

The Situation

South Dakota faces a critical shortage of skilled workforce. The lack of a skilled workforce not only effects business and industry but also communities and their ability to grow and prosper. Communities that believe status quo is satisfactory, may find themselves in an unwanted situation and may need to look closely at what attracts new people or drives the current population to stay. Communities that are thriving and emerging look more like a Fortune 500 company by branding and promoting their assets so people desire to work, live, shop, play, and retire there. Many are realizing that it's not just about the job, but the "community" and all that goes with it!

Why do communities struggle with workforce issues?

- Inability to "up-skill" community members or provide upward mobility/career paths for current employees.
- Lack of a "draw" to the community or ability to compete with surrounding communities.
- Image (good, bad or none).
- Absence of social climate/positive buzz.
- Lack of partnerships with key entities.
- Lack of hands-on, career oriented courses at the high school level to expose students to these occupations.
- The mass exit of the Baby Boomers from the workforce.
- The increasing technical sophistication of many job sectors.
- Void of technology and technology infrastructure.

Lake Area Tech may not be able to help in all of these areas but we can help with workforce training needs by offering programs that produce the skilled graduates your community needs. Whether in-person, online, prior learning, or prior work credit, dual credit or concurrent credit, Lake Area Tech can help you build your workforce. Lake Area Tech wants to be your partner and give your community an opportunity to grow!



The Solution

What can your community do to grow and create opportunity?

1. Learn Where You Earn. Promote career opportunities within your community. Encourage local companies to allow employees to up-skill through Lake Area Tech's on-line hybrid options to gain the skill sets your community needs. Provide the resources needed such as a computer, high-speed internet, or a place to study.

2. "Scholarship" Community Members with a plan and commitment to stay or return after receiving their training. Offer scholarships to current or future employees to attend programs at Lake Area Tech. Link scholarship acceptance to employment in your community during the summers, internships, and upon completion of the degree. Good resources would be Build Dakota/Stretch the Million/Workforce Scholarships.

3. Grow Your Own. If there is opportunity, young people desire to live and work close to home. Promote employment opportunities in your community by developing relationships with high school students, parents, and educators. Include your community's assets in your marketing. Your business social environment, communities amenities and quality of life are key to employment choices. Provide a pathway for growth...it shows you value your employees and are invested in them as well as the community.

4. Forward Momentum!

- BRAND your community.
- Develop a digital footprint.
- Have a plan in place to help people grow both personally and professionally so they don't leave.
- Develop partnerships with your community businesses and industry.
- Market your assets and show off your "wow" factors.
- Welcome new and potential community members and show them how your community is "different".
- Communicate with your community members.
- Speak to grade school/high school classes about your community employment opportunities.
- Conduct business tours and open houses.
- Participate in Lake Area Tech job/career fairs.
- Hire Lake Area Tech students for part-time/summer employment or an internship.
- Scholarship a student in exchange for employment after graduation.
- Actively serve on Lake Area Tech Advisory Boards.
- Consider joining the Business Partner Program or Build Dakota Scholarship Stretch the Million through the Lake Area Tech Foundation.
- Partner with Lake Area Tech on grant requests and implementation.
- Engage with South Dakota programs such as Dakota Roots, SD WINS, Build Dakota, etc.

5. Education IS Economic Development

- Work closely with Lake Area Tech Corporate Education to develop customized training to up-skill your current employees.
- Allow us to analyze how to best present your business/community image and the skill sets needed!
- Offer incentives for current employees to locate individuals who are willing to pursue selected degrees.
- Consider assisting in Dual Credit or Concurrent Credit opportunities to expose students to Career and Technical Education.
- Invite Lake Area Tech to your Economic Development meetings.