

## Keeping Communication Current

January 11, 2010

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### Meetings and Awards Banquet – January 7, 2010

The meetings and awards banquet at the Rochester International Event Center took place on Thursday, January 7, with a somewhat diminished crowd due to it being Minnesota and January.

At the Business Meeting, Tom Cummings reported on the audit for FY08. In going over the 75 streams of funding and expenses, he found no inconsistencies and reported a clean audit again this year. Brian Ashton and staff were

praised for their hard work in keeping WDI running smoothly. Randy Johnson gave an update on some important advances to our Strategic Plan, a copy of which is located at <http://www.workforcedevelopmentinc.org/About/StrategicPlan.htm>.

The General Session/Legislative Forum focused on regional economic issues and recovery. Guest speaker Ron Painter, CEO of the National Association of Workforce Boards, gave

a presentation on the NAWBs efforts in Washington, D.C. with the WIA Reauthorization. A question and answer session targeted the ability to fund programs using limited financial resources. Presentations from Randy Johnson and Ron Painter will be posted on the internet when available.

After a social time and banquet, seven local businesses were honored as Best Places to Work Award recipients.

(Continued on pages 4 & 5)

### Healthcare Academy

Austin and Albert Lea will be hosting another Healthcare Academy. The class will begin on Tuesday, February 16, 2010 and go through Thursday, March 11, 2010. If you have anyone that would be interested in this class or future classes, contact Clara Sifuentes at 507.433.0555 to learn more about enrollments requirements. Location to be determined.

We have six students currently in the nursing assistance training that will finish later in January and will take their certification exam at that time. We expect them all to successfully become certified.—by Clara Sifuentes

### WDI Receives \$45,000 Grant from DEED

During 2009, WDI participated in regional planning for our 10-county region under the FIRST grant, a state funded project. The FIRST project required a regional analysis of our most important assets and tools that could be used to improve the region's economic competitiveness. One of the findings from the FIRST analysis was the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills for our future workers. At the same time, our region is beginning to fall behind in

developing those skills among our youth and current workers.

As a follow-up to the planning, WDI was recently awarded a one-year "Strategic Doing" grant from DEED totaling \$45,000. These funds will allow us to establish a Southeast Minnesota Regional STEM Network, develop a communication strategy that describes the Regional STEM Network, publicize and implement regional STEM initiatives, and develop an online database of STEM-related pro-

grammatic initiatives and contacts. The online database will be developed in partnership with the Southeast Services Cooperative. The Network will bring together partners who have been working with STEM-related initiatives that should be shared with other schools, students, employees, and potential employees. The goal is to increase the scope of successful projects within the region and reduce the "reinventing" of projects that are not as successful.—by Jakki Trihey

**An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.**

~Benjamin Franklin

**Working together to strengthen our future.**

## Riverland Offers Certificate for Installing Solar Equipment

Based on the promising job outlook in the renewable energy industry, Riverland Community College says it will add a solar installer certificate to its course offerings when the semester begins Monday.

There is "phenomenal growth potential" in the industry of solar energy and for employment in the field, said Steve Vietor, an instructor at Riverland who will teach parts of the solar installer course. He also teaches classes in the electrical and wind turbine technician programs at the college, which has campuses in Austin and Albert Lea.

### 'Renewables' classes

Classes for the solar installer certificate will be held from 8 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday at the Albert Lea campus, and will continue through May, when the semester ends.

The solar installer certificate is the latest program related to renewable energy

to be offered through Riverland. In September, the college launched a two-year program to train wind turbine technicians.

The demand for solar installers is likely to increase as the industry and the market expand, according to Vietor. More homeowners and business owners are exploring solar thermal systems to supply energy, heat and hot water for their homes or companies. Rebate programs and other incentives are helping to lower the cost of solar products and installation for consumers.

Anyone may enroll for the solar installer certificate, although those most interested might be electricians who want to broaden their skills, someone with an electrical and mechanical background or people who are unemployed and want to make a career change, Vietor said. Maximum enrollment for the program is 26 students.

### Grant money

Workforce Development Inc. received a \$90,000 grant through the Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace for Riverland to develop the 22-credit course. Some of the money will be used to fund scholarships for as many as 16 students who enroll in the program this semester.

Becky Thofson, sectors project manager for Workforce Development, helped write the grant.

With an emphasis being placed on renewable energy, it makes sense to offer the training and education necessary for employment in the industry, Thofson said.

"It's coming and we're recognizing that," said Thofson who works out of the Rochester and Albert Lea offices of Workforce Development.

If a student in the construction electrician program at Riverland decides to also obtain the solar in-

staller certificate, the additional skills could open up more job opportunities to them, Thofson said.

### Solar installer certificate

#### Where it's offered:

The course begins Monday at the Albert Lea campus of Riverland Community College.

#### For enrollment information:

Contact the Admissions Department at 507-433-0517 or online at <http://www.riverland.edu/>.

by Dawn Schuett, from [http://www.postbulletin.com/newsmanager/templates/localnews\\_story.asp?z=28&a=432505](http://www.postbulletin.com/newsmanager/templates/localnews_story.asp?z=28&a=432505)

## Winona County Gets Nearly \$32K for the Needy

Winona County will receive more than \$31,000 to supplement local food and shelter programs taxed by increasing demand.

The award is part of nearly \$3 million in funding appropriated to 30 Minnesota counties by the federal Emergency Food and Shelter Program. The money should provide a needed boost for several local assistance programs serving

more residents because of the recession, officials said.

"We're delighted to see that Winona County is once again getting money to help people in need, especially as the needs rise," said Beth Moe, executive director of United Way of the Greater Winona Area.

The award amount is based on poverty levels and unemployment rates. The county will receive \$31,836

this year, a slight drop from its 2009 funding of \$32,875 but still far above the 2008 award of \$25,795. Winona County is the only county in southeast Minnesota to receive an allocation from the program this year.

While the award is welcomed, it means many county residents are struggling, Moe said. She noted that demand for services at Winona Volunteer Services

and Southeast Minnesota Rural Education Resource Center in St. Charles, Minn. has soared. Both organizations received portions of the county's food and shelter program allocations in the past.

United Way "serves as a conduit" for the funding, Moe said, and a local board of human service providers will consider applications (Continued on page 3)

**Joint Powers Board New Member**

Mike Podulke joins the SE MN Joint Powers Board of County Commissioners representing Olmsted County. Mike has served on the County Board since 1987. His current term will expire in 2012. Current 2010 Committee Appointments include:

- Administrative Committee
- Criminal Justice Strategic Planning Committee
- Dodge-Fillmore-Olmsted Joint Powers Board
- Rochester Downtown Alli-



- ance
  - First Homes Committee
  - Historical Society
  - Housing and Redevelopment Authority
  - Jail Program Committee
  - Job Training Partnership
  - Planning Administrative Services Committee
  - Planning Advisory Commission
  - Public Health Disaster Response Advisory Group
  - Solid Waste Project Board, Dodge-Olmsted Joint Powers
  - Workforce Development
  - Youth Commission
- Mike is the owner of Rochester Stained Glass.

**WDI Dates to Remember**

**WDI Dates to Remember**

- January 11 Forms Committee Meeting @ 9:00 a.m. at Admin
- January 11 Employer Roundtable Planning Session (Red Wing) @ 1:00 p.m. at Admin
- January 14 Advisory Team Meeting @ 9:00 a.m. at Admin
- January 14 CRC Committee Meeting @ 1:00 p.m. at Admin
- January 15 All Day "Back to Basics" Training for MFIP Staff at Admin
- January 18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – All WDI offices closed
- January 22 Professional Development Committee Meeting @ 9:30 a.m. at Admin
- January 22 Communication Committee Meeting @ 2:00 p.m. at Admin

**Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

Monday, January 18, 2010 marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation and the Rochester Branch of the NAACP's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. We Have a Dream Breakfast. This year's keynote address will be given by Mark Adafin, owner of Global Employment Solutions, Inc. and Global Home Health Care, Inc. in Rochester. Registration is available online at rochestermnchamber.com

**Winona**

(Continued from page 2)

from area agencies to determine how Winona County's allocation is disbursed.

*by Dustin Kass, from  
[http://winonadailynews.com/news/local/article\\_f0417f8e-fa87-11de-8b1e-001cc4c002e0.html](http://winonadailynews.com/news/local/article_f0417f8e-fa87-11de-8b1e-001cc4c002e0.html)*



**South Central College**  
**Center for Business & Industry**  
*"Your Resource for Knowledge, Skills, and Strategies"*

**Our Winter/Spring Schedule is now Available Online!**

CBI is replacing your printed class schedule with an eCatalog to decrease our carbon footprint. Please help us keep you informed on the latest education, training and consulting services to maximize your productivity. To view our eCatalog, visit our website at [cbi.southcentral.edu](http://cbi.southcentral.edu)

Faribault Campus  
1225 Third Ave SW  
Faribault, MN 55021

North Mankato Campus  
1920 Lee Boulevard  
North Mankato, MN 56003

### Second Annual Best Places to Work in Southeast Minnesota

Seven companies representing Freeborn, Mower, Rice, Steele, Goodhue, Olmstead, Houston, Dodge, Fillmore and Wabasha Counties were recognized as the "Best Places to Work" in Southeast Minnesota. In the "100 and Under" employee category; **Alamco Wood Products, Inc.** of Albert Lea, **IBI Data** of Brownsdale and **Larson Allen, LLP** of Austin were recognized. In the "Over 100" employee category, **Hearth & Home Technologies** of Lake City, **Lou-Rich** of Albert Lea, **Riverland Community College**, and **The Bergquist Company** of Cannon Falls were recognized. This is the second year in a row that **Alamco Wood Products, Inc.**, **Hearth and Home Technologies**, and **Riverland Community College** have received this distinction.

The "Best Places to Work" awards program was a study commissioned by Workforce Development Inc. The purpose of the program was to recognize some of the best

employers in our local area and provide vital information to companies about the practices they use to attract and retain employees. Each company participating was required to complete a 40-question survey that allowed their employment practices to be analyzed by the consulting firm of Personnel Dynamics Consulting of Florida. Every company participating in the survey will receive a 19-page report detailing the information on their company and the results of the survey.

Data were measured on such parameters as: turnover, growth, employee training and development and promotion rates; employee evaluations and feedback; percentage of employee injuries; diversity of management; benefits offered; average paid days off and increase in pay.

Workforce Development, Inc., the SE MN Workforce Investment Board, is proud to bring the "Best Places to Work" program to Southeast Minnesota.

"The program recognizes some of the best employers in our local area," said Jakki Trihey, event coordinator.

**"Being awarded the best places to work was a pleasant surprise. It confirms our belief that our people are our number one asset. I'm proud to work for a company with such a noteworthy achievement!" ~ Jean Larson for The Bergquist Company in Cannon Falls.**



"HHT decided to apply for the Best Places to Work award because it is one of our core goals to be a "great place to work." We do many things to achieve this goal and sometimes we take our achievements for granted; it is great for us to be recognized as a Best Place to Work. In addition, the report we get provides us with excellent benchmarking tools for continuing to improve our operations.

Achieving the Best Places to Work award two years in a row is a great honor and would be at any time; however, we feel it is even more remarkable given the economic times we have all experienced these past few years. In our case, being directly connected to the housing market, we have faced many challenges over the last three years. These challenges have led us to make difficult decisions in terms of our operations and our staff. Even with all of these difficult decisions, we have remained in a positive light with our current and former members (employees) and our local communities. I even received congratulations from a former member (employee) for this award who said we truly are a great place to work." ~ from Heather Hauser, Member and Community Relations Manager with Hearth and Home Technologies.



Heather Hauser, Rich Bodensteiner, Linda Wilson

**Seven Local Organizations Recognized**



“Riverland decided to apply for the Best Places to Work award again this year because going through the survey report always gives us insight into our strengths and weaknesses. Even if we do not win, we gain information to help us improve as an organization.

Achieving the Best Places to Work award two years in a row is an affirmation that our team is continuing to improve work-place quality at Riverland. This year is especially satisfying to win because of the many financial challenges we face.” ~ Terry Leas, President of Riverland Community College



People pictured clockwise, beginning upper left—  
 Riverland Community College: Brad Doss, Ron Langrell, Beth Fondell, Eric Deters, Terry Leas, Todd Fjeldberg, Marijo Alexander, Miguel Garate  
 Lou-Rich, Inc.: Beth Miller with presenter Randy Long  
 The Bergquist Company: Jean Larson, Neal Matuska  
 LarsonAllen LLP: Angie Ross, Gregg Draeger



## DOL Announces \$100 Million in Green Jobs Training Grants

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has announced nearly \$100 million in green jobs training grants, as authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

The grants will support job training programs to help dislocated workers and others find jobs in expanding green industries and related occupations. Approximately \$28 million of the total funds

will support projects in communities impacted by auto industry restructuring.

Through the Energy Training Partnership Grants being administered by the DOL's Employment and Training Administration, 25 projects ranging from approximately \$1.4 million to \$5 million each will receive grants. These grants are built on strategic partnerships, which require labor and business to work together.

Training activities funded through this grant program will be individually tailored based on occupations and skills identified as in demand in local areas around the country. Training programs will seek to prepare workers for a range of careers, including wind and energy auditors, solar panel installers, hybrid/electric auto technicians and weatherization specialists.



Grant recipients are expected to work in conjunction with a diverse range of partners, including labor organizations, employers and workforce investment boards, according to the DOL.

from [http://www.nawindpower.com/e107\\_plugins/content/](http://www.nawindpower.com/e107_plugins/content/)

## Blue Green Alliance Awarded DOL Grant to Create Green Jobs

The U.S. Department of Labor this week announced that the Blue Green Alliance Foundation will receive a \$5 million energy training partnership grant to fund its GreenPOWER job-training program.

The program is designed to bring state labor unions, manufacturers and job-training providers together to train manufacturing workers created by clean energy companies.

GreenPOWER (Green Partnership of Workforce and Employer Resources) is a collaboration among the Blue Green Alliance Foundation and several labor and job-creation organizations.

Groups involved in the job training program include the United Steelworkers, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system, Dunwoody College of Tech-

nology, the Institute for Career Development (ICD), Minnesota Workforce Investment Boards, Honeywell and other employers and support services statewide.

The green-jobs-focused group is focusing on three Minnesota regions chosen for their potential manufacturing growth – the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, southwest Minnesota and the Iron Range in northeastern Minnesota.

"We need skilled workers to manufacture the wind turbines, solar panels, transmission equipment and countless green products that will form the foundation of the clean energy economy," said David Foster, president of the Blue Green Alliance Foundation, in a news release.

"We look forward to

## FINANCE AND COMMERCE

working with our partner unions and environmental organizations, training partners, employers and support services providers throughout Minnesota to make GreenPOWER a success," Foster said.

The GreenPOWER program provides workers with skills required to benefit from the clean energy economy.

Workers will be trained to manufacture products designed for the energy-efficient building construction and retrofit industries, renewable electric power industry, the energy-efficient and advanced drive-train vehicle industry and other environmentally friendly lines of business.

One specific group tar-

geted by the program will be displaced auto workers, including those affected by the planned 2011 closing of the Ford Motor Co.'s Twin Cities Assembly Plant in St. Paul.

Authorities expect that 2,060 workers will enroll in the training programs to obtain skills required by green product manufacturers. The program is expected to impact 53 of Minnesota's 87 counties.

by Bob Geiger, Staff Writer, from <http://www.finance-commerce.com/article.cfm/2010/01/08/Labor-department-grant-to-Blue-Green-Alliance-aims-create-green-jobs>

## Going Green for the Long Term

*Creating a skill foundation for employee retention and success in green jobs with Career Ready 101® and the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)*

The green jobs initiative promises great impact on the entire nation. It promotes the health of our economy in myriad ways, providing important jobs for our citizens, acting for the environment, and reducing dependence on non-renewable energy sources. The importance of the initiative underscores the need to avoid pitfalls and to prepare the participants for long-term success.

### What are Green Jobs and Why are they Important?

Green jobs are primarily jobs that already exist today that have been repurposed for green industries. For example, *sheet metal worker* is a green job if its purpose is to create towers for wind energy generation. Green jobs have other important characteristics that make them very important to our nation's economic situation. Because they are primarily local jobs, they are difficult to out-source. They also tend to be long-term, career track jobs that provide a living wage.

### How Can the NCRC and Career Ready 101 Help to Maximize Success of the Green Jobs Program?

The importance of the Green Jobs initiative underscores the need to avoid pitfalls of other high-growth situations like high employee turnover, elevated training costs, and high rates of employee errors. These are the same issues that the



components of preparation; however, foundational skill development is something that can be undertaken immediately because it is the common thread among almost all jobs.

### How Would the System be Used?

Following is a usage example that encompasses the primary parts of the system: Discovery, Learning, and Certification.

**Discovery:** O\*NET has identified 215 jobs within 12 green sectors that can be defined as green jobs – these are noted as such within the Career Ready 101 system. In order to determine what green jobs are about and what skills they require, a user would search the job profile database included in Career Ready 101. For example, if a user was interested in

what foundational skills are needed for that job. In the case of Electrician, a Gold level National Career Readiness Certificate is necessary (level 5 in each of the WorkKeys skills Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information).

Further, the system includes an explanation of how the NCRC skills apply, and why they are important, in green jobs. This feature helps to create relevance for the user throughout the program.

**Learning:** In just a few clicks within the Career Ready 101 system, a user can automatically be assigned the appropriate lessons for the job Electrician, or for the NCRC certificate level Gold. The user would then simply complete the lessons.

**Certification:** After completing lessons in Career



NCRC and Career Ready 101 are addressing for businesses, colleges, secondary education, and workforce development agencies across the country.

Further, while green job industries are clearly defined, it is difficult to predict exactly which green jobs will be high-demand as the program comes to fruition. Ready individuals with foundational and job-specific skills are both vital

2. Specify search criteria. (You may search by category or skill levels or both.)

construction and wanted to find green jobs within that field, a search like the one below would provide information about green jobs in construction:

This search would show green jobs in construction including, for example, the job Electrician. It will also provide information about the job and tell the user

Ready 101, a user would take the three WorkKeys assessments in order to officially certify their skills. Based on the scores on these assessments, a user can earn the National Career Readiness Certificate at various levels (Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum) which will certify their found (Continued on page 8)



**Going Green for the Long Term**

(Continued from page 7)

dational skill levels for specific green jobs.

**Creating skill foundations** using tools the nation already endorses, like the National Career Readiness Certificate and learning tools for career readiness and employability skills will help prepare our workforce, and the entire green jobs initiative, for long term success.

Many states recently received ARRA grants targeted at green jobs. To receive more details as to how the NCRC and Key-Train's Career Ready 101

system can help achieve the goals of such grants, please call Thinking Media at 877-842-6205 or email us at [info@keytrain.com](mailto:info@keytrain.com). We have worked closely with many states regarding ARRA funds and we will be happy to send you further information and consult with you about your state's programs and opportunities within the Green Jobs sector.

from "The Key Train Report" at <http://www.keytrainnews.com/Newsletters/2009/4QGreen.htm>

**12 Tips for Negotiating and Compromising with Difficult People**

*The Coach's Corner: Quick Success Tips from the Carnegie Coach*

Negotiating is the process of attempting to agree on a solution. Compromising, or settling on a mutually agreeable solution, is the result of successful negotiations. Compromise is all about being flexible. It means being able to generate alternate solutions when you've "hit the wall." Whether it involves a person you can't get along with, an idea you know will work but that others are reluctant to agree to, a change in office systems, or a turf war that needs ending, learning to negotiate and compromise is essential to your success.

- **Have a positive attitude.**
- **Meet on mutual ground.**

- **Clearly define and agree on the issue.**
- **Do your homework.**
- **Take an honest inventory of yourself.**
- **Look for shared interests.**
- **Deal with facts, not emotions.**
- **Be honest.**
- **Present alternatives and provide evidence.**
- **Be an expert communicator.**
- **End on a good note.**
- **Enjoy the process.**

Read the complete article at [http://www.dalecarnegie.com/lead\\_nurturing/tips/tips\\_mobile.jsp?franchise=914240&promoid=LNTipCal1.10](http://www.dalecarnegie.com/lead_nurturing/tips/tips_mobile.jsp?franchise=914240&promoid=LNTipCal1.10)

Submitted by Lynda Hyberger

Living on too little?

**Project Community Connect**

Please come to  
**Christ United Methodist Church**  
400 5th Ave. SW, Rochester  
(507) 328-6333

Thursday, January 28, 2010  
11:00 am—3:00 pm  
\*Free Lunch\*

Services Offered Include:

- Legal services
- Medical services
- Housing resources
- Employment assistance
- Free haircuts
- Veterans' services
- Photo ID's
- Interpreters
- Mortgage foreclosure resources
- Tax appointment information

**Workforce<sup>3</sup>One**

Collaborate. Innovate. Transform.

*Webinar Invitation!*  
**Greening the World of Work;**  
Implications for O\*NET SOC and New and Emerging Occupations

This Webinar highlights findings from the O\*NET Program's report Greening the World of Work: Implications for O\*NET – SOC and New and Emerging Occupations. The report described the O\*NET program's efforts to define the green economy; describe green industry sectors and identify different types of green occupations including green new and emerging occupations. The Webinar also presents how this new green information has been incorporated into O\*NET products and tools to help workforce development professionals, educators, and individuals learn about and use the most current information on the green economy and green occupations.

**Presenters:** Phil Lewis, Technical Officer, O\*NET Center  
David Rivkin, Technical Officer, O\*NET Center  
**Moderator:** Jennifer Pittle, Workforce Analyst, Office of Workforce Investment, Employment and Training Administration

**Date:** 1/14/2010  
**Time:** 2:00 pm Eastern (1:00pm/Central, 12:00pm/Mountain, 11:00am/Pacific)  
**Length:** 90 minutes

Register Now!!!  
Registration for this Webinar is limited and seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. Please click the link below to login to Workforce 3 One and register today!

<http://www.workforce3one.org/view/5000929237922379523>

To be added to the newsletter distribution list, contact Dari Sunderland ([dsunderland@wfdi.ws](mailto:dsunderland@wfdi.ws)).