

## 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.
    - Seeking grant funding to upgrade to phone app for k12 Navigator. Applied for a 10k grant from United Way, announcement date is 1/19/26.
    - <https://cmmaworks.org/k12-navigator>
    - <https://cmmaworks.org/youth-appren>
  - Expanding the workforce development committee to include more education representatives.
  - Considering the creation of a CMMA “Dream Team” to do school/student outreach. The CMMA Manufacturing Career Dream Team would put the spotlight on talented young manufacturing employees from the CMMA region. These employees serve as ambassadors for manufacturing, representing the industry, promoting careers, and providing information on education options and skills needed to be successful in manufacturing. The Dream Team will be available for virtual or in-person student presentations.
    - [TSMA Manufacturing Career Dream Team - Midwest Manufacturers' Association](#)
  - Assist with newsletter and website content
  - Assist with program committee planning/Upcoming schedule:
    - December 9: Holiday Party at Partner’s Pub
  - Annual strategic planning retreat on 1/7/26
- 

2. Central MN HR Cooperative: meets monthly, second Thursday, 8:00 – 10:00. Group meeting is hybrid model. In person attendance is increasing. MN Paid Leave Act is an issue of ongoing concern yet most are making progress and preparation for this law change. Hiring as slowed/leveled off for some while employee retention remains a challenge for others.

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.
- [Workforce Pathways - Wright County Economic Development Partnership](#)
- 2025 Annual meeting is on 1/16/2026 at 7:30 AM at Wright Co. Gov. Ctr

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. Continued interest in Incumbent Worker/Talent Development services from business partners. Interest in leadership supervision training from manufacturers in central area. Extensive Business Services team collaboration to deliver these services in Wright and Sherburne counties.

2 OJT's this month: one in manufacturing, one in healthcare.

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. Co-facilitate the CMJTS and Monticello CFC Job Seeker Professional Development and Networking Group. Session occurs on Tuesday's 10:00 – 12:00 via Teams. Discussion topics include: job search strategy, finance in career transition, advanced Linked In strategies and self-branding/promotion and networking. Sessions in collaboration with and promoted by DEED. Average of 25 people per session. Many dislocated workers with workplace maturity attending from I.T., Finance and other technical backgrounds. Most attendees from metro area.
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. Attending Business Retention and Expansion visits with Sherburne and Wright County Economic Development partners. Providing information on CMJTS and CFC business services.
10. Planning 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Central MN Job Fair in collaboration with DEED and CFC partners.

### **MN DEED Labor Market Info**

The unemployment rate increased to 3.7% in Minnesota in September, on a seasonally adjusted basis. The number of unemployed increased to 117,394 workers and the number of employed decreased to 3,042,086 workers. The labor force grew to 3,159,480 workers, and the labor force participation rate held at 68.1%. The U.S. unemployment rate rose to 4.4% in September, on a seasonally adjusted basis. The national labor force participation rate increased to 62.4%.

**Business Trends/Updates/Events**

- Nancy Hoffman, Chisago County HRA-EDA Director, received an Outstanding Service award from the Association of Minnesota Counties for her work recently and over the past 13 years.
- Falcon Powersports opened in early December in Stacy. They offer 4x4s, ATVs, UTSs, and full range of motorsports services. They partner with Polaris, whose R&D facility is also located nearby in Chisago County.
- Chisago County Childcare Coalition is hosting a Child Care Champions Training Day on January 31, 2026. This educational resource event is open to all childcare providers across the region regardless of their location.
- Construct Tomorrow Hinckley is scheduled for Wednesday, January 28 at Grand Casino Event Center. If you would like to visit this event, please connect with Rebecca.
- Tentative date for East Central MN Career Fair in Pine City – April 14, 2026.

**East Central Development Partnership** – No meetings in December. Will start meeting again in January.

**Human Resources Cooperative** – The HR group met online in October and November with 11 attending. Many focusing on open enrollment and sorting out processes for MN Paid Leave. Businesses shared that recruitment has been better, several are fully staffed as a change. More people seem to be staying. A couple members continue to have recruiting issues. Most group members attending feel they are now as prepared as they can be at this point for the paid leave – however a variety of logistical questions remain. Once employer noted that they may be prone to experiencing people who are eligible to go on leave due to work at other additional jobs.

**Chisago County Child Care Initiative** – Next meeting will be January 12 with guest, Carla Vita, who will share about her new role and department. The group also hosts a learning event for childcare providers which is outlined above.

**Princeton Tiger Community Connections** – Working on creating a “career crawl” event for students to learn more about local employers.

**Cambridge-Isanti Schools C4 Group** – Career Center Director will be submitting a proposal for YST grant for health careers to help build out their programming and start a nursing assistant course at the high school. Twenty-three students are now enrolled in the manufacturing program.

**East Central Regional Transit Coordinating Council** – Next meeting January 8. No meeting in December.

**Incumbent Worker Projects**

**New**

**Waiting on applications for 3 companies.**

**On-going**

- CDI Curb, Sherburne County, 16 trainees
- City of Mora, 1 trainee
- Karlsburger Foods, Inc., Wright County, 12 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** – Creating career roadmaps for several employers. Discussions about OJT and Talent Development trainings.

**Unemployment Rate Data and Information**

**Local Unemployment Statistics for September 2025**

More Info	Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
	<a href="#">EDR 7E- East Central</a>	90,975	NA	87,489	NA	3,486	3.8%

## Local Unemployment Statistics for September 2025

More Info	Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
	<a href="#">U.S.</a>	171,217,000	62.4%	163,894,000	59.8%	7,324,000	4.3%
	<a href="#">Minnesota</a>	3,169,283	68.3%	3,058,240	65.9%	111,043	3.5%
	<a href="#">U.S. Seasonally Adjusted</a>	171,248,000	62.4%	163,645,000	59.7%	7,603,000	4.4%
	<a href="#">Minnesota Seasonally Adjusted</a>	3,159,480	68.1%	3,042,086	65.6%	117,394	3.7%

## Local Unemployment Statistics for September 2025

More Info	Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
	<a href="#">Chisago County</a>	31,767	NA	30,688	NA	1,079	3.4%
	<a href="#">Isanti County</a>	23,223	NA	22,377	NA	846	3.6%
	<a href="#">Kanabec County</a>	8,414	NA	8,015	NA	399	4.7%
	<a href="#">Mille Lacs County</a>	14,368	NA	13,804	NA	564	3.9%
	<a href="#">Pine County</a>	13,203	NA	12,605	NA	598	4.5%



# REGISTER NOW

## CHILD CARE CHAMPIONS TRAINING DAY

Attention  
child care  
providers!

**Saturday, January 31, 2026**

8am - 3:30pm (doors open at 7:30am)

**North Branch Area High School**

Early bird registration ends 12/31/25 - \$50

Registration after 12/31/25 - \$60

Register at [nbaceonline.org](http://nbaceonline.org) or 651-674-1025

Calling all child care providers! Join us for a full-day event dedicated to advancing your skills, connecting with peers, and having fun!

### Why Attend?

- **Professional Development:** Earn six hours of Develop-approved training by attending three engaging sessions, with nine topics to choose from.
- **Networking & Resources:** Connect with other providers and explore vendor booths and on-site resources designed to support you.
- **Perks & Prizes:** Enjoy tasty snacks, and a delicious lunch. Have a professional photo taken. Plus, you'll have the chance to win exciting door prizes!



<b>Unemployment Rates</b>			
	<b>September 2025</b>	<b>August 2025</b>	<b>September 2024</b>
<b>Minnesota</b>			
Seasonally Adjusted	3.7%	3.6%	3.1%
Not Seasonally Adjusted	3.5%	4.1%	2.5%
<b>United States</b>			
Seasonally Adjusted	4.4%	4.3%	4.1%
Not Seasonally Adjusted	4.3%	4.5%	3.9%

*Current DEED Info Available*

Wright County Unemployment Rate for August 2025 is 3.9%  
 Sherburne County Unemployment Rate for August 2025 is 4.1%

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

**DEED News:** Governor Tim Walz and DEED announced the recipients of \$8.8 million in grants to grow Minnesota's workforce through the Drive for 5 Workforce initiative. Drive for 5 is the state's program for preparing Minnesotans for high-demand jobs in five occupational categories: the caring professions, education, manufacturing, technology, and the trades.

The Governor launched Drive for 5 in 2023 to expand access to workforce training in occupational groups where there is high demand for employees and a pathway to careers with family-sustaining wages. Drive for 5 is a unique approach to two of Minnesota's most challenging problems: employment disparities faced by Minnesotans and a labor force shortage in key fields. Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS), will receive \$600,000 for this initiative.

**Willmar Business news:** Christianson CPAs and Consultants announced that it has broken ground to construct its new headquarters on east U.S. Highway 12 in Willmar. The firm plans to move into the new location in fall of 2026.

**Renville County:** The commissioners approved a \$500,000 purchase agreement for the west wing of the Meadows on Main in the city of Renville. The county will convert the 13,192-square-foot wing to provide child care services, as well as market-rate rental housing for working families.

The county will use a \$350,000 grant from the for child care toward the project costs. In discussions prior to the vote, the commissioners said the purchase is a financial commitment to subsidize child care within the county. But commissioners see county support as the only viable option to address the need.

The wing is currently unoccupied. The county plans to convert four of the 15 assisted-living units in the wing for use by independent child care providers. The units will be provided to the independent providers at a reduced rental rate. The four new child care operations could serve up to 48 children, and make a dent in the county's child care needs.

A previous study by First Children's Finance, a nonprofit that works to grow child care businesses, found that Renville County has child care for 76% of its needs, or a 154-child gap. It's believed that the gap may be larger now, as the county has lost some child care providers in the last two years.

**Ridgewater College news:** Dr. Craig Johnson, President of Ridgewater College, is pleased to announce the promotion of Sam Bowen to the position of Vice President of Finance and Operations and Chief Financial Officer.

Bowen has been serving as the Dean of Customized Training and Continuing Education for Ridgewater since 2013. He previously served as the Director of Communications and Marketing from 2004-2013. Before joining Ridgewater, Sam worked in sales and marketing roles for private industry in Minnesota.

There were **421** postings on **Minnesotaworks.net** for Region 6E.  
Up from last month of **389**.

**Kandiyohi County:** 188 posts (163 FT and 25 PT) Increase from last month  
**McLeod County:** 155 posts (141 FT and 14 PT) Increase  
**Meeker County:** 65 posts (53 FT and 12 PT) Decrease  
**Renville County:** 13 posts (11 FT and 2 PT) Same

**Committee/Project Involvement/Misc. Business Service Coordinator Activity Highlights:**

**I have been fortunate to participate in several EDA, Community based, and agency-based meetings:**

- Meat Processor OJT management, 1 new OJT.
- Mid-MN Regional Transportation Coordinating Council MMRTCC.
- Explore Your Future kick off meeting.
- Kandiyohi County Business Retention & Expansion Board meeting.
- Ticket to Work and Placement Referral customer meetings.
- Hutchinson and Litchfield CareerForce staff coverage days.
- Business WEP meetings and search
- Collaboration meetings with CDL training vendors.
- Willmar High School job fair kick off planning meetings.

**Incumbent Worker projects:** 2 Talent Development projects in progress.

- **DC Diesel Tec:** CDL training. \$14,000 for 2 trainees.
- **Willmar Schools:** Teacher Apprentice Training. SW MN State Univ. 14 Trainees. \$25,000.
- **Haug Implement:** CDL Training Ridgewater College. 3 Trainee. \$21,000. **MODIFICATION**
- **Simonson Lumber:** CDL training Ridgewater College. 9 Trainees. \$25,000.
- **Von Ruden:** Machine Programming. 2 Trainees. \$20,800.
- **Haug Kubota:** CDL training. Ridgewater. 1 Trainee. \$7,098.

**Follow Up IW Projects:**

- **Millerbernd Manufacturing:** Industrial Maintenance. 4 Trainees. \$14,780.
- **Viking Engineering:** Mechanical Assembly Principles. 13 trainees. \$12,100.
- **Career Solutions:** Talent Optimization. 14 trainees. \$14,425.

**Local Unemployment Statistics for September 2025**

Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
<a href="#">U S</a>	171,217,000	62.4%	163,894,000	59.8%	7,324,000	4.3%
<a href="#">Minnesota</a>	3,169,283	68.3%	3,058,240	65.9%	111,043	3.5%
<a href="#">U S Seasonally Adjusted</a>	171,248,000	62.4%	163,645,000	59.7%	7,603,000	4.4%
<a href="#">Minnesota Seasonally Adjusted</a>	3,159,480	68.1%	3,042,086	65.6%	117,394	3.7%
Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
<a href="#">EDR 6E- Southwest Central</a>	64,068	NA	61,960	NA	2,108	3.3%
Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
<a href="#">Kandiyohi County</a>	22,897	NA	22,180	NA	717	3.1%
<a href="#">McLeod County</a>	20,098	NA	19,447	NA	651	3.2%
<a href="#">Meeker County</a>	13,004	NA	12,586	NA	418	3.2%
<a href="#">Renville County</a>	8,069	NA	7,747	NA	322	4%

**Local Unemployment Statistics August 2025 for comparison:**

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

Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
<a href="#">U S</a>	171,035,000	62.4%	163,288,000	59.6%	7,747,000	4.5%
<a href="#">Minnesota</a>	3,174,821	68.5%	3,043,052	65.6%	131,769	4.2%
<a href="#">U S Seasonally Adjusted</a>	170,778,000	62.3%	163,394,000	59.6%	7,384,000	4.3%
<a href="#">Minnesota Seasonally Adjusted</a>	3,156,875	68.1%	3,043,312	65.6%	113,563	3.6%
Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
<a href="#">EDR 6E- Southwest Central</a>	64,379	NA	61,545	NA	2,834	4.4%