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Nebraska Next Generation Industry Partnerships

March 2019

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Accelerating Industry Partnerships

by Valentina Obafunwa, Economic Development Consultant/Industry Partner Coordinator, Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Industry growth is a priority for the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED). With this in mind, DED has teamed up with the Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL) to create the new **Nebraska Industry Partnership Grant**. This 1:1 matching grant is intended to grow active and accelerate emerging regional industry partnerships.

The program will be administered by NDOL and sponsored by the Nebraska Workforce Development Board. It will provide grant funding for workforce development initiatives, economic development projects, industry collaborations and partnerships with the education and business sectors.

Examples of eligible projects include work-based training opportunities; projects that address permitting or supply chain issues; projects that

create economies of scale by addressing shared needs of multiple businesses; career and industry awareness projects; or those that strengthen connections between businesses and education; etc.

The grant program will be funded with federal dollars allocated to Nebraska under Title IB of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA). Funding of up to \$7,500 for emerging partnerships and \$20,000 for active partnerships will be available, with matching funds required.

Pending final approval, guidelines containing details on partnership eligibility, deadlines, application requirements and allowable and unallowable expenses will be published in early April.



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Southeast Region: Partnership Changes Name and Selects New Initiatives

by Jason Esser, CEcD, Co-Convener & BRE Coordinator, Omaha Public Power District

The Southeast NE Next Generation Manufacturing Partnership is now the **"Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership" (RAMP)**. The new name is more reflective of the geographical area the group serves, which is Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri and Iowa.

Two primary initiatives for 2019-2020 were identified at the January 25, 2019 meeting, and working groups are being formed. While associated activities will take place locally or within small regions, RAMP will promote itself and individual member companies across the entire region.

The first initiative is career awareness. Facility tours and table booths will be set up at parent/teacher conferences to connect with parents and students. Industry promotion will also be pursued through regional advertising and by curating content for school video boards.

The second primary initiative involves educational partnerships and outreach. Focus will be on hosting STEM teacher externships during the summer, utilizing Iowa's externship program and the Falls City EDGE program as models. RAMP businesses also plan to sponsor students with scholarships choosing to pursue manufacturing careers.



RAMP members utilize SCC's LifeSize video conferencing to connect from Beatrice, Falls City, Nebraska City and Hebron.

Northeast Region: Manufacturers Commit to 60-Day Plan

by Denise Wilkinson, Past Co-Convener & President of the Norfolk Area Chamber of Commerce



The Northeast Manufacturing Partnership met on January 23, 2019 at Duo-Lift in Columbus. Due to poor weather conditions, some industry leaders were unable to attend; however, those who braved the icy roads made great progress. Nine industry leaders representing Duo-Lift, Northeast Machine & Mfg., Prairie Catalytic, AWG, Lindsay Corp, Blazer Mfg. and Cardinal Health attended, and were joined by 11 public partners.

Action plans were built around increasing talent pipelines and improving the image of manufacturing. The improving infrastructure priority was tabled for now due to other local groups leading the charge on this. The 60-day plan for the talent group is to take an inventory of existing training programs, survey business partners to learn how they have partnered with schools in the past; and research best practices for business-school engagement in states like Colorado.

The Marketing Committee plans to identify marketing professionals within its network who can provide pro-bono assistance to the partnership; other companies willing to participate in a regional signing day; and current and potential industry marketing presence on social media.

After the meeting, the group received a tour of Duo-Lift, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary. The company specializes in fertilizer trailers, farm equipment and products for the Department of Transportation.

Southeast Region (Healthcare): CNAs, Care Coordination Technology Emerge as Major Focus Areas

by Gary Targoff, Co-Convener & Workforce Development Board Consultant



Partnership members review 60-day action plans created by the Care Coordination and the Recruitment and Talent Committees.

The Southeast Nebraska Healthcare Partnership met on January 17, 2019 to recap progress and chart a course for the next 60 days. The Partnership includes healthcare organizations from Gage, Lancaster, Saline and Seward counties, and is focused on improving care coordination, talent pipelines and recruitment in these communities.

Co-champions Heath Stukenholtz (Tabitha) and Rick Haraldson (Beatrice Community Hospital) made introductory remarks about the value of the group's efforts, the importance of participation and collaboration with the public sector going forward.

Heath reviewed the progress made by the Care Coordination Committee, including the selection of a technological solution to assist in the tracking and transition of patients from the hospital to acute care facilities. In addition, the team has started thinking about the need for and identification of funding to support these efforts.

Linsey Hulbert (Nebraska Hematology Oncology), Minde Stone (Bryan Health) and Luke Reiff (CenterPointe) reviewed the results of the Recruitment and Talent Pipeline Committees' combined survey efforts. Results from 19 responses

identified top personnel needs as being medical technicians, certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and medical assistants.

The full group later dispersed into small working groups to formulate action items for the next 60-day period. The Recruitment/Awareness Team and Talent Pipeline/Community Engagement Team decided to combine their efforts and consolidate groups.

Following are the details of each committees' 60-day action plan:

Care Coordination: 1) Pursue additional representation from acute care and outpatient providers; 2) Complete an in-depth evaluation of the top two technology vendors; 3) Provide technology recommendations/funding proposals.

Talent Pipeline/Awareness and Recruitment: 1) Understand current levels of interest in CNA and health care careers and how to grow the pipeline; 2) Identify barriers and community solutions; 3) Identify assessment tools to help manage healthcare career expectations for interested candidates.

Central Region: Central Manufacturers and Public Partners Meet, Tour Thermo King

by Mark Kjar, CNMP Business Champion & General Manager, Chief Fabrication Division



Manufacturers and public partners review progress, create action plans and tour Thermo King in Hastings during the February 5 meeting.

The Central Nebraska Manufacturing Partnership continues to gain traction discovering and evaluating industry needs in central Nebraska. For the past 12 months, we have focused on three primary areas, utilizing subcommittees to dig deeper:

1. **Increased Manufacturing Training Opportunities.** Business partners' training strengths and weaknesses were evaluated with "best practice" tours at partner businesses. Additionally, training coordinators from industry continue to work on this initiative, and plan to create a training action plan for partnership members.
2. **Building Partnerships with Schools.** This committee is focused on increasing awareness within schools surrounding manufacturing occupations, and informing students that manufacturing truly presents endless opportunities. One of the best ways to showcase this is by providing tours of local manufacturers to highlight such opportunities. Emphasis is placed on students, their parents and educators, in order to show what manufacturing is really all about. This group is currently working on a directory that lists all of the ways manufacturers in the partnership are able to partner with schools (e.g., mentorships, internships, scholarships, tours etc.), and plans to present at administrator and counselor meetings at regional ESUs.
3. **Air and Ground Transit.** A strong desire has been voiced for a flight from central Nebraska to Chicago. Two letter writing campaigns were launched for use by regional airports to attract airlines. A total of 46 letters were received, wrapping up the committee's work.

Omaha GOHIP: Gearing up for a Reboot

by Keith Station, Convener & Director of Business Relations, Heartland Workforce Solutions, Inc.

A GOHIP (Greater Omaha Healthcare Industry Partnership) meeting was held on September 13, 2018. During the meeting, leaders committed to a 90-day action plan for the three major committees: Workforce Development, Consumer Engagement and Behavioral Health. As leadership among the industry partners has changed, the partnership plans to reconvene in the second quarter of 2019.

Lessons Learned from the Austin Next Gen. Academy

by Susan Nickerson, Convener & One-Stop Coordinator, Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Over 340 Next Generation conveners, state staff and business leaders from around the nation descended upon Austin, Texas for the 2019 Next Gen. Academy on February 12 and 13. New groups received coaching on how to launch a successful partnership, while ongoing partnerships received guidance on topics such as business engagement, effectively working with public partners and meeting best practices. The following are some best practices provided during the Academy:

Meetings & Committees: Each committee should have a business lead and a public partner support lead. The bulk of the meeting time should be spent prioritizing the ideas for action and defining roadblocks to achieving opportunities, with the meeting concluding by gaining commitments from industry partners who agree upon next steps and what success looks like. Meeting minutes should be sent out within one week. Some groups have monthly “huddle” meetings between full partnership meetings. Monthly updates on action items and who is responsible can be sent out to help keep the industry partners informed and show evidence that the action items are moving forward and progress is being made.

Effectively Working with Public Partners: The work of public partners is most effective at the committee level. However, as time allows, the end of the industry meeting can also be devoted to brief public partner comments, as appropriate to the discussion.

Business Engagement: The recruitment of new members grows the partnership. The philosophy is that each current member calls one/brings one new industry partner to each meeting. Having a short written piece that summarizes the partnership helps new industry partners connect to the work. The write-up should focus on “wins,” and show the action-orientation of the group’s work. When onboarding new industry partners, an email can be sent with the champions’ names and company logos (or sector partnership logo), and should include an invitation to the next meeting. The new member should also be introduced to the whole partnership through an email or at the next in-person meeting.

Partnership Metrics: Good partnership metrics include quantitative and qualitative measurements such as: number of meetings, membership growth, number of students/workforce being reached by initiatives, new curriculum developed, business-to-business solutions that have been accomplished, growth in supply chains, new marketing initiatives, etc. Surveys can be used to gather this information from industry partners. A sample question could be, “What difference has this partnership made for you?”



Participating Conveners (left to right): *Marguerite Himmelberg (Southeast Community College); Gary Targoff (Nebraska Workforce Development Board); Bryan Seck (LPED and Prosper Lincoln); and Susan Nickerson (Nebraska Department of Economic Development).*

Consultant Corner: Two Rules for Business Engagement

by Lindsey Woolsey, The Woolsey Group, Next Generation Consultant

No matter which stage of business engagement you are in, there are two consistent rules to follow:

1) Keep your outreach simple and straightforward; 2) Be persistent (with a little grace!).

What does that mean? It means leave out any and all complicated and unnecessary language, your acronyms and asks related to your programs, and your funding. Remember you are building a network “of them, by them and for them.” It may seem crazy, but that means it has nothing to do with you! It has everything to do with what’s in it for them.

In the building phases of a Next Gen Sector Partnership, this means you’re selling them on their own need to network business-to-business, to find ways to tackle issues they can’t tackle alone and to streamline the complex navigation of education, training and community resources. That’s it! Simple! But remember, you will need to message this repeatedly, and to find ways to set expectations that their Sector Partnership is a consistent way to accomplish those three things. So keep reaching out, and get them to reach out to each other.

If you haven’t watched and shared this new Next Gen video that makes the case for businesses to self-build a partnership, do it now: <https://vimeo.com/318221918>.

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