

MN PIPELINE – Agriculture Industry Council

Thursday August 14, 2014 1:30pm-4:30pm

Meeting Summary

Welcome – Jessica Looman, Assistant Commissioner, MN Dept. Labor and Industry

- Thank you for coming and participating in the Agricultural Industry Council
- The Council is recognized as including Employers, Labor, Education and Government
- Industry Council is the experts and everyone's contributions are important to the success of this project.
- This project is about coming to agreement on occupational competencies, and linking them to 3 occupations.
- Competency standards should be accessible, understandable, and transferrable
- The PIPELINE Project should be flexible and broad enough to meet the Industry's needs as a whole

MN PIPELINE Project Vision and Overview – Senator Terri Bonoff and Dave Kornecki, MN Senate

- Serves as Chair of Higher Education and Workforce Development
- Representing students and their families
- Standing in Employer shoes
- 20 Campus Listening Tour around the State, heard student and family stories on what worked and what didn't.
- Students expressed desire to have jobs and fear they wouldn't have jobs
- Itasca Project acknowledged and the work that was done
- Economic snapshot: 4.5% unemployment vs, 11% youth and recent graduates unemployment rate
- Agriculture is very important to Minnesota's Economy: We want transferrable credits, and a wider degree of acceptance and agreement.
- We want investment from Industry, Labor, Education, and Government

Question to the Council:

1. What jobs are most needed to be filled now?

Responses:

1. Maintenance workers
2. Skilled Mechanics
3. Agronomy positions – Crop consulting, degrees in Agronomy
4. Agriculture teachers – High School level and up
5. Herd persons
6. Barn Animal Caretakers
7. Breeders – helpers, birthing, moving animals, handlers
8. Record Keepers – entry level
9. Managers – with soft skills
10. Dairy farmers and workers
11. Research and Statistics – people with basic knowledge of soil, plants, and agronomy.

12. Technology and data management
13. An emerging field is **Medical Cannabis**. The new industry will need people in extraction, packaging, dispensing, growing and operations. Instead of 5,000 patients, new data indicates that it will be closer to 15,000 patients.

Challenges Identified by Council:

1. There are metro and state schools that can have classes: but we don't have the teachers.
2. This is an industry where a lot of people are retiring. We are doing a lot of hiring now. But we need trainable people. The emphasis on "trainable."

Question of the Council: What are we doing for the next few months?

Responses: We are convening to understand and learn about the skills and trade in this industry. Then we want to come to learn about who's doing what and how they are doing it, and then be at a state where we can approve and vote as an Industry Council.

- What is this systematic approach going to look like?
- What is the funding structure and model going to look like?

Dr. Brian Buhr – Framework: We are working on Labor Force Development. We need more Innovation. More Jobs. More Activity.

- Forestry is a significant industry we sometimes forget about
- Minnesota is bigger than South Dakota and North Dakota combined in terms of Agriculture
- Agriculture is a Core part of our State: Austin, Mankato, when you think of these major cities you can identify a strong agricultural center in these places
- Agriculture in these cities are a major driver for our economy
- 54,000 jobs needed per year in Agriculture
- Large opportunity at the Ph.D. level in Plant Protection
- Communication and Leadership skills are needed
- Problem Solving and Analytical skills
- Potential students need to have an idea of what agriculture is about
- Technology and how it's used in the agriculture industry
- Language skills and computer skills are needed
- The challenges include: a strong competition for labor across the state and it is hard for companies to get good qualified labor
- Agriculture is a "real environment" You are out there, in the soil, out in the field, outdoors, and it's unlike most other jobs
- We have retiring workers, there are cyclical problems, seasons to deal with, long work hours, and the work doesn't end

Question: What other jobs are there and what are the differences in jobs?

- Animal Care
- Herd Positions
- Compliance officers
- Maintenance
- Plant processing
- Food Science
- Quality Control/Quality Technician
- Production Worker – Anything beyond k-12 education
- Agriculture teachers
- Plant managers

Exercise 1 – Soft skills and Personal Skills

1. Time-management
2. Food safety
3. Reliability
4. Good work ethic
5. Computer skills – highly automated systems at some locations
6. Data entry
7. Working in a team
8. Listening skills
9. Safety Awareness – General Safety
10. Good Attitude
11. Basic Comprehension
12. Math – Computation, High school math, arithmetic, applied math, DEPENDS on the job
13. Speaking – Social skills, social interaction
14. Basic mechanical attitude – familiar with machinery, tech type classes, know tools, Preferred (vs. mandatory). Comfortable around machinery.
15. Problem solving, decision making, creative thinking.
16. Integrity, honesty.
17. Curiosity