Lambda$	Kanabec County	8,615	NA	8,000	NA	615	7.1%
$\Lambda\Lambda$	Mille Lacs County	14,635	NA	13,811	NA	824	5.6%
$\Lambda \Lambda$	Pine County	13,464	NA	12,536	NA	928	6.9%

ECOUNTY ECOUNTY ECOUNTY DEVELOPMENT

UPDATE May 30, 2025

Lezlie Sauter, Economic Development Coordinator

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES THROUGH HOUSING



The Pine County Local Housing Trust Fund is a dedicated resource to support the creation, preservation, and rehabilitation of affordable housing in Pine County. By investing in housing stability, we foster economic growth, stronger communities, and improved quality of life for our residents.



A LHTF encourages the development of new affordable rental and ownership housing; provides financial assistance to developers, non-profits, and local organizations for housing projects; leverages state and federal funding to maximize local investments.

Scan the QR Code to learn more:



New Rock LLC

32 housing units

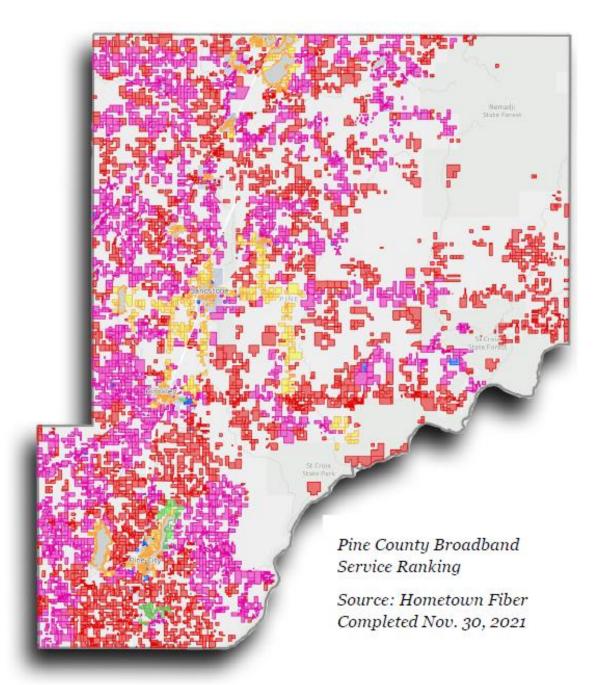
- \$48,000 LHTF grant for stabilization phase
- \$75,000 LHTF grant for construction phase
- \$75,000 RLF loan for construction phase

Broadband

Hired Hometown Fiber to:

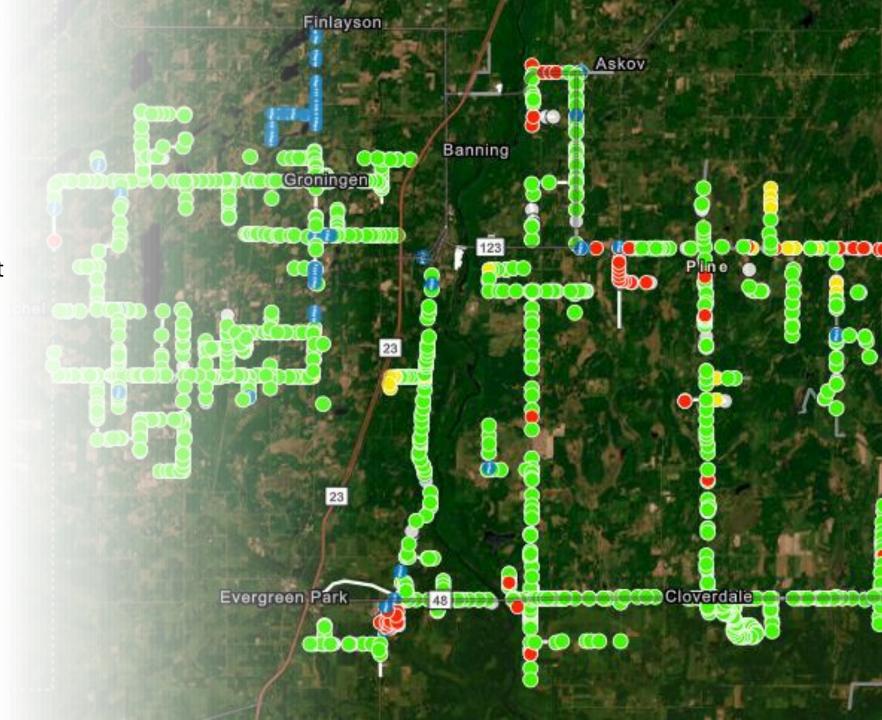
- Map existing infrastructure
- Make recommendations for future infrastructure
- Develop broadband grant program

Code	Assessment	Technology
Red	Worst	Twisted Pair (DSL) only, No Coax, No Fiber, greater than 1.25 miles from a DSLAM
Purple	Bad	Twisted Pair (DSL) only, No Coax, No Fiber, within 1.25 miles of a DSLAM
Yellow	Good	Coax (Cable Modem) with or without Twisted Pair, No Fiber
Green	Better	Shared Fiber (PON), with or without Coax, with or without Twisted Pair, No Direct Fiber
Blue	Best	Direct Fiber or Private Fiber, with or without Coax, with or without Twisted Pair



Broadband

- RDOF
 - County ARPA \$
- Community Development Block Grant
 - LMI Areas
- Border to Border
 - R7 & R9
 - County ARPA \$
- USDA ReConnect Congressionally Directed Spending
- Blandin Foundation
- BEAD



Broadband Projects

RDOF

- Midco (dark green polygon)
 - Cross Lake Trail *\$25,000 ARPA
- SCI (pink polygon)
- LTD (peach polygon- ignore)

CDBG-CV

- SCI LMI (Black lines)

Border to Border

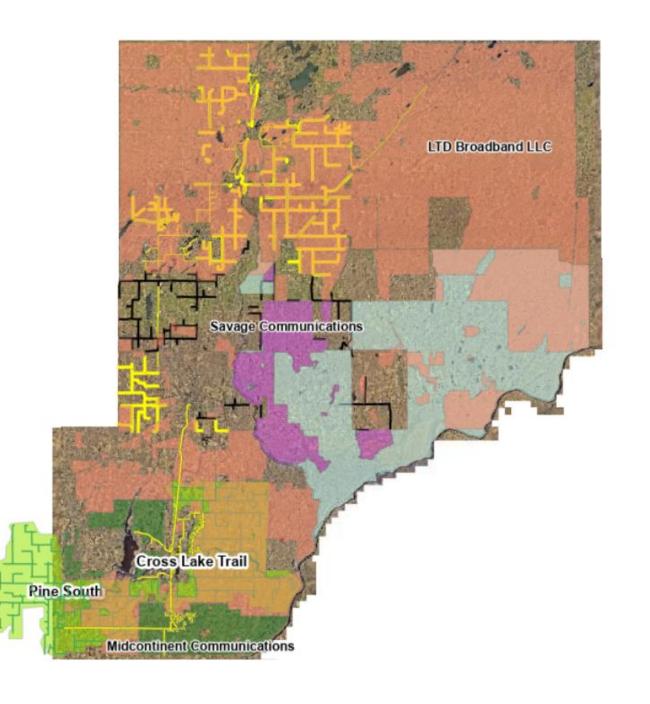
- R9: SCI East Central (**bold** yellow lines) ***\$75,000 ARPA**
- R7: ECE Pine South (bright green polygon) *\$14,000 ARPA

ReConnect (CDS)

- SCI (light blue polygon)

Blandin Foundation

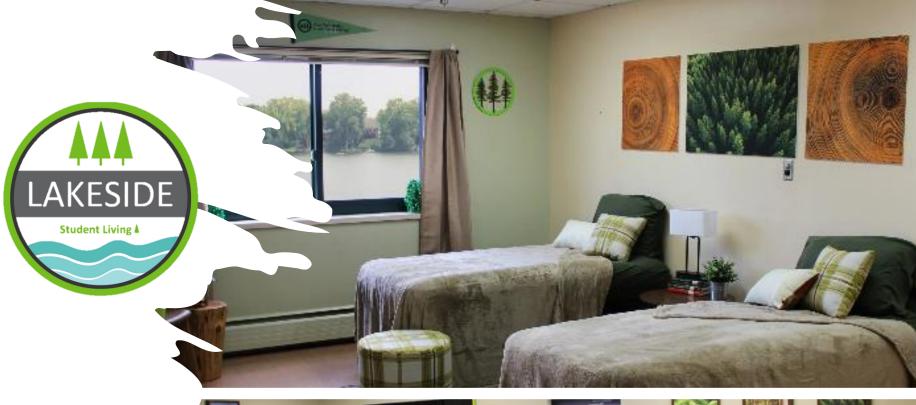
- SCI (thin yellow in Kerrick)
- Starwire (Chengwatana & PC Twp)



Lakeside Center

- Student Housing
- Child Care Center
- Recreation Center



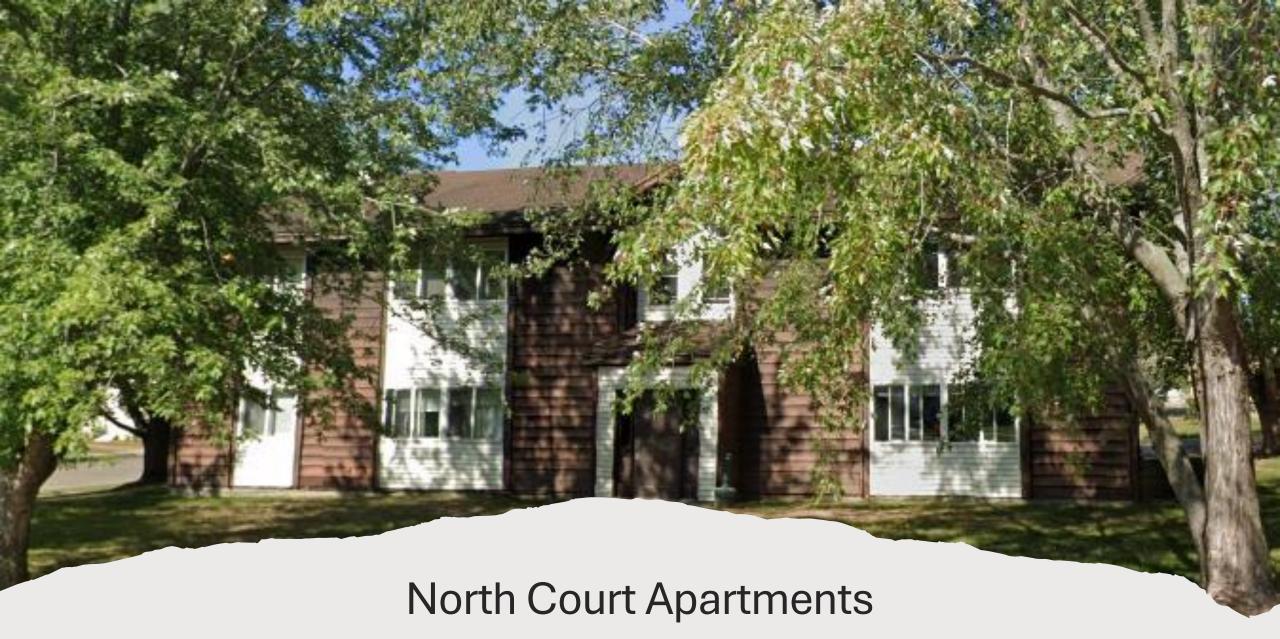




Child Care Expansion Grant

- Collaboration with
 - Pine Technical & Community College
 - Lakeside Center LLC
 - Pine Children's Early Learning Center
 - Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures
 - Hinckley-Finlayson School District
 - Little Willow Child Care Center
 - Willow River School District
- Awarded \$500,000
- Adds an additional 118 childcare slots

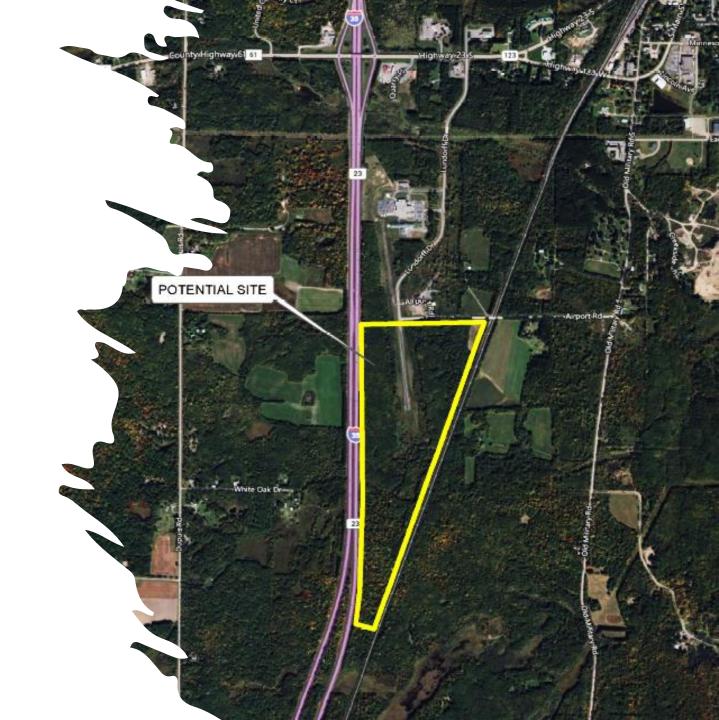




Purchased & Preserved 8 units of Section 8 Housing

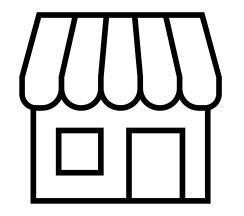
Transportation & Logistics Study

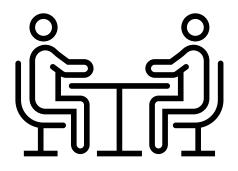
- Identified three industries as potential users:
 - Wood Product Manufacturing
 - Forest Products
 - Recycled Materials
- Two sites identified
 - Sandstone Business Park (\$8.3M)
 - Parcels near Hinckley Solid Waste Transfer Station (\$5.2)
- Outlined steps to develop a rail facility
 - Project champion
 - Secure shipper & rail commitments
 - Select location



Business Attraction, Retention & Expansion + Tourism

- ✓ Business Survey
- ✓ One-on-one counseling services to start-ups
- ✓ Hosted SBDC Sessions:
 - ✓ Bookkeeping for Non-Accountants
 - ✓ Marketing Strategies
- ✓ Hosted Paid Leave Info Session
- ✓ Shrpa Partnership through Explore MN
 - ✓ Chambers & Cities







Pine City Village Hall Redevelopment









Fawn Meadows

- Development went unfinished during Great Recession (2009)
- 20 single family lots platted with no infrastructure
- In 2009, estimated costs to finish infrastructure were **\$979,430**
- No streetlights, no final layer of asphalt, no sidewalks
- Dead end street with no turnaround
- Estimated \$1.3 M (green)
- \$9M (yellow)





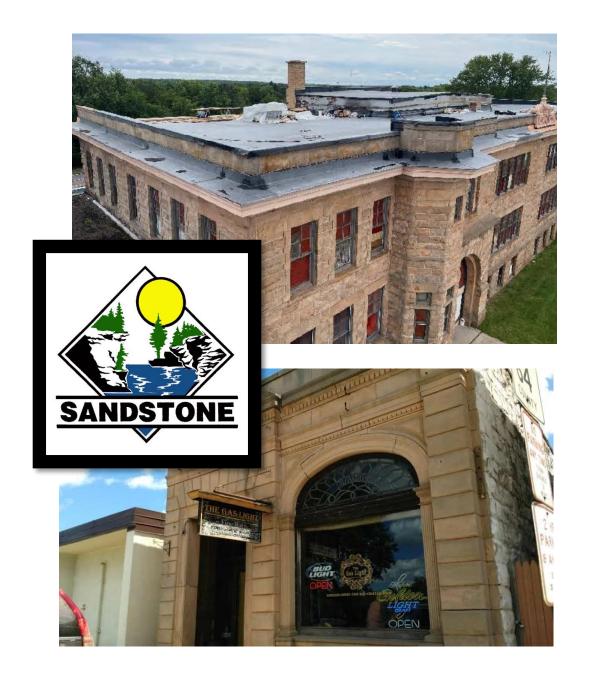


Affordable Housing Project

- Developer = Commonwealth Development Corporation
- Location = Fire Monument Rd & McGowan Ave
- 44 units workforce housing
 - Mix of 1, 2, 3, and 4-bedroom units
- Construction in 2027 pending MHFA funding award in 2025







- Gas Light Redevelopment
 - Downtown Redevelopment Study
- Community Business Partnership Program
- Habitat for Humanity
- Kwik Trip
- Historic Sandstone School
 - Ground Breaking on August 9, 2025 at 2pm
- Panelist @ EDAM
 - A Case Study and a Work in Progress
- Breakout Session @ LMC
 - A Case Study in Persistence and Adaptive Re-use

DISCOVER



STURGEON LAKE | SANDSTONE | HINCKLEY | PINE CITY

We are truly 'in the middle of it all', as Pine County offers a strategic location, a world of outdoor adventures, and a peaceful sanctuary to reside, work, and grow.



May 2025 Tim Zipoy

Project Work

- 1. Central MN Manufacturers Association: Workforce Development Initiatives
 - Continued promotion and development of the Youth Apprenticeship Toolkit and the "K-12 Navigator" workforce development tools. Improving utilization and functionality with mobile and social media platforms
 - o Seeking grant funding to upgrade to phone app for k12 Navigator
 - o https://cmmaworks.org/k12-navigator
 - o https://cmmaworks.org/youth-appren
 - Assist with newsletter and website content
 - Assist with program committee and Tour of Mfg committee initiatives.
 - May membership meeting info: <u>CMMA May Meeting Glenn Metalcraft May 22, 2025 Midwest Manufacturers'</u> Association
 - Further collaboration with the East Central Development Partnership on CMMA services.
 - Attended Granite City Stakeholders annual meeting to promote CMMA
 - Exhibitor booth at the 2025 Granite Stakeholders Tradeshow on Wednesday 21 May in Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. Attracting over 400 attendees, the tradeshow provides a unique opportunity for those in the Granite community to meet each other, learn about exhibiting companies, and explore potential ways to work together. The tradeshow hosts roughly 100 exhibitors, including representation from the Granite Companies and advisory, community, digital, education, Employer Support for the Guard and Reserves, and sustainability partners.
 - o Granite Partners
 - Planning for 13th annual golf fundraiser/awards ceremony: <u>CMMA Golf Social 2025 at Wapicada</u> -Jun 10, 2025
- 2. Central MN HR Cooperative: meets monthly, second Thursday, 8:00 10:00. Group meeting is hybrid model. In person attendance is increasing. Some members are actively hiring while others have slowed hiring, citing current economic and political uncertainty. Employee retention and applicant "showing up for interviews" are current topics.
- 3. Wright County Economic Development Partnership: https://www.wrightpartnership.org/
 - Continued development and promotion of web-based career exploration data tool, *WorkForce Pathways*. This site assists Wright County businesses with their Workforce needs to create a long-term vibrant community through education, training, marketing and collaboration. This project is ongoing with new committee members needing continued outreach to schools.
 - https://www.wrightpartnership.org/workforce-pathways-v2/
 - Annual golf fundraiser planned for Sept. 9
 - CEO program student business expo scheduled for May 21

4. Work Based Learning Coordination:

Promotion and development of OJT and Incumbent Worker services and training. Providing CMJTS and CFC resources and services info to area businesses through outreach and response to incoming inquiries. Helping to place Power Up grant cohort into training related positions. Continued interest in Incumbent Worker services from business partners. Extensive Business Services team collaboration to deliver these services in Wright and Sherburne counties.

- 5. Create and broadcast a weekly (Monday) workforce/employment/training program entitled *Work Wright Radio* on KRWC, Work Wright Radio | KRWC 1360 AM featuring Wright County employers, careers, CFC services, events and resources. Sharing info on CMJTS, UI, CFC, Partners, and more. Highlight business sectors and employment opportunities along transportation corridors in the county helping listeners to understand local labor market and in demand occupations to slow labor exportation from the county and to increase local skill base.
- 6. Providing job search assistance to active CMJTS job seekers as referred from our Career Navigators in PA, Adult/DW and Youth programs. Assisting with job matching, job leads, employer connections and on the job training opportunities.
- 7. Partner/Co- Facilitate the Monticello CFC job seeker professional development and networking group. Meets on Tuesday's 10:00 12:00 via zoom. Discussion topics include finance in career transition, advanced Linked In strategies and self- branding/promotion. Increasing attendance, now 30 40 people per session. Most attendees learn of this group through DEED outreach, many people from the metro area attend. Group is facilitated by community partner Kim White and CMJTS. This initiative has been temporarily suspended and is being reconfigured for future service delivery.
- 8. Serving walk in job seekers at CFC, offering local labor market info, job leads, contacts and connections to CMJTS and CFC partner services.
- 9. Soliciting and securing donations/financial support for CMJTS Summer camps.
- 10. Facilitated on site hiring event/job fair in collaboration with DEED and CFC partners on May 22.

 13 employers and 24 job seekers attended. Employers provided positive feedback on their experiences with active job seekers. Several employers commented that they scheduled post event interviews.
- 11. Presented CMJTS/CFC info to Annandale business breakfast on 4/30. Well attended, well received and have had business inquiries on services.
- 12. Met with Sherburne County HR team to promote CMJTS services and resources.
- 13. Requesting and receiving grant letters of support and commitment to support CMJTS funding initiatives and pursuits.
- 14. Attended CMJTS Leadership team meeting on 5/19.

MN DEED Labor Market Info

The unemployment rate ticked up to 3.2% in Minnesota in April, on a seasonally adjusted basis. In Minnesota, the number of unemployed workers increased to 100,039 and the number of employed increased to 3,053,254. The labor force grew to 3,153,293 workers, and the labor force participation rate held at 68.2%.

The U.S. unemployment rate held at 4.2% in April, on a seasonally adjusted basis. The labor force participation rate increased to 62.6%.

Unemployment Rates									
	April 2025	March 2025	April 2024						
Minnesota									
Seasonally Adjusted	3.2%	3.1%	3.0%						
Not Seasonally Adjusted	3.2%	3.9%	2.8%						
	United States								
Seasonally Adjusted	4.2%	4.2%	3.9%						
Not Seasonally Adjusted	3.9%	4.2%	3.5%						

County Employment Rates, April 2025, not seasonally adjusted

Wright county: 3.1% Sherburne county: 3.2%