

21st Century Workforce 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

INTRODUCTION

The number one issue facing manufacturing companies in Walsh and Pembina Counties of northeastern North Dakota is workforce. Combined, these two rural counties bordering Manitoba and Minnesota, have 20+ companies employing more than 1,200 people. These companies also have a 24% annual turnover rate and just nine companies recently reported a need for 400+ employees in the next five years to address openings created through employee retirements. These needs are identified while the area continues to have population loss – a loss trend that has continued for 70 years. There is recent activity that the loss trend is beginning to lessen, and millennials and their young children may be migrating to the area. This strategic plan aims to seize this opportunity by identifying, addressing, and marketing the needs of this area as well as the career opportunities available.

Established in 2015, the NE Manufacturing Group has been working together to address key issues challenging their companies in Walsh and Pembina County, North Dakota. These companies have been supporting and participating in numerous career exposure and entrepreneurship development activities offered to K-12 students that engaged nearly 2,000 students from 23 school districts in the Upper Red River Valley.

In 2019, the ND Department of Commerce, Marvins, Motor Coach Industries, Pembina County Job Development Authority, North Valley Career and Technology Center and Red River Regional Council invested funds and expertise in moving this initiative beyond exposure to impact. These efforts have included the production of ten social media videos, strategic planning, and the establishment of a job shadow program for 200 NVCTC students in grades 9-12. More than 80 companies were identified and agreed to be participants in the job shadow program. These companies represented a cross section of the business and services community.

Herein is the strategic plan developed by the NE Manufacturing Group and its partners in early 2020. While elements of past activities will be continued, this strategic plan aims to move deeper into actual outcomes and impacts to increase the workforce availability in this rural region.

While the past efforts have largely focused on the needs of manufacturers, the 2019-2020 job shadow program provided students the opportunity to guide selection of their 4-hour job shadow. This strategic plan continues to focus heavily on manufacturing; however, it will also begin to address other industry challenges. The key to achieving success with this strategic plan is the ability to increase staffing capacity to a full time professional dedicated towards these activities and linking education, job seekers, and area companies. Further, if a full-time position is achieved, the geography of these efforts will be enhanced to include the rural areas of ND Region 4 – Grand Forks, Nelson, Pembina and Walsh Counties. The city of Grand Forks has existing dedicated efforts and staff related to workforce development



There are numerous partners supporting and participating in these efforts including Red River Regional Council, North Valley Career and Technology Center, Pembina and Walsh County Job Development Authorities, 23 school districts, ND Department of Commerce, Job Service North Dakota, Greater North Dakota Chamber, Impact Dakota, Lake Region State College, Northland Technical College, ND State School of Science and more.

TIMING: 2020-2024

GEOGRAPHY: RURAL GRAND FORKS, NELSON, PEMBINA AND WALSH COUNTIES

TARGET AUDIENCE: K-12 STUDENTS

OBJECTIVE

Engage students in grades K through 12 with unique events and content exposing them to local manufacturing businesses and career opportunities.

- Strategy: Develop a Northeast Manufacturing Group e-newsletter
 - Distribute quarterly to grades 7-12
 - Include updates from the NE Manufacturing Group businesses on new cutting-edge technology, in-demand jobs, employee highlights, new products, etc.
- Strategy: Increase participation of the NE Manufacturing Group businesses at local career exploration events targeted to grades 3-8
 - Events to include: Marketplace for Kids and Explore NVCTC
- Strategy: Continue to implement MFG DAY annually for 7th grade students
 - Tour/business introduction led by young ambassador
 - Have a handful of employees do “stations” where they showcase different careers
- Strategy: Start a Junior Manufacturing Group
 - Build with 7-12 grade Robotics Team students and launch in Grafton
 - Bring in manufacturers one at a time and present interesting concept based on trades
 - Field trips to manufacturing businesses
 - Older members could take on a “little brother/little sister” to mentor
 - Utilize Tik Tok / Snapchat to create awareness among this group
- Strategy: Continue the job shadow program for North Valley students in grades 9-12
 - All students are required to do one half-day (4-hour) job shadow in a career related to the course(s) they are taking
 - Students self-select their job shadow experience
- Strategy: Northland/NDSCS/Lake Region College Tour
 - Invite colleges to present in Grafton and Cavalier to grades 9-12
 - Focus on careers in the trades and program offerings

OBJECTIVE

Utilize partnership with North Valley Career and Technology Center to expose students to cutting edge curriculum and extracurricular opportunities with ties to manufacturing

- Strategy: Add an Emerging Technology Class at NVCTC with curriculum on robotics, machine tooling, auto, etc.
 - Make class available for 9-12 grade students
 - Add required course for middle school students to try out all trades.

- Strategy: Have the local robotics teams do demonstrations at sporting events to increase awareness and encourage participation from younger students.
- Strategy: Help promote robotics and UAS Summer Camps at Northland to increase interest in these fields.

TARGET AUDIENCE: K-12 TEACHERS AND PARENTS

OBJECTIVE

Create awareness of the wide variety of manufacturing jobs available in Pembina and Walsh Counties among teachers and parents.

- Strategy: Summer Externships/Job Shadows for teachers/counselors
 - Present idea to Pembina/Walsh Superintendents
 - Schedule half-day job shadows at area manufacturing businesses
- Strategy: Quarterly Manufacturing e-Newsletter
 - Post digital flip book on social media to reach teachers/parents

TARGET AUDIENCE: POTENTIAL RECRUITS (ADULTS 18+)

OBJECTIVE

Enhance partnership with the Northeast Manufacturing Group to recruit talent to Pembina and Walsh County manufacturing businesses.

- Strategy: Offer training to the manufacturing businesses that will help grow their workforce
 - ND Career Builders Program
 - Registered Apprenticeships
- Strategy: Implement targeted alumni marketing to reach those who may want to move back home, those looking for a new career opportunity and those who may not be ready to retire
 - City Facebook groups
 - Showcase those that have come home
 - Share manufacturing video series
- Strategy: Develop a Northeast Manufacturing Group website
 - Include a job opening section
 - Host the social media videos
 - Links to quarterly e-newsletter
 - Links to city/county information
 - Business listing for each manufacturer with links to website/social media
- Strategy: Create community marketing materials that businesses can use to attract potential recruits
- Strategy: Study the targeted immigration models that have been successful in Manitoba to support growth in manufacturing and population as they have had growth success

TARGET AUDIENCE: CURRENT MANUFACTURING EMPLOYEES

OBJECTIVE

Maintain the current talent pool within the Northeast Manufacturing Group businesses and reduce employee turnover

- Strategy: Offer training to the manufacturing businesses that will provide tactics and ideas for increased retention and reduced turnover
 - Creating a welcoming corporate culture
 - Reducing employee turnover
 - Potential speakers: WCCO Belting, Pat Bertagnolli

TARGET AUDIENCE: INDUSTRIES OUTSIDE OF MANUFACTURING

OBJECTIVE

Expand workforce development efforts to include other industries outside of manufacturing such as healthcare, services, trades and more in the rural areas of Region 4

- Strategy: Expand regional efforts to include Nelson and rural Grand Forks County (outside the city of Grand Forks)

CAPACITY AND ADVOCACY

OBJECTIVE

Increase staff organizational and leadership capacity to implement this strategic plan and enhance awareness of workforce challenges in northeastern North Dakota

- Strategy: Seek funds to create a full-time regional workforce development position to implement this strategic plan as well as continue to work on all workforce development needs to include manufacturing, healthcare and beyond
- Strategy: Partner with the University of North Dakota to conduct an in-depth study of workforce needs for the next five years to be used as a basis for activities, advocacy and leadership
 - All industry needs would be included in the study – particularly manufacturing, healthcare, and the trades
 - Host public information event with the outcomes of the study
- Strategy: Continue to strengthen state and federal workforce development relationships to enhance advocacy and funding potential to support this strategic plan
 - ND Department Career and Technical Education
 - ND Workforce Development Council
 - ND Department of Commerce
 - ND Governor's Office
 - ND Legislators
 - ND League of Cities

- US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration
- Strategy: Develop a public information campaign on workforce development needs and action steps identified in this strategic plan
 - Make public presentations to local governing bodies and Chambers of Commerce