



### Events of Interest:

November 13-14

- Blandin Foundation Conference. “Building our Connected Future: Minnesota’s Better With Broadband” at Greysolon Ballroom in Duluth, MN. Registration is \$95. Go to <http://www.blandinfoundation.org/resources/events-detail.php?intResourceID=3145> for more information.

November 14-15

- Robotics Alley Conference at the Edina Westin Galleria. For more information go to <http://www.mhta.org/event/robotics-alley-conference/>.

November 21

- Writing the “Ultimate Business Plan” workshop 2-4PM at the UMD CED office in Duluth, MN. Cost is \$60. Go to [https://casper.d.umn.edu/biz/umdcged/workshops/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=9&products\\_id=1068](https://casper.d.umn.edu/biz/umdcged/workshops/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=9&products_id=1068) for registration.

November 29

- “Selling Globally in a Borderless Society” 7:15AM –9AM at the Women’s Club in Minneapolis, MN. Expert panel will give information on how to market your business internationally. Go to <https://m360.smei.org/event.aspx?eventID=57618&instance=0> for more information.

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## Minnesota Management & Budget Office Releases October Economic Update

The October Economic Update shows an overall increase in the general fund receipts. The general fund sits at \$16.416 billion for the end of FY 2012, which is \$299 million above projections in the February Forecast (a 1.9% improvement). For the first quarter of FY 2013, general fund revenues totaled \$3.75 billion, which is \$145 million more than expected in the February Forecast (a 4% improvement). Income, sales, and corporate taxes account for \$100 million of the surplus. This puts the 2012-2013 biennium up \$444 million above forecast.

Even with unemployment continuing to

reach post-recession lows as well as increase in performance indicators such as home and auto sales, economic growth is expected to be slow through 2013. Global Insight Inc. expects real GDP to grow 2.1% in 2012 and 1.8% in 2013 with growth picking up in 2014 and 2015 (2.9% and 3.4%, respectively). Most analysts believe if Congress and the President reach an agreement on a “Grand Bargain”, then another recession may be avoided.

*For the full October Economic Update, go to <http://www.mmb.state.mn.us/doc/fu/12/update-oct.pdf>.*

## Local Broadband Work Garners Tekne Award, Recognition for Innovative Collaboration



Billed as the “Academy Awards for high tech,” rural Minnesota communities and partners received a Tekne Award in Minneapolis on Nov. 1 from the Minnesota High Tech Association for their work on broadband access and adoption. Representatives of the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC) initiative collected the “Innovative Collaboration Award” in front of a crowd of nearly 1,000 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Over the past 2 years the EDA Center at the University of Minnesota, Crookston has been heavily involved as program evaluator of this collaboration. The EDA Center has partnered with U of M Extension, PCs for People, Minnesota Learning Commons, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, and Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace to determine how various education, training and outreach programs can influence broadband adoption in rural Minnesota. This collaboration focused on 11 demonstration communities and compared their progress in broadband adoption to all of rural Minnesota.

Selection of Tekne finalists and winners was made by an independent panel of judg-

es. In choosing MIRC, an initiative convened by Blandin Foundation and involving 30 partners, judges noted that, “MIRC has benefited from a legacy of collaboration. MIRC partners are numerous and the impact the collaboration has had on broadband adoption is significant. In fact, the [broadband] adoption rate is 29.8 percent faster in MIRC partner communities when compared to the rest of rural Minnesota.”

All rural regions of Minnesota have engaged in broadband projects as part of the MIRC Initiative. Individual communities initiated more than 70 locally designed and led demonstration projects, such as Lac Qui Parle County’s “Commuter Computer” (mobile learning lab) or Winona’s “Project FINE” (language-specific computer literacy training in Hmong and Spanish).

Statewide MIRC partners provided training to more than 8,000 individuals, computers to more than 1,600 households and has resulted in more than 40,000 households in rural Minnesota subscribing to high-speed Internet. The two-year initiative was funded through a \$4.3 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant administered by Blandin Foundation and will be completed at the close of 2012.

“Resilient, vibrant communities are *connected* communities,” said Dr. Kathy Annette, Blandin Foundation CEO. “And the quality and diversity of those connections is a hallmark of a community’s leadership and sustainability. Through MIRC, en-

gaged local leaders and statewide partners worked together to bring the promises of broadband to many of Minnesota’s rural communities, including all residents in their progress. Blandin Foundation is thrilled that coalition’s ambitious and innovative work has been honored through the Tekne Award.”

Presented by the MHTA, the Tekne Awards honor those who play a significant role in discovering new technologies that educate, improve lifestyles, and impact the lives and futures of people living in Minnesota and all over the world. The program reinforces Minnesota’s place as one of the most competitive and technologically advanced regions in the world. A full list of winners and finalists is available online at <http://www.tekneawards.org/finalists>

“The Tekne Awards recognize those whose leadership and dedication to technological innovation helps demonstrate Minnesota as a global player in technology-based markets,” said Margaret Anderson Keliher, President & CEO of MHTA. “This year’s finalists should be extremely proud of their role in helping Minnesota excel.”

#### **About Minnesota High Tech Association (MHTA)**

MHTA, or the Minnesota High Tech Association, is an innovation and technology association united in fueling Minnesota’s prosperity. MHTA helps bring together the people of Minnesota’s technology ecosystem and leads the charge in directing technology issues to Minnesota’s state capitol. MHTA is the

only membership organization that represents Minnesota’s entire technology-based economy. Its members include organizations of every size – involved in virtually every aspect of technology creation, production, application and education in Minnesota. Find out more online at <http://www.mhta.org> or follow MHTA on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MHTA>.

#### **About Blandin Foundation**

Blandin Foundation stands with rural Minnesota communities as they imagine and claim ambitious, vibrant futures. It is one of only a handful of foundations in the U.S. focused exclusively on rural communities and the largest rural-based private foundation in Minnesota. Information on Blandin Foundation grant-making, leadership development programs and public policy initiatives are at [www.blandinfoundation.org](http://www.blandinfoundation.org) and broadband news at [www.blandinonbroadband.org](http://www.blandinonbroadband.org). On Twitter at <http://twitter.com/BlandinFound>. Media contact: Allison Ahcan, 218-326-0523.

*The final report will be available before the end of the year. To see how the partners have done in relation to the goals of this project, visit our dashboard at <http://www.edacenter.org/mirc-dashboard.php>.*

*MIRC Partners share thoughts at the Tekne Awards on Nov. 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5BR1UloVxU&feature=youtu.be>*

## 2011-2012 Local Area Unemployment Statistics and Current Employment Situation

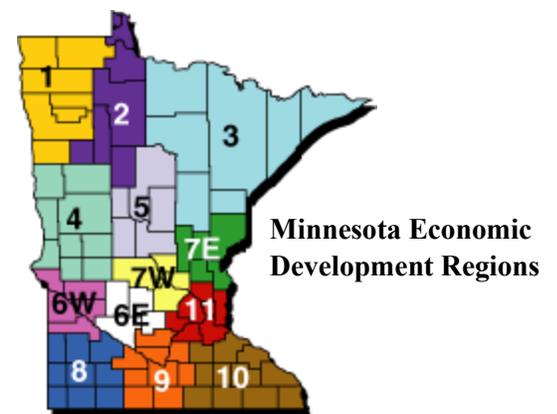
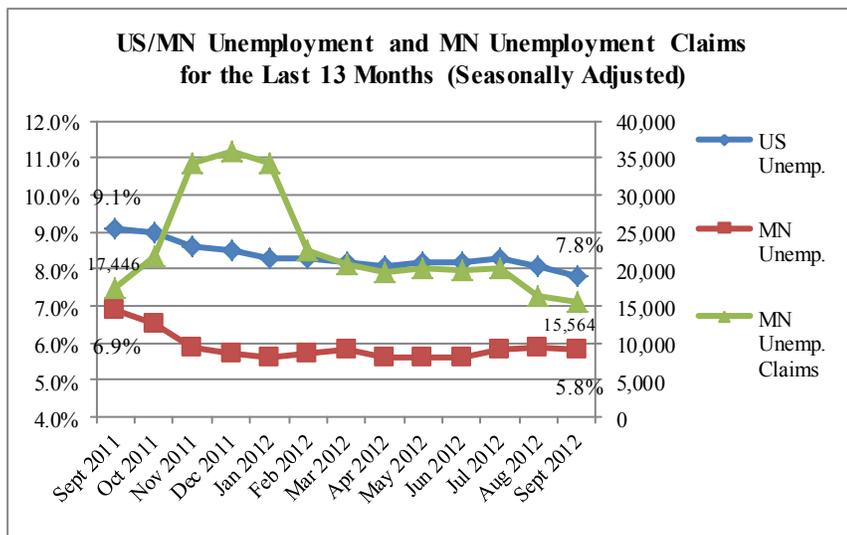
After seasonal adjustments, US unemployment in September dropped to 7.8%. Unemployment in Minnesota ended a 2 month increase by dropping 0.1% to 5.8%. Unemployment claims in September dropped to 15,564 when compared to August. Unemployment claims are down 10.8% when compared to September 2011.

Minnesota employers added 5,900 jobs in the past month. Education &

Health Services (5,600) and Leisure/Hospitality (3,300) led the way in job gains. Construction (1,500), Financial Activities (1,200), Other Services (1,100), Professional/Business Services (800), and Trade/Transportation/Utilities (200) were other industries to post job gains in September. Government (-3,600) and Manufacturing (-2,500) showed the largest losses in September. Information (-1,500), and Mining/Logging (-200) also showed losses in Septem-

ber. With that said, Minnesota showed a 1.3% growth from 1 year ago with an additional 34,700 jobs over the past year.

All of the EDRs experienced another decrease in unemployment. Unemployment numbers for the EDRs are NOT seasonally adjusted. Go to the DEED website; [www.positivelyminnesota.com](http://www.positivelyminnesota.com) to view more employment and wage statistics.



### 2011-2012 Minnesota Unemployment by Economic Development Region (Not Seasonally Adj.)

Date	EDR1	EDR2	EDR3	EDR4	EDR5	EDR6E	EDR6W	EDR7E	EDR7W	EDR8	EDR9	EDR10	EDR11
Sept 2011	5.3%	7.3%	6.5%	5%	6.7%	6%	5.2%	7.2%	5.9%	4.7%	5.3%	5.4%	6%
Oct 2011	4.6%	6.7%	6%	4.4%	6.2%	5.3%	4.5%	6.6%	5.3%	4.3%	4.8%	4.9%	5.4%
Nov 2011	5%	7.5%	6.3%	4.6%	7.1%	5.5%	4.4%	6.9%	5.4%	4%	4.7%	4.7%	5.1%
Dec 2011	5.9%	8.4%	6.9%	5.5%	8.3%	6.4%	5.4%	8.5%	6.4%	4.4%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%
Jan 2012	7.8%	9.4%	7.8%	6.4%	9.6%	7.6%	6.5%	10%	7.4%	5.4%	6.3%	6%	5.7%
Feb 2012	7.9%	9.7%	8%	6.7%	9.8%	7.9%	6.7%	10.3%	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%	7.3%	5.5%	6.4%	6.2%	5.9%
Apr 2012	5.8%	7.6%	6.7%	4.5%	6.8%	5.8%	4.8%	7.6%	5.5%	3.9%	5%	4.8%	5%
May 2012	4.8%	7%	6.4%	4.2%	6.1%	5.5%	4.6%	6.8%	5.3%	4%	5%	4.9%	5.1%
Jun 2012	5.2%	7.6%	6.9%	4.7%	6.6%	6.1%	5.2%	7%	5.7%	4.7%	5.5%	5.5%	5.8%
Jul 2012	5.2%	7.8%	7.1%	4.7%	6.6%	6.1%	5.2%	7%	5.8%	5.2%	5.6%	5.5%	5.9%
Aug 2012	4.8%	7.1%	6.7%	4.4%	6.3%	5.8%	5%	6.6%	5.5%	4.5%	5.3%	5.3%	5.7%
Sept 2012	4.2%	6.6%	6.2%	4.1%	5.9%	5.3%	4.4%	6.2%	5.2%	4.1%	4.9%	4.8%	5.3%

## UEDA Talent Development Award Finalist North Carolina State University Promotes a Different Approach to Internships with Backpacks to Briefcases Program

Most degrees at a major university will typically require (or strongly recommend) an internship prior to graduation. The idea is the experience gained during the internship will make that first job hunt a little easier. After all, most potential employers will tell you experience is a major determining factor of who gets a job. At the University of Minnesota Crookston, we require students to complete an internship prior to graduation. Internships may be either paid or unpaid and often times the student is required to find an internship much like a job search. In December of 2011, the Capital Area Workforce Development Board partnered with North Carolina State University and developed a program for post-graduates located in Wake or Johnston counties in North Carolina which helps match recent graduates who have had trouble finding full-time employment with companies in the area that would like to hire interns. This program is called "Backpacks to Briefcases".

Coordinated by the Capital Area Workforce Development Board, NC State hosted information sessions in January 2012 to recruit recent graduates. The Business Service Team with the Capital Area Workforce Development Board then recruited potential employers who may be interested in this program. Businesses could use this program to not only find interns, but to also find suitable candidates for any current openings. Within the first year of this program, over 30 businesses agreed to participate. The program also enrolled 52 recent graduates still looking for full-time work in their field and who had also completed the "job readiness" workshops which consisted of 20 hours of job readiness/communications workshops, individualized career coaching, a skill assessment, mock interview, and a business book presentation.

The program completed a very successful first year. Between January 2012 and June 2012, 39 internships were coordinated as well as 10 posi-

tions hired without completing an internship. This equates to a 94% placement of the initial 52 recent graduates within the program. For the employers who hired interns, this program paid the wages and workman's compensation insurance for the duration of the internship (\$12/hour, 32 hours/week, for 12 weeks). Of the 39 internships, 13 led to full-time positions with a total of 23 full-time jobs resulting from this program as of the end of June. As this program continues, their goal is to arrange 55 more internships between July 2012 and June 2013 as well as adding another 30 potential employers.

*For more information, contact Darrell Kain, Business Services Manager at [darrell.kain@wakegov.com](mailto:darrell.kain@wakegov.com) or Tom White, Director, Economic Development Partnership, Office of Extension, Engagement, & Economic Development at [tom.white@ncsu.edu](mailto:tom.white@ncsu.edu).*

## Minnesota Trade Office Accepting Applications for Small Business Exporter Financial Assistance

DEED has announced the Minnesota Trade Office is accepting funding applications for small business owners wishing to expand their sales in foreign markets. The State Trade and Export Promotion Program (STEP) is responsible for disbursing awards and is partially funded through a U.S. Small Business Administration grant. For those interested in funding, up to \$7,500 may be available for approved export-related activities, which include:

participation in trade missions, exhibits at trade shows or industry-specific events, translation of marketing materials, development of foreign language websites, Gold Key or other business matchmaking services, company-specific international sales activities, and testing/certification necessary to sell products in foreign countries. In addition to the larger award, \$500 may also be available for those who wish to participate in classes intended to

help develop export plans. The first deadline was October 30, 2012 with a second round deadline of November 15, 2012. Additional awards will be available each following month until funds are no longer available.

*For more information and application materials, go to [http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/Business/Exporting\\_Trade/STEP\\_Export\\_Assistance\\_for\\_Small\\_Business/index.aspx](http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/Business/Exporting_Trade/STEP_Export_Assistance_for_Small_Business/index.aspx).*

## University Economic Development Association Announces 2012 Award of Excellence Winners

The University Economic Development Association (UEDA) announced their 2012 Award of Excellence winners at the 2012 Summit held in Chattanooga, TN on October 24<sup>th</sup>. UEDA “is the cornerstone membership organization representing higher education, private sector and community economic development stakeholders. UEDA works to expand economic opportunity in our communities by leveraging research, community resources, campus planning, talent development, and technology commercialization”.

There were 5 categories recognizing UEDA members “who are transforming their campuses in engines of economic prosperity through leading edge initiatives”. The 5 categories are: 1) Community Connected Campus, 2) Research & Analysis, 3) Leadership & Collaboration,

4) Innovation & Entrepreneurship, and 5) Talent Development. The winners in each category are as follows:

### Community Connected Campus Category

“Kemper Military School Redevelopment Project” submitted by University of Missouri University Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (UCIE)

### Research and Analysis Category

“Sustainable Economies Program” submitted by Iowa State University, CIRAS

### Leadership and Collaboration Category

“Kansas Opportunity Innovation Network (KOIN)” submitted by Kansas State University / Advanced Manufacturing Institute

ty / Advanced Manufacturing Institute

### Innovation and Entrepreneurship

“Linking Innovation, Industry and Commercialization (LIINC)” submitted by West Virginia University

### Talent Development

“Developing Analytics & Operations Research Practitioners” submitted by Lehigh University – Enterprise Systems Center and Industrial & Systems Engineering Department

To read more about each winner, go to <http://universityeda.org/blog/member-news/university-economic-development-association-ueda-announces-2012-award-of-excellence-winners/>.

## Center for Rural Entrepreneurial Studies (CRES) at the U of M, Crookston awarded \$50,000 grant from Bremer Foundation to Extend Entrepreneurial Assistance Services and Programming to the Region

By Elizabeth Tollefson

The Bremer Foundation has awarded a grant for \$50,000 to the Center for Entrepreneurial Studies (CRES) at the University of Minnesota, Crookston. The grant, which provides \$25,000 each year for two years, offers operational support to extend the unique entrepreneurial assistance services and programming of CRES to northwestern Minnesota. It will also focus on developing entrepreneurial awareness among area high school and U of M, Crookston students. Susan Brorson, head of the Business Depart-

ment serves as the principal investigator for the grant which was written by Kevin Cooper, who serves as director of CRES, and Rachel Lundbohm, the Center's assistant director.

"We want to engage students and assist businesses by providing technical assistance to area entrepreneurs and conducting valuable research related to entrepreneurship," explains Lundbohm. "Encouraging students interested in entrepreneurship while getting them involved in the region is also a priority. We appreciate this award from Bremer to

support our passion for entrepreneurship and to help us provide assistance to entrepreneurs and businesses in the region."

Goals of CRES for the next two years include entrepreneurial and small business consulting, community education and outreach that facilitates entrepreneurial networking, and the dissemination of rural entrepreneurship research.

The work of CRES positively impacts entrepreneurs and small businesses in northwest Minnesota by providing no-cost technical assis-

tance to these individuals. Entrepreneurs, companies, and non-profit organizations receiving the assistance of CRES have provided positive feedback regarding their experience with the program. Students

who have worked on CRES-initiated projects have also received valuable experience, further contributing to their education and professional understanding.

*For more information, contact Lundbohm at 218-281-8190 ([rlundboh@umn.edu](mailto:rlundboh@umn.edu)) or visit the CRES Web site at [www.umccres.org](http://www.umccres.org).*

## International Economic Development Council Survey Highlights Economic Impact of Broadband

In a report titled “Moving the Needle Forward on Broadband and Economic Development”, author Craig Settles partnered with the International Economic Development Council to conduct a survey of their membership and other affiliated professionals. With 365 responses, participants responded to questions related to the presence of wireless/fiber networks, types of carriers, levels of competition and community plans to develop community networks. The report also provides insight into the participants’ perception of broadband to help create

jobs. The data presented shows a clear preference for fiber networks over wireless networks in a variety of ways. The table to the right shows responses related to perceived direct impact of wireless and fiber networks.

*For the entire report, go to <http://www.cjspeaks.com/msp/IEDC2012.pdf>. Mr. Settles will also be a featured speaker at this year’s Blandin Foundation Broadband Conf. (See details of conference in our “Events of Interest Section on p. 1)*

	Wireless	Fiber
Attract Businesses	39.9%	58.3%
Revive Bus. Districts	22.5%	28.5%
Local Companies	39.3%	51.8%
Revive Communities	20.2%	27.5%
Improve Individuals	21%	30.1%
Home Businesses	41.3%	48%



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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.*

EDA Center Staff:

*Jack Geller-EDA Center Director*

*Eddie Walker-Research Analyst/Editor*



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