

Flexibility

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of talent and skill. “Manufacturing is very strong in Yankton, and will continue to be strong over the next decade,” he said. “We’re now at that point we knew we would be at 10 years ago. Manufacturing will rebound, it will just require fewer people, and that’s exactly what we’re facing in Yankton, in North America and around the world. The Yankton workforce has to become better skilled and smarter at what it does, better trained at automation, in science, technology, engineering and math. It’s incumbent on us as a community and as a base of employers to recognize our responsibility to train, retrain and keep our work

District

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a new vehicle. In Bon Homme County, District III helped the City of Scotland with storm water and sewer improvements as well as with a project on Washington Street. The planning committee helped a few projects in Douglas County, included railway avenue reconstruction in Corsica and a facility upgrade and expansion project within the county. In Hutchinson County, a number of projects are still under review. However, in 2011, the group helped the City of Parkston with its “safe routes to school” initiative, the City of Menno with a water meter replacement project, and other improvements in Menno and Freeman for a small community planning grant. District III also helps with many other projects across the area, including commu-

force at that level.” Wenande said there is always room for more manufacturing in Yankton, but that it is also important to stay aware of what is happening globally. “Whether it’s the typical metal-bending manufacturing, or it’s some other type of high-tech manufacturing or something in the airline industry, whatever it might be, we could always have more manufacturing. There’s no doubt about that,” she said. “But fewer companies around the world will need rock crushers that Kolberg Pioneer makes if there’s a recession in other areas of the world. We can’t be focused on just our little bubble. I know the manufacturers have done a really good job of being aware and helping the community become aware of what’s happening the world and how it impacts them, which then impacts their employees.”

nity planning, housing, geographic information systems (GIS), business development, grant and loan applications, and other specialty projects. Since its founding in 1973, each dollar of membership dues paid by counties has expanded to an average of \$61 in assistance needed — a number that counties to grow higher. Total outside assistance to date totals more than \$247 million on just \$4 million in dues paid. District III is financed through membership dues, administrative charges, state and federal agency service contracts, grants and other technical assistance fees. Expenses in 2011 were at \$1.1 million and about 22 percent of the funding came from local government dues. The group is currently working locally with the Boys and Girls Club of Yankton to try and secure the group a grant to build a new facility. District III helps many groups and community organizations secure funds to help improve their communities in ways they might not have been able to without the groups help and guidance.

Nebraska

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built an 80- by 100-foot addition to its manufacturing facility and purchased new equipment. • Nucor Corporation, North America’s largest steel bar producer, has approved \$290 million for projects to be completed at its Norfolk, Neb., Memphis, Tenn. and Darlington, S.C., steel mills that will expand its SBQ and wire rod capacities by a combined one million tons. • Thurston Manufacturing, manufacturer of farm equipment and side dump semi-trailers, celebrated its 40th anniversary last year and expanded in Thurston. • TrailManor Manufacturing Company, LLC, which produces the design, manufacture, assembly and laminate for light-weight recreational travel trailers, started a manufacturing facility in Hartington, creating 20 full-time jobs. • Williams Form Engineering Corp., manufacturer of quality products for the construction and fastener industries in the categories of concrete forming hardware and accessories, rock and concrete anchor bolts, and post tensioning systems, opened a new manufacturing facility in Wayne, hiring 15 full-time employees. Manufacturing has a lot to offer the region’s workforce. Workers in this field can expect to earn competitive wages. Manufacturing in northeast Nebraska has an average weekly wage of \$769, compared to the overall average weekly wage for the northeast area of \$623 for 2011. Workers help drive the success of all industries, including manufacturing, and there are a variety of reasons why today’s jobseekers might consider manufacturing. The industry provides a large number of potential employment opportunities. In the Northeast, employment averaged 23,499 workers in 2011, making it the largest employing industry of all non-farm industries in the area, followed by Health Care and Social Services at 14,993 (14 percent) and Retail Trade at 12,538 (11 percent). Manufacturers are currently among the top 25 largest employers in northeast Nebraska. The Northeast region has gained back 377 manufacturing jobs from the 2010

Vermillion

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We are attempting to grow a sector that needs workers that possess the skills that our school districts across the country have scaled back on teaching. Pressures on school districts at the federal level with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, combined with flat growth in funding at the state level have forced schools to make hard decisions, and Vermillion is no exception. When you are short of cash, you fund what is measured. NCLB and Dakota STEP do not measure welding proficiency or the ability of school districts to meet the workforce needs of the local businesses. American society has devalued the trade careers for our children and has chosen to underfund and deprioritize education in the trades resulting in a skills mismatch between what businesses need and what our public education systems provide. At the same time we provide incentive dollars for these same businesses to come to our communities because we desire the property tax dollars they generate so our schools will be better funded. It takes a minute to get your head around that flawed logic. Recognizing you cannot grow an industry without the necessary workforce, and understanding the limited opportunities in Vermillion to obtain the skills needed by

the manufacturing sector, the Vermillion Area Chamber and Development Company partnered with Masaba Mining Equipment and the Vermillion School District to create a Welding Boot Camp to provide the basic skills needed to at least be considered for employment in the welding trade. While still in its infancy, this program has had success in placing welders, and we’ve been able to secure a grant to upgrade the welding equipment to ensure the students are being taught with modern tools. In the long run, it is going to take more than an evening welding class to provide a workforce pipeline for manufacturing in Vermillion. It’s going to take a change of mindset that “trade careers are not,” as Governor Dugaard has said, “a consolation prize.” This may be more challenging for a community such as ours that has placed a high value on the college degree. It is the product we sell, so of course it’s important to us. But we have seen many indications that this mindset is changing. Our business community and our local governments have contributed significant financial resources to recruiting diverse industries, our school district opened its doors to adult skills training partnerships with business, the owner of our largest manufacturing company, Jerad Higman, was recently named Community Leader of the Year. We are seeing the value of manufacturing and all it brings to Vermillion. We recognize that we need diversity to grow and we are willing to back it with dollars and resources. While it may take time to achieve our ultimate goals, Vermillion is on its way.

RTEC

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should instead be dangled out there as a carrot or reward.” **CHANGING WITH THE TIMES** Transitions, both large and small, are nothing new to RTEC. The Yankton program has seen a number of changes since its origin in 2000 as a satellite training center for Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls. RTEC originated at a downtown Yankton site, then moved to the former Aalf’s Manufacturing building, just northwest of Yankton High School and the Summit Activities Center. RTEC has earned the distinction of operating one of the two American Welding Society (AWS) Accredited Test Facilities in South Dakota. In addition to offering welding and other customized training, RTEC also serves as a host for programs offered by its partners — Northeast Community College, Mitchell Technical Institute, Black Hills State University, Avera Education & Staffing Solutions and others. These and other programs were enhanced by the addition of nearly \$90,000 in new training equipment awarded by the state Department of Labor in spring 2009 through federal

stimulus funding. RTEC’s “Home Grow Our Own Workforce” approach has drawn praise from state officials, including state Labor Secretary Pam Roberts. The secretary is no stranger to the Yankton facility, visiting it for events under different governors. This summer, Roberts served as featured speaker at the recognition ceremony for the RTEC-First Dakota National Bank Manufacturing Academy and the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Institute. Amidst a national recession, South Dakota offers job opportunities, Roberts said. In fact, the state actually faces a worker shortage in a number of technical and skilled fields, she said. “There are very real openings,” she said. “With the right training, you can find a job immediately in the southeast part of South Dakota.” Besides attaining job skills, the academy participants showed the initiative to invest in their future, Roberts said. “You have committed two weeks of your summer, and you really show what it takes,” she told the students. “What you have done for the last two weeks really matters.” Svatos noted that he observed a similar personal growth among the academy participants. “They show up for work on time and are productive. They show drive and desire,” he said. “It’s all about ‘attitude, aptitude and appetite.’”

The expanded coverage area includes Freeman, Canton, Parker, Viborg and Yankton, as well as U.S. Highway 81 north of Yankton to Freeman; east of U.S. Highway 81 on U.S. Highway 18 and State Highway 44 to Interstate 29 and east on I-29 from U.S. Highway 18 to the Iowa border. “The expansion of our 4G high-speed network will enable customers to use their 4G LTE devices in more parts of South Dakota to stay in touch with family, friends and colleagues, all with speeds up to 10 times faster than before,” Seamus Hyland, president-Great Plains Region, Verizon Wireless, said in a statement.

Internet

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done by the end of this year, will add 359 miles of new fiber optic cable to the state and benefit 75 communities. That will mean increased broadband access to more than 300 hospitals, schools and government facilities. Earlier this fall, Verizon Wireless continued its expansion of service in southeastern South Dakota by further enhancing its 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) network.

Recruiting

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and an employment opportunity for their spouse. More than half of the survey respondents felt as if the rural location, size of the community and available patient base, in combination with lack of facilities and equipment available, were the biggest deterrents to recruiting and retention activities. The report also showed that rural areas have more difficulty recruiting and retaining healthcare providers than larger areas do. In addition, rural communities are also more successful in recruiting and retaining providers who have had rural backgrounds or ties to the area.

For healthcare facilities, employees felt as if competitive salary levels, family preferences, flexible call schedules and availability of social, cultural and recreational opportunities were some of the biggest reasons in the decision to practice in a particular community. In addition to the professional issues, family issues, including employment or educational opportunities for family members were identified as some of the biggest factors for deciding to practice in a particular community. Hospital incentives, proximity of residency programs and lack of hospital specialties were some of the least common responses for where employees chose to practice. As Yankton grows and develops, employers will continue to have to sell potential employees on the area and why they should come here to live and work.

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