



Events of Interest:

- April 19
 - “Recruit, Motivate and Retain Your Workforce” at The Evergreen in Thief River Falls from 7:30—10AM. Cost is \$45. For more information, please go to http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/Calendar_of_Events/recruit_motivate_train.pdf
- April 23
 - Small Business Funding Webinar hosted by U.S. SBA from 9AM to 10AM. Email Gia.Vu@sba.gov for details.
- April 26
 - “Quest for the Best: Four Stages of Leadership Excellence” hosted by DEED at Prairie’s Edge Casino Resort in Granite Falls from 8:30AM to 3PM. Fee is \$89. For more information, please go to http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/JobSeekers/WorkForce_Centers/0-JobFairs/042613quest.pdf.
- May 10
 - “South America Trade Forum 2013” hosted by the Minnesota Trade Office at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis from 8:30AM-4:30PM. Fees-\$75 pre-register, \$95 walk-in, \$40 student. For more information, please go to http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/Business/Exporting_Trade/Calendar_of_Trade_Events/2013-05-10_-_South_America_Trade_Forum_2013.pdf.

Inside This Issue

- Angel Tax Credit Update 2
- IDEA Competition Banquet 2
- MHTA Spring Conference 2
- DEED Employment/Unemployment Statistics 3
- USDA Renewable Energy Project Applications 4
- STEM-related Jobs & Educational Attainment 5
- Encore Entrepreneur Month 5
- National Small Business Week 6

Minnesota Exports Post Record Numbers for the 9th Straight Quarter to Close 2012

According to DEED, Minnesota exports exhibited modest growth (0.6%) for the fourth quarter totaling over \$5.13 billion. This is lower than the growth of exports in the U.S, which was 2.8%. While the growth is small, Minnesota is faring better than some states with 21 states reporting decreases in exports ranging from a less than 1% decline to 15.7% decline in the fourth quarter. Growth in exports to Canada (5.1%), Mexico (8.4%), Latin America (19%), and Europe (6%) help offset the declines in exports to China and Japan. Exports to China dropped almost 15% to \$550 million with exports to Japan dropping 11.3% to \$269 million. The top 10 countries receiving exports from Minnesota are: Canada, China, Mexico, Japan, Ger-

many, South Korea, Belgium, Taiwan, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom (Table 1).

While machinery-related exports had the highest dollar amount exported (\$928 million), exports in this area dropped 6.2% from Q4 2011. Optic/medical exports had the next highest dollar amounts (\$736 million) and grew 4.3% from Q4 2011. Mineral fuel/oil exports had the largest growth from Q4 2011 (33.4%) and total exports were at \$160 million.

For the complete quarterly report, please go to http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/Data_Publications/Data/Export_Statistics/2012_Stats/Fourth_Quarter_Exports_2012.pdf.

Table 1: Top 10 Countries Receiving Exports from Minnesota and Over-the-Year Growth

Country	Exports (Millions)	Q4 2011 to Q4 2012		Annual MN % Change
		MN	US	
Canada	\$ 1,580	5.1%	3.1%	2.7%
China	\$ 550	-14.7%	6.9%	7.1%
Mexico	\$ 331	8.4%	7.3%	6.7%
Japan	\$ 269	-11.3%	1.4%	-9.9%
Germany	\$ 174	7.8%	-7.8%	-0.8%
South Korea	\$ 170	-7.8%	-9.1%	0.8%
Belgium	\$ 168	29.1%	-7.5%	2.7%
Taiwan	\$ 130	15.0%	1.5%	0.1%
Philippines	\$ 128	-10.6%	6.1%	-5.1%
U.K.	\$ 115	-10%	-8.4%	-8.2%
Other	\$ 1,514	2.3%	3.6%	0.5%
Total	\$ 5,130	0.6%	2.8%	1.2%

Latest DEED Report Shows 386 New Jobs Resulting from the Angel Tax Credit Since 2010

In 2010, the Minnesota Legislature passed legislation creating the Angel Tax Credit to encourage investment in Minnesota businesses. Between 2010 and 2012, \$137,322,690 has been invested in small businesses across Minnesota. During that same time, DEED reports 386 jobs have been created as a result of these investments. These 386 jobs have estimated annual wages totaling \$15,570,468.

The Angel Tax Credit program has been very successful with all 2012 credits issued prior to July 24th. This is also evident early in 2013 with \$6 million remaining of the \$12.7 mil-

lion in credits available as of March 25th. The popularity of this program does not stop with investors. Over the past 3 years, more businesses are becoming certified so they may receive investments which qualify for the tax credit. In 2010 there were 112 certified businesses. This grew to 176 in 2011 and again to 190 in 2012.

Investors provided funds to 117 of the 190 certified businesses in 2012. Businesses receiving funding in 2012 were in the following industries: software (31), medical devices & equipment (26), biotechnology (11), IT services (8), other (8), clean tech-

nology (7), consumer products & services (7), internet/web services (6), healthcare services (4), electronics/instrumentation (3), food/drink (3), marketing/advertising (2), and telecommunications (1).

For the full 2012 report, please go to http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/Business/Financing_a_Business/An-gel_Tax_Credit/2012_Angel_Tax_Assets/An-gel_Tax_Credit_Program_Annual_Report_to_the_Legislature_2012.pdf.

IDEA Competition Winners to be Announced on April 24th in Thief River Falls

On April 24th at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls, the Northwest Minnesota Foundation will announce the winners of the 5th Annual IDEA Competition. The banquet will run from 5 to 8:30 PM. Anyone interested in attending the banquet must register by April 19th. Registration is \$20 per ticket. Past winners Jason LaValley (President and Founder) and Jorge Prince (CFO) will represent LaValley Industries as keynote speakers for the banquet.

There may be up to 5 winners of the IDEA Competition. Winners will receive \$10,000 as well as access to business "coaches" who can assist in developing their business concept. Other past winners include: Jay Fisher (Eleven Hockey), Jeff Sullivan (E3 Solutions), Stephen & Nancy Fisher (Highway My Way), Fred Hartmann (Grand Steer, Inc.), Kiki Anderson (Craft Night Out), Corey Westrum (Insect Inferno), Scott Gustafson (McIntosh Machine & Manufacturing), Donald Zejdlik

(Xtreme DnA), Dave Ekstrom (Ultralight Soaring Aviation), Todd Ham (Icehogger, Inc.), Tim Sargent (Trophy Head Shot), Mark Landes, Eric Thorsgaard (The Forte Keyboard Company), Brady Dyr Dahl, and William Stephani.

For more information about the awards banquet, please visit www.ideacompetition.org. To register for the event, please go to <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/nwmfoundation/event/4475>.

MHTA Spring Conference to be Held on April 30th in Minneapolis

The Minnesota High Tech Association is hosting the upcoming Spring Conference on April 30th from 7:30 AM to 4 PM at the Minneapolis Convention Center. "This daylong event at the Minneapolis Convention Center encompasses all of MHTA's programs, research and

initiatives. Breakout sessions cover the latest trends, breakthroughs and ethical challenges." Hubert Joly, the CEO of Best Buy will be the opening keynote speaker. Innovation expert and creativity author Jim Link will be the closing keynote speaker. Three separate breakout sessions

will have topics related to leadership, IT, healthcare, research & development, and mobile technology.

For more information about the conference, please go to <http://www.mhta.org/network/spring-conference/>.

2012-2013 Local Area Unemployment Statistics and Current Employment Situation

After seasonal adjustments, US unemployment in February dropped from 7.9% to 7.7%. Unemployment in Minnesota stayed steady at 5.5%. Unemployment claims in February declined to 19,154 when compared to January. Over the year unemployment claims dropped 15.1% when compared to February 2012.

Minnesota employers added 14,500 jobs in February. Professional/Business Services (6,800) and Lei-

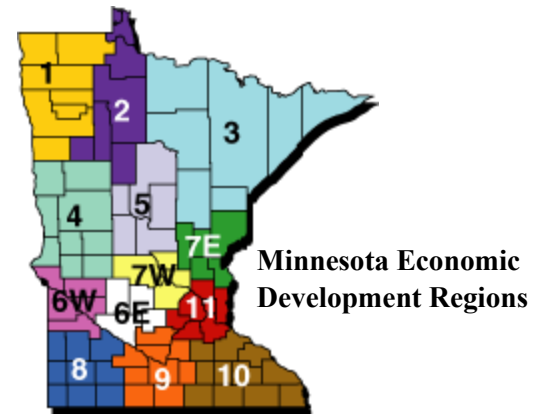
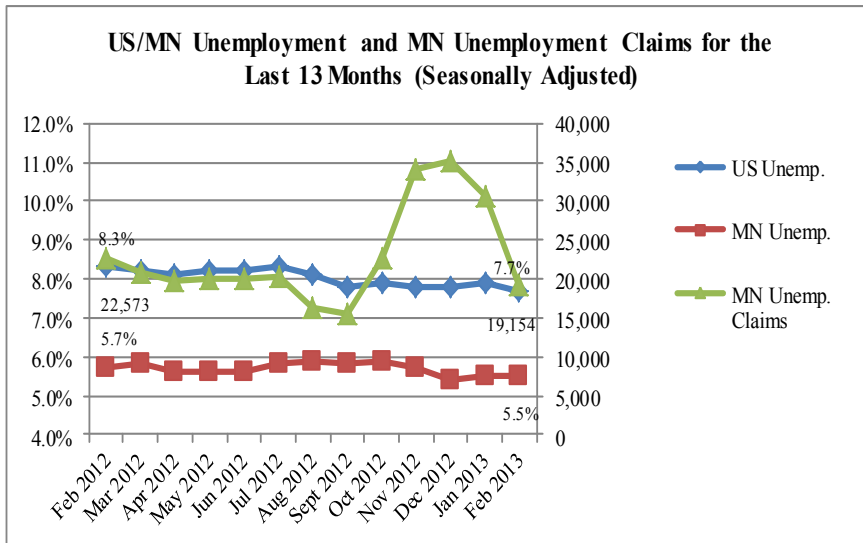
sure/Hospitality (3,200) had the largest gains in February. Education/Health Services (1,900), Financial Activities (1,700), Construction (1,400), Trade/Transportation/Utilities (1,300), and Mining/Logging (100) also experienced gains while Other Services added no jobs in February. Government (-1,000), Manufacturing (-800), Information (-100) posted job losses in February.

Minnesota is up to 2.3% growth from

with 62,360 additional jobs over the past year. The 2.3% growth in Minnesota is above the U.S. growth rate of 1.5% for the last 12 months.

All of the EDRs experienced a sizable decrease in unemployment in February. Unemployment numbers for the EDRs are NOT seasonally adjusted.

Go to the DEED website; www.positivelyminnesota.com to view more employment and wage statistics.



2012-2013 Minnesota Unemployment by Economic Development Region (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Date	EDR1	EDR2	EDR3	EDR4	EDR5	EDR6E	EDR6W	EDR7E	EDR7W	EDR8	EDR9	EDR10	EDR11
Feb 2012	7.9%	9.7%	8.0%	6.7%	9.8%	7.8%	6.8%	10.2%	7.6%	5.8%	6.6%	6.4%	5.9%
Mar 2012	7.5%	9.7%	8.1%	6.4%	9.4%	7.8%	6.6%	10.0%	7.4%	5.5%	6.4%	6.3%	5.9%
Apr 2012	5.8%	7.6%	6.7%	4.5%	6.8%	5.8%	4.8%	7.5%	5.5%	3.9%	5.0%	4.8%	5.0%
May 2012	4.8%	7.0%	6.4%	4.2%	6.1%	5.5%	4.6%	6.8%	5.3%	4.0%	5.0%	4.9%	5.2%
Jun 2012	5.1%	7.6%	7.0%	4.7%	6.6%	6.1%	5.2%	7.0%	5.7%	4.7%	5.5%	5.5%	5.8%
Jul 2012	5.2%	7.8%	7.1%	4.7%	6.6%	6.2%	5.2%	6.9%	5.8%	5.1%	5.7%	5.6%	5.9%
Aug 2012	4.8%	7.1%	6.7%	4.4%	6.3%	5.8%	4.9%	6.6%	5.5%	4.5%	5.3%	5.3%	5.7%
Sept 2012	4.3%	6.5%	6.2%	4.1%	6.0%	5.3%	4.4%	6.2%	5.2%	4.2%	4.9%	4.8%	5.4%
Oct 2012	4.1%	6.7%	6.1%	4.1%	6.2%	5.3%	4.4%	6.2%	5.1%	4.7%	4.9%	4.8%	5.3%
Nov 2012	4.5%	7.1%	6.5%	4.1%	6.9%	5.4%	4.2%	6.5%	5.1%	3.9%	4.6%	4.5%	4.9%
Dec 2012	5.7%	8.1%	6.9%	5.2%	8.1%	6.1%	5.4%	7.9%	6%	4.2%	5.2%	4.9%	5%
Jan 2013	8.1%	10.1%	8.4%	6.7%	10.2%	7.9%	7.4%	10%	7.6%	5.8%	6.7%	6.2%	5.8%
Feb 2013	7.1%	9.3%	7.7%	6.1%	9.3%	7.3%	6.5%	9.1%	6.9%	5.5%	6.2%	5.8%	5.2%

USDA Invites Applications for Renewable Energy System and Energy Efficiency Improvement Projects

Press Release From <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2013/03/0057.xml>

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA is seeking applications to provide assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Funding is available from USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) remains focused on carrying out its mission, despite a time of significant budget uncertainty. Today's announcement is one part of the Department's efforts to strengthen the rural economy.

"The Obama Administration continues its commitment to help our nation become more energy independent by partnering with agricultural producers and rural small businesses as they build renewable energy systems and reduce energy usage," said Vilsack. "These investments will not only help our farmers and rural small businesses reduce energy costs, but also provide a new potential revenue source and stabilize their operations' bottom lines."

REAP, authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, (Farm Bill) is designed to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy costs and consumption and help meet the Nation's critical energy needs. USDA is accepting the following applications:

- Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement grant applications and combination grant and guaranteed loan applications until *April 30, 2013*;
- Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement guaranteed loan only applications until *July 15, 2013*;

Renewable energy system feasibility study grant applications through *April 30, 2013*.

More information on how to apply for funding is available in the [March 29, 2013 Federal Register](#), pages 19183-19190.

Since the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill and through the end of Fiscal Year 2012, REAP has funded nationwide over 6,800 renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, feasibility studies, energy audits, and renewable energy development assistance projects.

Examples include Edaleen Cow Power LLC, located near Lynden, Washington, which received a REAP loan and grant combination to install an anaerobic digester and sell the resulting electricity to a utility. The project is anticipated to generate 4,635 Megawatt hours per year. Manure produced by Edaleen Dairy's 2,450-head herd is the sole feedstock for the project and the dairy benefits from the bedding by-product the digester produces. Also, in Augusta, Wisconsin, farmer Matthew Gabler received a grant to assist in installation of an 11 kilowatt wind turbine to produce approximately 29,000 kilowatt-hours a year for his farm.

This funding is an example of the many ways that USDA is helping revitalize rural economies to create opportunities for growth and prosperity, support innovative technologies, identify new markets for agricultural producers, and better utilization of our nation's natural resources.

The Obama Administration is working to promote domestic production of renewable energy to create jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, combat global warming, and build a stronger rural economy. The President's plan for rural America has brought about historic investment and resulted in stronger rural communities. Under the President's leadership, these investments in housing, community facilities, businesses and infrastructure have empowered rural America to continue leading the way - strengthening America's economy, small towns, and rural communities. USDA's investments in rural communities support the rural way of life that stands as the backbone of our American values. President Obama and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack are committed to a smarter use of Federal resources to foster sustainable economic prosperity and ensure the government is a strong partner for businesses, entrepreneurs and working families in rural communities.

USDA has made a concerted effort to deliver results for the American people, even as USDA implements sequestration - the across-the-board budget reductions mandated under terms of the Budget Control Act. USDA has already undertaken historic efforts since 2009 to save more

than \$700 million in taxpayer funds through targeted, common-sense budget reductions. These reductions have put USDA in a better position to carry out its mission, while implementing sequester budget reductions in a fair manner that causes as

little disruption as possible.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write:

USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of

Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

STEM-Related Jobs Outgrowing Native-born Americans' Educational Attainment

In the March 16th edition of *The Economist* (reprinted online at <http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21573282-americas-immigration-rules-are-opposite-what-it-needs-own-goal>), the author cites an October 2011 report from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce examining the growth of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) jobs between 2008 and 2018. They estimated there will be 779,000 new STEM jobs created between 2008 and 2018 which will require graduate-level degrees with only 550,000 native-born Americans attaining graduate-level degrees during that same time period. As a result, Anthony Carnevale from Georgetown University states

in his report that STEM businesses were already relying on international talent for some of the STEM jobs. As this gap grows, it stands to reason more and more jobs of these new jobs will either be filled with immigrants or will remain unfilled because of the lack of qualified candidates.

The Economist's authors states only 140,000 immigrants a year are given a "green card" as it relates to employment. They cite other restrictions on employers which make it expensive and tedious for them to hire qualified immigrant workers. With the increasing lack of qualified native-born Americans present for STEM-related jobs, it makes sense to re-visit immigration rules to allow these positions to be filled.

Roughly 3% of people with STEM-related advanced degrees are unemployed compared to less than 8% of all workers. While not all immigrants would be looking for employment in STEM jobs, giving businesses the opportunity to recruit international talent could help ensure these high-tech jobs will be filled by highly qualified candidates.

For the full Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce report, please go to <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/stem-complete.pdf>. For the executive summary, please go to <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/stem-execsum.pdf>.

SBA and AARP Host Encore Entrepreneur Mentor Month in April

Entrepreneurship is not limited to only new college graduates or young businessmen and women looking for a more challenging experience. There are also entrepreneurs over 50 who, for whatever reason, are looking to start a new business. These entrepreneurs are known as "encore entrepreneurs". April is National Encore Entrepreneur Mentor Month. During April, the U.S. Small Business Administration and AARP are hosting more than 100 events across the

nation aimed at assisting these encore entrepreneurs in starting a new business.

These events include "speed mentoring, which allows mentors and entrepreneurs to share information for five-minute sessions, and mentor lunches for entrepreneurs to learn best practices from successful small business owners". While there are no events within the state of Minnesota, there are 3 events particularly close to certain areas of the state: Grand Forks (April 24th)

and Fargo (April 23rd) in North Dakota as well as Eau Claire, Wisconsin (April 17th). The events are free and last approximately 2 hours.

For more information from the U.S. Small Business Administration related to 50 and over entrepreneurs, please go to <http://www.sba.gov/encore>. To get information regarding all Encore Entrepreneur Mentor Month events and their locations across the country, please go to <http://www.sba.gov/mentormonth>.

SBA Announces National Small Business Week will be June 17th-June 21st

Every year the U.S. Small Business Administration holds a National Small Business Week. This year National Small Business Week will be from June 17th to June 21st in 5 different locations: Seattle (June 17th), Dallas (June 18th), St. Louis (June 19th), Pittsburgh (June 20th), and will conclude in Washington, D.C. (June 21st). “This year’s activities will include forums discussing the small business landscape, business coaching services, matchmak-

ing events as well as networking opportunities and award ceremonies.” At the final event in Washington, D.C. the 2013 National Small Business Person of the Year will be announced. There will also be daily online forums which will focus on a variety of topics. All events will be live-streamed at www.sba.gov.

All Small business owners who attend will get the opportunity to in-

teract with federal and local government officials, small business experts as well as representatives from businesses across the country. A complete list of events and information regarding registration will be posted as the event gets closer.

For more information on National Small Business Week, please go to <http://www.sba.gov/nsbw>.



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The EDA Center at the University of Minnesota, Crookston is one of more than 40 university centers nationwide, supported by the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

We conduct applied research, provide direct technical assistance and deliver educational programs development agencies that support the economy of economically-distressed rural communities throughout Minnesota.

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