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**Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.**  
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING**  
**803 Roosevelt Avenue, Detroit Lakes, MN**  
**April 21, 2026**

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**Members present:** Jerry Arneson, Carol Anderson, Ed Bolas, Kathy Cottew, Amanda Hanson, Lisa Hanson, Troy Haugen, Justin Holley, Amy Johnson, Darrell Lende, Julie Sachs, Tammy Schatz, Lori Schwartz, and Sandy Voigt

**Members excused:** Jeff Bjornson, Terry Blake, Duane Johanning, Brittany Nordick, and Leigh Shebeck

**Members unexcused:**

**Staff present:** Heather Bergseid, Arlyce Cucich, Tina Jaster, David Smith and Chrys Kirschbaum

**Guests:** John Connell, DEED

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**MINUTES**

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**Business Committee Meeting – Arlyce Cucich/David Smith**

Ms. Cucich reviewed reports for the month ending March 2026. This included the Program Progress, MFIP/DWP County Performance Standards, WIOA Performance Standards, SNAP, and Ticket to Work reports.

Program Progress

Mr. Smtih reviewed all current programs. Overall, there are no concerns.

MFIP/DWP County Performance Standards

- ✓ MFIP
  - Entered Employment Rate: 8 counties are exceeding, and 2 are meeting.
  - Successful Placements: 8 counties exceeding, and 2 are meeting.
  - Wage at Placement: 11 counties are exceeding.
  
- ✓ DWP
  - Entered Employment Rate: 7 counties are exceeding.
  - Wage at Placement: 9 counties are exceeding, and 1 is meeting.

WIOA Performance Standards

Adult:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ▪ Employment Q2: 85.35% of goal    | ▪ Credential: 92.44% of goal            |
| ▪ Median Earnings: 118.24% of goal | ▪ Measurable Skill Gain: 63.06% of goal |
| ▪ Employment Q4: 94.98% of goal    |   |

Dislocated Worker:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ▪ Employment Q2: 100.57% of goal   | ▪ Credential: 95.11% of goal            |
| ▪ Median Earnings: 132.99% of goal | ▪ Measurable Skill Gain: 82.37% of goal |
| ▪ Employment Q4: 96.80% of goal    |   |

Youth:

- Employment Q2: 105.00% of goal
- Median Earnings: 113.68% of goal
- Employment Q4: 114.30% of goal
- Credential: 108.98% of goal
- Measurable Skill Gain: 97.36% of goal

SNAP Slots

- ✓ Region IV is at 2 of 17 slots enrolled.
- ✓ Region V is at 18 of 12 slots enrolled.
- ✓ Additional Pledge funds have now been received.

Ticket to Work

There are currently 19 active enrollments with 74 cumulative enrollments.  
 Revenue to date (DEED and ADEN) is \$459,295.67  
 Remaining Ticket to Work funds are \$155,765.75  
 Revenue from 2014-2018 (DEED) is \$104,574.67  
 Revenue 2018-present (ADEN) is \$354,721.00  
 2026 Revenue to Date is \$10,098.00.

Social Security Advocacy Services

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY APPLICATIONS	3/31/26
Claims submitted	21
Claims approved at initial application	7
Claims approved on reconsideration	1
Claims referred to other agencies for ALJ hearing	5
Claims still pending decisions	3
<b>Total income received</b>	<b>\$ 15,769.89</b>

**Call to Order – Carol Anderson, Chair**

Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**March 24, 2026, Minutes – Ms. Anderson**

**Moved by Terry Blake and seconded by Ed Bolas to approve the minutes from the March 24, 2026, meeting as presented. Motion carried.**

**MN RETAIN Program Presentation – John Connell**

Mr. John Connell with DEED presented on the MN RETAIN Program. RETAIN’s primary goal is to provide early intervention for workers to stay at work or to return to work as soon as possible after an injury or illness.

The Minnesota Retaining Employment and Talent after Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) Program

- RETAIN Overview
  - Job Loss and Health Condition
  - How RETAIN Helps and the Benefit to All

- RETAIN Timeline
  - Phase 1 - 2018-2021
  - Phase 2 - 2021-2026
  - Sustainability Pilot - 2024-2026
  - Disability Innovation Fund - 2024-2029
- Helping Ill/Injured Return to Work
- How RETAIN Works
  - Referral Process
  - Initial Assessment
  - Developing a Return-to-Work Plan
  - Services Provided
  - Monitoring and Follow-up
- Who Can Benefit
  - Eligibility Criteria
    - 18 years or older
    - Live and work in MN
    - Employed at the time of enrollment
    - Participants unable to work and/or unable to work with accommodation
    - Must be within 6 months of last day of work
  - How Employers and Healthcare Providers Can Get Involved
- Impact of RETAIN
- RETAIN Dashboard
- RETAIN Resources
- Acknowledgements
- Q&A Session

Mr. Connell answered questions and good discussion was held.

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### **WDB Member Sector Representation Change – Tina Jaster**

Amy Johnson represented the Workforce Development Board in the Economic Development Sector. Due to a change in employment, she will now represent the Board under the Private Sector.

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### **Diversionary Work Program Wrap-Up – Char Hirte**

The Diversionary Work Program (DWP) has been repealed and ended on March 1, 2026. The program was a 4-month job search-focused program aimed to keep participants off MFIP. The program ran from July 1, 2004 – March 1, 2026. Ms. Hirte reviewed RMCEP’s DWP statistics.

#### RMCEP Exit Summary

07-01-04 – 03-01-26

Total exits: 4,930

Unique individuals served: 4,475

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## **DEED Update – Julie Sachs**

Ms. Sachs provided an update on recent DEED activities. Presentation topics included:

- New Required Training: Fraud Awareness, Prevention and Reporting
- LWDA 3 Updates: New Comprehensive Center
- February Employment Numbers
- Cutover Communications Overview: Change from MinnesotaWorks.net to CareerForce.MN.gov
  - Communications with staff and partners
  - Communications with job seekers
  - Communications with employers
- Employer Transition to CareerForce.MN.gov: <https://careerforce.mn.gov/post-a-job>
- Unemployment Insurance Script Change
- May: Military Appreciation Month, Hire a Veterans Month, Annual Veterans Career Fair

A Q&A session was held, and good discussion took place.

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## **Monitoring Reports – Ms. Cucich**

### WIOA Adult

The PY25 WIOA Adult program was monitored on March 3, 2026. Twenty-two staff were in attendance. Overall, it went well and there were no Findings.

### WIOA Dislocated Worker and State Dislocated Worker

The PY25 WIOA Dislocated Worker and State Dislocated Worker programs were monitored on March 3, 2026. Twenty-two staff were in attendance. The monitoring went well and there were no Findings.

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## **Director’s Report – Ms. Jaster**

Ms. Jaster provided an update on Recent Accomplishments and Current Activities, Staffing Changes, and Agency Outreach Efforts.

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## **Rural Workforce Discussion: Labor Market Information – Ms. Jaster**

As part of the DEED’s strategic planning work, it is employing an Objectives and Key Results (OKR) goal-setting framework to identify and advance key department priorities. Ms. Jaster is participating in the Workforce System Innovations LWDA subgroup, which consists of two rural Directors and three metro Directors assisting with the Objectives and Key Results. Objective Four, Labor Market Information, was reviewed with the Workforce Development Board and feedback was requested. Great discussion was held, and comments were appreciated.

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## **Regional Planning/Career Advising – Chrys Kirschbaum**

### Regional Planning

- Regional Workforce Alliance (RWA)  
The April 16 Regional Workforce Alliance meeting was held in Mahnommen at the Shooting Star. A speaker from the Office of Cannabis Management presented and a tour of the Waabigwan Mashkiki facility was provided.
- Community Workforce Inclusion Council (CWIC)  
The Good Jobs Initiative continues to be developed. A flyer was provided in the packet.

### RETAIN Program

RMCEP staff has begun promoting the MN RETAIN Program at events and Job Fairs.

### Career Advising

- End-of-year surveys were sent to contracted schools for feedback.
- Career Advising contracts for the 2026-2027 school year have been sent to schools.

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## **Member Updates – Roundtable Contribution**

### Jerry Arneson

- The Coke distribution plant in Moorhead has shut down; a new facility has broken ground in West Fargo.
- The Ag Industry financial hardships continue.

### Carol Anderson

The local Planning Commission has approved a cannabis facility.

### Ed Bolas

Sales at DyCast are not as robust as a year ago.

### Darrell Lende

A new Plasterers agent has been hired and will replace Darrell in his retirement.

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## **Celebrate Wins – Ms. Jaster**

A Success Story was shared in the packet.

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## **Adjourn – Ms. Anderson**

Ms. Anderson adjourned the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

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**Respectfully submitted,**

**Terry Blake, Secretary  
Workforce Development Board**