

Business Trends/Updates/Events

- The Bookmatch apartments in the now renovated high school in Sandstone, formerly known as the Rock and in a massive state of disrepair, opened in June and by August are nearly full. This workforce housing project has been an amazing partnership between the City of Sandstone and many others and is exciting for the community. View a recent video here by the developer here along with several articles:
 - [Bookmatch Apartments: Historic redevelopment in Sandstone | FOX 9 Minneapolis-St. Paul](#)
 - [The Bookmatch | Jillpine](#)
 - [New housing at The Bookmatch in Sandstone is really coming along - WDIO.com](#)
 - [A beloved landmark gets a new name: Introducing The Bookmatch | News | pinecountynews.com](#)
- New Pathways, family homeless shelter in Cambridge, is transitioning into it's new space August 11. They will have on-site space for multiple families, additional staff have been added, and they will continue to partner with churches and organizations for meals. [New Pathways | Family Homeless Shelter](#)
- LP Building Solutions will be building a new facility in the North Branch Industrial Park. The company purchased 120 acres for the project and is expected to bring more than 100 new jobs to the area, marking a significant investment in the local economy. Plans for the development also included the addition of a rail spur, enabling the company to utilize rail service and strengthen regional logistics capabilities. See more below courtesy of Chisago County HRA-EDA newsletter.
- On June 3 Kendall Howard celebrated the ribbon cutting for their large-scale expansion in Chisago City. They have been adding jobs already and expect to add 120 through the end of this year with more to come in 2027.
- Brinks Market n Chisago City completed an expansion of 8,500 sq ft to their store with many new amenities and grocery items to serve the Chisago Lakes Area.
- Atscott Manufacturing, Pine City has received a MIF (Minnesota Investment Fund) grant which will help with investment for their building expansion project to accommodate a contract to build 350 towers for the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol along the southern border. The expect this project to create about 15 jobs. Read more at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2k3vwufz>
- Broekema Beltway, also in Pine City was awarded \$200,00 from the Minnesota Investment Fund, and \$167,500 from the Job Creation fund which will be used for an expansion project to establish a new manufacturing line . It is expected to create 12 jobs. Read more at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/3duv77j3>
- Returnships Toolkit for Employers – designed to help employer implement “Returnships” similar to internships but for those interested in returning to work after an extended absence including early retirement. Ali Bilden Camps is available through December 2026 for assistance with or presentations about the toolkit or its implementation in your business.
- Fair Chance Employer Training, Thursday, September 17, 2026, at MINNCOR Roseville (see flyer below)
- Manufacturers Summit hosted by East Central Development Partnership, Friday, September 25 in Isanti from 7:30am – 11am. Includes tours of BP Metals and Metal Coatings.
- East Central MN Career Fair – Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at the City of Isanti Community Center from Noon - 2pm. Resume review assistance available at 11am.
- Chisago County Manufacturing Month event for high school students, hosted by Chisago County HRA-EDA and partners will be Tuesday, October 20.

Human Resources Cooperative – Discussed opportunities for creating Registered Apprenticeship in businesses across multiple industries. Promoted upcoming paid leave power hour sessions and the MN Retain Mental Wellness workshop recording. Richard Owen shared about September event– Fair Chance Hiring (see flyer bottom of report). Hosted guest speaker, Ali Bilden Camps in August to share about the Employer **Returnships Toolkit**. Vocational Rehab partners also shared their interest in hosting an employer roundtable in region 7E. Several employers in August noted that they are approaching being fully staffed.

Chisago County Child Care Coalition – Met for additional strategic planning and mapping out activities for grant funded initiatives.

Mille Lacs County Child Care Coalition – Mille Lacs County purchased a property that will be converted to be into a special license home childcare and may become a business incubator site for providers as well. Met with the group online on May 26, they are looking for ways to engage with providers more. They are also participating with the Initiative Foundation program and working on mission/vision and direction going forward.

North 65 Chamber of Commerce – Progressive networking session. Learned about organizations and employers and had the opportunity to share with these individuals about CMJTS. The Brave Project, Plugs Garage, Security Bank & Trust, Go Savvy Social, Scooters, Commissioner Berg, New Pathways, Serenity Circle, Out of the Woods Nutrition. Conversations with businesses at August meeting included Grand Casino Hinckley, Century 21 Moline Realty, New Pathways, and K

Registered Apprenticeship – met with DOLI coordinator Annie Jenkin regarding CMJTS RA work. On-going communication with Olympak in Mora and DOLI regarding their pursuit of RA for their printing positions. They are now considering the Dual Pipeline Training program as well. Follow up with organizations who indicated an interest in RA as part of the career fair employer post-survey completed. Met with 49s union training center and MPLS JATC about their apprenticeship programs and how best CMJTS can support those seeking apprenticeship opportunities. Also met with Peterson Companies to learn more about their hiring needs and processes as primarily union employer. Met with Great Lakes Trades Academy to learn about their trades training offerings and discuss potential partnerships.

MN Paid Leave – review of webinars for continued resource learning. Follow up with organizations who indicated an interest in paid leave as part of the career fair employer post-survey. Participation in CMJTS MN Paid Family Medical Leave power hours for employers and employees. Technical assistance for employers to get their questions answered.

Webinar – Aspen Institute, “When Work Isn't Enough: Improving Job Quality for ALICE Households”

Isanti Entrepreneurship Workshop – August 2, shared a presentation in Isanti on CMJTS tools and resources for entrepreneurs who may be looking to add employees.

Operation Community Connect – Onamia – attended to represent CMJTS and programs. Spoke to about 90 adults about general CMJTS resources. Youth programs seemed to be of most interest to those attending for their kids, grandkids, students.

Incumbent Worker Projects

New

Canvas Health, multiple counties, 6 trainees

On-Going

M&M Precision Machine, Sherburne County, 24 trainees

City of Mora, 1 trainee

Hoffman Truck Repair, Kanabec County, 5 trainees

On-the-Job Training

Dal-Kor Corporation, Mora – Welding Employee

Business Assistance – Set up employer of the day for Twin City Staffing to help them with recruitment for a woodworking business in Isanti, MN. They scheduled use of office space at the Cambridge CareerForce on Tuesdays in May and extended into June. Shared the following leads with staff as requested by these employers – Advance Design and Systems – PT Accounts Payable; Nemadji – Revenue Cycle Specialist I; Mille Lacs County – Eligibility Worker, Assessor Trainee, Certified Assessor; HireQuest – multiple listings for production, forklift, mold operators, CNC Machine Operators, CNC Lathe, Fabricator, Shipping & Receiving, Welder at undisclosed employers in Princeton, Pine City, Braham, Stanchfield, Mora, and Isanti; Freedom Center – Peer Recovery Specialist.

Job Seeker Assistance – Additional communication with two universal customers – one is a Veteran, another a mechanical engineer. Providing, ideas, introductions/connections with businesses, and job leads. The engineer has found employment. Meeting with Career Navigators regarding job seeker referrals.

Unemployment Rate Data and Information

Local Unemployment Statistics for July 2026

More Info	Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
	U S	170,235,000	61.8%	162,800,000	59.1%	7,435,000	4.4%
	Minnesota	3,144,886	67.2%	3,000,854	64.2%	144,032	4.6%
	U S Seasonally Adjusted	169,094,000	61.4%	162,177,000	58.9%	6,916,000	4.1%
	Minnesota Seasonally Adjusted	3,126,848	66.9%	2,991,180	64%	135,668	4.3%

Local Unemployment Statistics for July 2026

More Info	Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
	Chisago County	31,723	NA	30,227	NA	1,496	4.7%
	Isanti County	23,355	NA	22,066	NA	1,289	5.5%
	Kanabec County	8,273	NA	7,740	NA	533	6.4%
	Mille Lacs County	14,381	NA	13,557	NA	824	5.7%
	Pine County	13,173	NA	12,319	NA	854	6.5%

Local Unemployment Statistics for July 2026

More Info	Area - click name for historical data	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment	Employment to Population Ratio	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
	EDR 7E- East Central	90,905	NA	85,909	NA	4,996	5.5%

From Chisago County HRA-EDA



Growth in Action: LP Building Solutions coming to Chisago County!

LP Building Solutions, a leading manufacturer of high-performance building products, expanded into Chisago County with a major new development in the Certified Shovel Ready North Branch Interstate Business Park. Known for its innovative siding and structural solutions and decades of industry experience, LP has built a reputation for delivering durable, high-quality products while remaining committed to its mission of "Building a Better World."



The company purchased 120 acres for the project and is expected to bring more than 100 new jobs to the area, marking a significant investment in the local economy. Plans for the development also included the addition of a rail spur, enabling the company to utilize rail service and strengthen regional logistics capabilities.

On June 23, community leaders, business partners, advocates, and local and state government officials gathered at the site to celebrate the project during a groundbreaking ceremony, recognizing the investment as an important milestone for both LP Building Solutions, the City of North Branch and Chisago County.

Following the groundbreaking, the Chisago County HRA-EDA, in partnership with the City of North Branch, hosted a luncheon to welcome LP Building Solutions to the community. The event provided an opportunity for local leaders to visit with the company's CEO and employees, extend a warm welcome, and begin building the relationships that will support the company's long-term success in the region.

This expansion further reinforced Chisago County's growing reputation as a destination for business investment, industrial growth, and economic opportunity.

[Learn more about LP Building Solutions>](#)

Kendall Howard, a long-established manufacturer of high-quality IT and networking solutions, is continuing its growth with a major expansion in Chisago City. Known for its U.S.-made products and decades of industry experience, the company is constructing a new facility to significantly increase its operations.

The team recently celebrated this milestone with a ribbon cutting on June 3rd, bringing together the owners, local government agencies, and county commissioners which highlights the strong community support behind this project.

This expansion reflects both Kendall Howard's continued success and Chisago County's strength as a place where businesses can grow and thrive.



[Learn more about Kendall Howard>](#)

Build a Resilient Workforce with Fair Chance Hiring

Discover effective solutions for today's toughest recruiting and retention challenges

EMPLOYERS:



Are these issues impacting your business?

- Difficulty attracting strong candidates
- High turnover in critical roles
- Fewer dependable, long-term employees
- Challenges staffing 2nd and 3rd shift positions



Imagine being able to say:

- Our hiring process evaluates every candidate on a **Case-By-Case Basis**
- We have standardized metrics for considering the **Severity of the Crime**
- We can document **Compliance** with all **Background Check** and **EEOC** guidelines
- Our processes create a robust protection from **Negligent Hire Claims**



Picture your company achieving:

- An increasingly diverse and engaged workforce
- Higher productivity and exceptional retention
- Strong financial growth as a Fair Chance Employer

Take the next step toward becoming a Fair Chance Employer.

Attend our **1st Fair Chance Employer Training** to gain the strategies, clarity, and confidence needed to strengthen your hiring practices and expand your talent pool.

WHO: Hiring Decision Makers: HR staff, Owners, Compliance Officers

WHAT: Fair Chance Experts, Successful Fair Chance Employers, Background Check Experts

WHEN: Thursday, September 17, 2026

TIME: Noon–3:00 PM; Feel free to bring your lunch; water and treats will be provided.

LOCATION: MINNCOR Industries, 2420 Long Lake Road, Roseville, MN 55113

REGISTRATION: **FREE!** Register by emailing jennifer.gast@state.mn.us

Registration is encouraged to help us plan effectively; however, walk-ins are welcome.

Training Provided By:

Jennifer Gast
Fair Chance Job Developer



Richard Owen
Founder and Creator



Jana Fischer
Founder and CEO



Project Work

1. Central MN Manufacturers Association: Board and 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. *K12 Navigator has been redesigned and improved!*
 - [K12 Navigator](#)
 - Education committee is focusing on further engagement with schools and tour promotion
 - CMMA Impact report available here: [MMA Impact report Final version](#)
 - CMMA Scholarship Info: [CMMA Academic Scholarship - Midwest Manufacturers Association](#)
 - Manufacturing Matters-Student Voices Contest: [Manufacturing Matters-Student Voices Contest - Midwest Manufacturers Association](#)
 - October Tour of Mfg: [Central Minnesota Tour of Manufacturing - Midwest Manufacturers Association](#)
 - CMJTS PAID LEAVE POWER HOUR FOR EMPLOYEES: [CMJTS Power Hour - For EMPLOYEES Midwest Manufacturers' Association](#)
 - CMMA golf fund raiser on 6/9 was successful.
 - Summer social on 8/19 was well attended
 - CMMA Legislative Panel, Bad Habit Brewing Company and Tour of Hansen & Company Woodworks
 - Thursday, September 24, 2026
 - 7:15 a.m. - Breakfast and Networking
 - 7:30 a.m. - Meeting Starts - Announcements and Legislative Panel
 - 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. - Tour
-

2. Central MN HR Cooperative: meets monthly, second Thursday, 8:00 – 10:00. Group meeting is hybrid model. MN Paid Leave Act is an issue of ongoing concern. Discussing Apprenticeships, MN Retain and fair chance hiring.

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](#)
- Group is reviewing organizational structure for opportunities to increase services and efficiency.
- Group is in process of hiring a new Executive Director
- Annual Golf Fundraiser event 9/15

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. CDL and Leadership/Supervision training are in demand.

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.
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. Solicited financial support for CMJTS summer camps
10. Successfully completed MN CE Training (Customized Employment)
11. Facilitated 6/25 on site job fair at Monticello CFC, planning 9/17 session.
12. Presented CMJTS/CFC to Monticello Chamber of Commerce on 9/18
13. Presented to Sherburne county economic development committee on 6/4

MN DEED Labor Market Info

The unemployment rate dipped slightly to 4.3% in Minnesota in July, on a seasonally adjusted basis.

The number of unemployed decreased to 135,668 workers and the number of employed decreased to 2,991,180 workers. The labor force shrunk to 3,126,848 workers, and the labor force participation rate decreased to 66.9%.

The U.S. unemployment decreased to 4.1% in July, on a seasonally adjusted basis. The labor force participation rate decreased to 61.4%.

Unemployment Rates

Geography	Seasonal Adjustment	July 2026	June 2026	July 2025
Minnesota	Seasonally Adjusted	4.3%	4.4%	3.8%
Minnesota	Not Seasonally Adjusted	4.6%	4.6%	4.0%
United States	Seasonally Adjusted	4.1%	4.2%	4.2%
United States	Not Seasonally Adjusted	4.4%	4.4%	4.6%

Current DEED Posted County Unemployment Rates

Sherburne County 3.9% (May 2026)

Wright County June 2026 Rate: 4.60% (not seasonally adjusted).



WCEDP Golf Classic Presented by Guardian Angels

Guardians on the Green

Tuesday, September 15, 2026
Fox Hollow Golf Club
4780 Palmgren Ln NE, St Michael, MN
18-Hole Scramble

Where Business, Community & Impact Come Together

Join 100+ local leaders, businesses, and community partners for a day of golf, networking, and meaningful impact across Wright County.

WHY IT MATTERS

- Support local business growth
- Strengthen workforce & community connections
- Invest in Wright County's economic future

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 18-Hole Scramble Tournament
- On-Course Games & Contests
- Raffles & Prizes
- Networking Opportunities
- Dinner & Social Hour

Tuesday, September 15, 2026

Fox Hollow Golf Club
9:00 AM Registration
10:00 AM Shotgun Start
3:30 PM Social Hour
4:00 PM Meal

Thank you, Sponsors!

Proceeds support economic development across Wright County

Beverage Cart Sponsor



Premier Sponsor



Guardian Angels
SENIOR SERVICES

Premium Hole Sponsors



Platinum Sponsors



Wright-Hennepin
Economic Development
& Business Center



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BECOME A SPONSOR TODAY!**