



Growing Interest in North Dakota

ND MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP INTRODUCES "LEAN MANUFACTURING" WORKSHOPS

In spite of manufacturing employment declines in the rest of the country from 1988-98, ND manufacturers experienced four-percent annual employment growth during that period.

To continue and increase that growth, more than 120 representatives of 40 ND manufacturers attended one-day "lean manufacturing" workshops in Dickinson and Fargo this fall. The workshops, sponsored by the ND Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), a division of ED&F, combined classroom and hands-on simulations to help manufacturers improve productivity and competitiveness.

In the planning stage of the MEP, ED&F held nearly 200 on-site interviews with state manufacturers. In the interviews, manufacturers said that implementing lean manufacturing principles and expanding their markets were high priorities.

"This is a good sign that ND manufacturers want to grow and serve new customers. Lean manufacturing can help these firms become more competitive in larger markets," said Randy Schwartz, MEP interim director.

Presenters at the eight-hour seminars were Hank Czarnecki and Nicholas Loyd, Alabama Technology Network (ATN). ATN is an MEP pioneer in providing lean training and



Over 120 representatives from 40 manufacturers across North Dakota recently attended "lean manufacturing" workshops held in Dickinson and Fargo. Here, participants apply what they learn in each of the simulations.

services throughout the country. Since 1998, more than 150 companies such as Boeing, Mercedes-Benz, and Owens-Corning have attended lean manufacturing workshops with ATN staff.

The MEP is a public/private partnership of federal and state organizations and industry to address the needs of manufacturers with fewer than 500 employees. The national MEP network is affiliated with the US Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology. At the heart of the system is a network of regional MEPs that provide direct services to manufacturers.

"The MEP makes it possible to leverage national resources that were previously unavailable to the state's smaller manufacturers," Schwartz said. "A client-driven MEP in North Dakota has great potential. The national network will help us offer opportunities to our best service providers."

For more information about lean manufacturing or the ND MEP, contact Randy Schwartz at 701/328-5314, or email him at <rschwartz@state.nd.us>.

ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE ON CHINA TRADE MISSION DRAWS BUSINESS LEADERS TO BISMARCK

Gov. Ed Schafer's trade mission to East Asia in late September laid the diplomatic and official groundwork for relations between North Dakota and China, and also opened doors for several ND businesses.

To continue that momentum, ED&F and the governor's office sponsored a business roundtable conference on China Nov. 9 in Bismarck.

"The business leaders who accompanied the governor to China this fall embraced the possibilities and potential of global trade relations," said ED&F international business development specialist Nancy D'Ambrosio. "We brought those leaders together again and gave them a forum to discuss their experiences and impressions for other leaders."

Along with the participants of the trade mission, other prominent speakers at the roundtable included Ron Kramer, director of the US Export Assistance Center, Minneapolis,

(continued on next page)

Minn.; Kyle Jackson, Business Development Division, US Export Bank, Washington, DC; and Neil Whittey, LAS International and the District Export Council for North Dakota, Bismarck.

FARGO FIRM NETS LARGE SALE FROM TRADE MISSION

The North Dakota trade mission to China in September has borne fruit for Rust Sales, Inc., Fargo.

Company president Perry Rust, who visited China this fall with the delegation led by Gov. Ed Schafer, has secured a large order for laser-guided drainage systems for a farmer who is building a 150,000-acre alfalfa farm in eastern China. The farmer needs precise grading equipment to develop proper drainage and surface water management for the farm's flood irrigation system.

"My system is working beautifully for them," said Rust. "It's encouraging to see the same reaction to my products in China as in the US."

Rust said he is encouraged with the overall market for his products. "There are immense applications for my type of surveying and grading equipment," he said.

ED&F SPONSORS 2001 OUTSOURCING WORLD SUMMIT

By sponsoring the 2001 Outsourcing World Summit to be held Feb. 19-21 in Palm Desert, Calif., ED&F positions itself as a leader and innovator, according to ED&F business development specialist Sandy Opp.

In its fourth year, the Outsourcing World Summit is the premiere executive forum for the latest information and critical thinking on outsourcing as an essential business tool.

"The Harvard Business Review identified outsourcing as one of the most important management ideas and practices of the past 75 years," Opp said. "Recent research shows that firms in dynamic markets such as telecommunications, high-tech products, and professional services already outsource more than 40 percent of their operations. This trend creates many exciting opportunities for the business service industry in North Dakota."

About 700 outsourcing executives from major US and international corporations, respected academic institutions,

and government will attend the event. Attendance has more than doubled over the past two years. Educational tracks will include outsourcing of document and knowledge management, technology, and business processes, as well as e-sourcing.

\$7,500 HELPS RUGBY PARTNER WITH TOTAL EMED

The Rugby Area Job Development Authority received a boost this fall when ED&F gave the city \$7,500 toward partnership with Total eMed, which trains and hires medical transcriptionists.

Total eMed held an informational meeting in June to determine potential worker interest in Rugby, and more than 80 people turned out. Since then, ED&F has helped to foster the relationship in order to bring job opportunities to the area. The funding will be used to train the first 20 Rugby residents seeking employment with the company.

"This program is a wonderful fit for the Rugby community," said ED&F Director Kevin Cramer when he presented the check to the city. Cramer cited the need for smaller North Dakota communities to have the courage to take some risks. "This community is showing good leadership in planning its future."

Gary Satern, Rugby economic development coordinator, attributed the project's success to Christopher Young of ED&F. "We were looking for jobs and they [Total eMed] were looking for workers, and Chris helped bring us together," Satern said.

Lee Peterson, president of the Minot Area Development Corp., highly endorsed Total eMed, which already has nearly 140 medical transcriptionists working in the Minot area.

From an article in the Rugby Tribune by Matt Mullally, editor; used with permission

INDUSTRYWEEK NAMES IMATION AMONG BEST PLANTS

Imation Corp., Wahpeton, has been named one of IndustryWeek's 2000 Best Plants.

The company, which employs 600 people to manufacture data storage products, began in 1977 as a 3M Company plant. In 1996, Imation spun off from 3M. The 240,000-square-foot Wahpeton plant is now the largest diskette

(continued on next page)

manufacturing site in the world, producing hundreds of millions of diskettes per year—more than 30 percent of the world market. This year, Imation was the first North American plant to manufacture CD-RWs (readable and writable).

Ninety-nine percent of the Imation work force is part of an empowered team where employees make the decisions concerning production scheduling, interteam communications, skills certification, safety review and compliance, daily job assignments, and training. Imation also has a 99-percent on-time delivery rate, and no lost-time injuries from January through August 2000.

*Information taken from IndustryWeek web site at
http://www.industryweek.com/lwinPrint/bestplants/bp_profiles.asp?Input=108*

CROSS USA ADDS EMPLOYEES IN WATFORD CITY

Seven new programmer positions have been opened at Cross USA in Watford City. The software development company is expanding to accommodate a new corporate account: Super Valu.

Cross USA located in the northwestern ND community a year ago and employed six people before the new hires. The site manager will stay with Super Valu, and the remaining six new employees will stay in Watford City after six weeks of training in Eden Prairie, Minn.

KENMARE COMPANY CELEBRATES FIRST BIRTHDAY

Commercial Group West (CGW), Kenmare, celebrated its first birthday in October.

The celebration included the grand opening of the CGW-manufactured Quilt Inn & Suites at Lake Metigoshe. The two-story, 44-room motel will be open year-round, offering a breathtaking view of the lake. The motel has eight to twelve full- and part-time employees.

In March 2000, CGW opened the Quilt Inn, a 42-room motel, in Kenmare.

CGW received \$400,000 from the ND Development Fund through its rural revolving loan fund. "Commercial Group West is a prime example of a community identifying a specific need and pulling the resources together to meet that need," said ED&F Director Kevin Cramer.

In addition to the Kenmare plant, CGW sites in Pennsylvania and Arkansas also manufacture modular units. The units can be used as motels and in just about any other function, such as college dormitories, government housing, retirement units, assisted living units, daycare centers, nursing homes, bank buildings, offices, construction-site offices, classrooms, prisons, and inner-city housing.

INGERSOLL-RAND AGAIN "BEST-MANAGED COMPANY"

For the fourth consecutive year, Bobcat parent company Ingersoll-Rand is on the list of IndustryWeek's 100 Best-Managed Companies, chosen by IndustryWeek editors and a panel of international experts. Bobcat sites are located in Fargo, Gwinner, and Bismarck.

Candidates for the list were culled from the IndustryWeek (IW) 1000, a list of the world's largest publicly held manufacturing companies, based on revenues.

Each company was selected after a thorough evaluation that included analysis of the company's financial performance, review of a completed questionnaire from the company, research into the company's practices in such areas as philanthropy and safety, and voting by a panel of more than 90 business leaders, analysts, and academicians.

"IndustryWeek's 100 Best-Managed Companies are the world's leaders in innovative management strategies," said John Brandt, publisher and editor-in-chief of the magazine. "Their emphasis on long-term growth makes them models for every corporation." Only six other companies on the list have appeared four times.

SYKES TO ADD 100 EMPLOYEES IN BISMARCK

Sykes Enterprises is hiring 100 more permanent employees at its two call centers in Bismarck. Sykes, headquartered in Tampa, Fla., operates call centers worldwide to provide technical support for computer and other technology companies. With the additional hires, the two Bismarck call centers will employ about 950 people in two shifts.

(continued on next page)



RESOURCE INVENTORY 2001 HOT WITH ND LEADERS

The 600 copies of ED&F's Resource Directory 2001 distributed to local leaders across the state have received "nothing but good comments," according to Cornelius Grant, executive director of the ND Rural Development Council. The directory contains both community and economic development contacts.

The Resource Inventory 2001 directory is available as an Adobe Acrobat file on the ED&F web site at <http://www.growingnd.com/services/rdc/default.asp?sectionID=10&subSectionID=35&pageID=184>.

ND DEVELOPMENT FUND HELPS COMPANIES IN JAMESTOWN, HAZEN, AND GRENORA

Jamestown

Buffalo City Wood Products (BCWP) received a \$125,000 NDDF investment to provide temporary floor plan financing on its sold cabins. BCWP manufactures the Dakota Cabin, a self-contained, park-model trailer available in about 20 different models ranging in price from \$16,000 to \$32,000. The markets for the units include individuals, resorts, bed-and-breakfasts, hunting and fishing lodges, and parks needing employee housing.

Hazen

Sakakawea Lake Cabin Adventure received a \$63,600 NDDF investment to provide permanent financing to help with

development. Other funding included \$63,600 from the Lewis & Clark Regional Council and an undisclosed amount from Wells Fargo Bank of North Dakota, primary lender in this project.

Sakakawea Lake Cabin Adventure is located on the original Lewis & Clark Trail adjoining the Hazen Bay Recreation Area, 14 miles north of Hazen. It consists of nine cabins, each with a half-acre lot. In addition to comfortable accommodations, the company also offers guided fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, and sightseeing on private and public land, as well as rental equipment. About 70 percent of total revenue is expected to come from out-of-state reservations.

Grenora

Contact Centers Unlimited (CCU) received \$100,000 to provide a revolving line of credit. The newly formed telemarketing operation will open in December 2000. "When a company offers more than 36 jobs in a community of 261, that's substantial economic development," said ED&F Director Kevin Cramer.

"Low crime, strong family values, and quality education all contribute to worker productivity: an essential factor for profitable business."

Joe Rothschiller, general manager, Steffes ETS, Dickinson