



Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council Selected First In State Award

The Minnesota Workforce Council Association awards Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Inc. the #1 Promising Practice Award for two years in a row.



From left to right: **Ron Antony**, Chair of the Southwest Minnesota Chief Elected Official Board and County Commissioner in Yellow Medicine County; **Eriann Faris**, Youth and Young Adult Program Manager, Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council; **Bruce Bergeson**, Director of Minnesota Valley Education District Career and Technical Education Collaborative; **Audra Klinkner**, Youth Career Navigator, Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council; and **Chris Fenske**, Superintendent, Lakeview Secondary School.

The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Inc. (PIC) received the #1 Promising Practice Award during the Minnesota Workforce Council Association annual Summer Meeting for its role in a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Collaborative.

As Career and Technical Education (CTE) has declined over the past 20 years (combined with declining school enrollment and teacher shortages) the need for partnerships to form and deliver CTE has been renewed, driven by our labor shortages. In response, a

collaborative partnership was formed and has implemented new, in-demand Career and Technical Education courses for high school students. This alone is a great accomplishment in rural Minnesota where a where a declining student population makes filling a class difficult and securing a licensed teacher to teach the course even more so. The high school students in the course not only earn high school credit but also college credit and gain related workplace experience with local employers. Through partnering - the classroom is full of students, one teacher with the appropriate credentials is shared by multiple schools, more skilled workers are being developed, students gain an understanding of the local labor market demands, and resources are braided to make the courses sustainable.

The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Inc. (PIC)'s Youth and Young Adult Program Career Pathway Navigator is instrumental in helping employers develop meaningful work-based learning experience for students and preparing students for "real-life" workplaces and gaining essential workplace skills. Employers have the opportunity to share their great jobs and promote their businesses to future workers as well as are involved in the curriculum development. Engaging employers on the design of an initiative has helped ensure CTE related instruction aligns with business needs. As a school-to-career intermediary organization, the PIC can serve as a single point of contact for employers to work with the region's schools and colleges.

Partners in the CTE Collaborative:

- Southwest West Central Service Cooperative – Convener
- Minnesota West Community & Technical College – Post Secondary Instruction
- Minnesota River Valley Education District (MRVED), Yellow Medicine East High School, Montevideo Public High School, Lakeview Secondary School, Renville County West, MACCRAY High school – School Districts
- Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Inc. – Youth Career Pathway Navigator/Employer Engagement
- Granite Falls Energy, SpecSys, Chandler Industries, and CW Welding – Employers

The Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA) represents the cooperative efforts of the local workforce development system across the state. Each year MWCA names the three best Promising Workforce Development Practices in the state. The submitted nominations for the annual award are reviewed and ranked by representatives from National Skills Coalition; Governor's Workforce Development Board and DEED, so needless to say the competition is high and the selection is truly recognition of quality work and great collaboration.

"It is a real honor to be selected as one of the award winners and to be selected as #1 is OUTSTANDING!!!! Thank you to all of our tremendous partners!" says Eriann Faris.

More CTE collaboratives like this can be formed across the region through LYFT Career Pathways. To learn more about LYFT Career Pathways, check out their website at www.lyftpathways.org.

More Information Regarding the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Inc.

The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council works to build tomorrow's workforce through partnerships with a shared focus on training and leadership. We are a private, nonprofit organization that offers customized training and employment services for individuals and businesses in a 14-county area of Southwest Minnesota. We also facilitate services through three WorkForce Centers in Marshall, Montevideo and Worthington.

For over 30 years, the PIC has helped build a skilled and qualified workforce. Our youth and young adult division works with employers and educators to assist students with career exploration, career preparation, and skills training that align with the needs of local employers. This is accomplished through a series of work-based learning activities, career focused events and workplace experiences. Providing students with opportunities to experience "real-life" workplaces and employees outside of the classroom is important for their career preparation and for building a pipeline of future Southwest Minnesota skilled workers.