



## Bismarck-Mandan Workforce Study Updated

### BMDA Staff

Russell Staiger  
President/CEO  
[rstaiger@bmda.org](mailto:rstaiger@bmda.org)

Ken Will  
Vice President  
Business Development  
[kwill@bmda.org](mailto:kwill@bmda.org)

Judy Sauter  
Marketing & Research  
Director  
[jsauter@bmda.org](mailto:jsauter@bmda.org)

Eileen Hamman  
Administrative Assistant  
[info@bmda.org](mailto:info@bmda.org)

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Counsel

Bismarck-Mandan's low unemployment rate may give potential businesses the impression that they would be unable to find employees to hire if they moved to the community. A new survey released by the BMDA counters that misconception.

"Bismarck-Mandan has one of the best workforces in the country," says Russ Staiger, BMDA president, "and we want to make sure site selectors and business developers know about it."

According to the survey results, 32% of the adult population could be encouraged to work for a different or new employer. The most common reason to move into a new position is wages. Other reasons include career advancement, benefits, and a better fit for skills and abilities.

"We deal with companies worldwide, and we need to have documentation that even though our unemployment is low we have an available workforce in the area, due to underemployment," continued Staiger.

Also included in the surveys' findings are:

- The area's employees are well-educated:
  - 89.7% of the survey respondents had achieved their high school diploma (or equivalent).
  - 33.6% of the survey respondents had at least a 4-year college degree.
  - Employers rank 42% of applicants as having excellent or above the midpoints problem-solving skills.
  - Employers reported no shortage of applicants with good teamwork skills.

**31.5% of the Bismarck-Mandan area workforce has undergone some training in the last three years.**

- Employees are willing to learn new skills and continue their education:
  - 31.5% have undergone some training in the last three years.
  - Seven of ten potential job seekers would be willing to be trained in computer technology; and almost four in ten would be willing to be trained in manufacturing techniques.

## Workforce Study continued . . .

- The greater Bismarck-Mandan area's employees are reliable workers:
  - 70.5% of employers reported having less than 10% turnover.
  - 85.2 % of employers reported that daily absenteeism is below 6%.
  - 97.2% of employers report five days or less lost due to labor disputes during the last calendar year.
  - The average length of employment at the current job is 8 years 2 months.
  - The average years of experience in management was 9 years 9 months.

A business questionnaire was mailed to 656 firms during the months of April and May 2003. Of those still in business (634), 51.6% responded in a way that allowed for analysis. The data input and analysis was completed by the Labor Market Information Center at Job Service North Dakota. A telephone survey was conducted of adults in the Bismarck-Mandan labor market area. The study included ten North Dakota counties: all of Burleigh, Morton, and Oliver Counties, and selected areas of McLean, Mercer, Grant, Sioux, Emmons, Kidder, and Sheridan Counties. The study sample size provides accuracy at plus or minus 2.8 percent with a 95 percent confidence level.

The complete study executive summary can be found on the BMDA website at <http://www.bmda.org/Workforce/index.htm>.

## BMDA at Trade Shows

**September 9-10, 2003:** Minnesota Plant Engineering & Facilities Mgmt., Booth #129.

**October 1-2, 2003:** AmCon, Booth #240

## Bismarck-Mandan MSA on Mayor's Challenge list

The Bismarck MSA was ranked #29 nationwide in *Expansion Management's* "Mayor's Challenge." This study, the first of its type done by the magazine, takes a combined look at six major studies done during the course of the year.

The six areas are: education quotient, health quotient, quality of life quotient, logistics quotient, high-value labor market quotient, and legislative quotient. A total of 326 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) are included in each study.

One of the reasons for these types of studies is summed up in the *Expansion Management* article: "Whether that facility will be a distribution center, manufacturing facility, call center or back office operation, or even a corporate or regional headquarters, all of these factors will be important to one degree or another."

Overall, the Midwest dominated this first annual Mayor's Challenge, with seven of the top ten finishers being Midwestern cities. North Dakota's MSAs fared well, with Fargo-Moorhead placing eighth on the list and Grand Forks showing at 25<sup>th</sup>.

*(Expansion Management, July 2003)*

## Bismarck-Mandan joins IEDC / Forbes partnership

Do you subscribe to Forbes magazine? If so, you may have noticed the Bismarck-Mandan Development Association's name and logo listed as a "relocation hot spot" and a sponsor of the IEDC Business Relocation Guide. The BMDA website also has a link on the Forbes website. Check it out at [www.forbes.com/idec](http://www.forbes.com/idec).

## **Grizella Corporation Relocates to Hebron**

Following an initial contact from Mr. Jerry Chase, a member of the Hebron EDC, the BMDA started a dialogue with Mr. Mark Draeb of Denver about the prospect of moving his relatively new software company to Hebron. Mark and his brother, Jon, were originally from Hebron and had been looking for years for an opportunity to return to the community.

The company's name is Grizella and its principal software product "PostEverywhere," at this time is a program that helps both shippers and haulers to essentially find each other. The intent is help the shippers find truckers looking for loads to match their equipment and intended destinations. With one entry of key data, the software allows either party to enter the freight they need shipped or the truckers their equipment and preferred destination. The software then searches all of the other existing shipper/trucker software programs to bring the two parties together. Once a match is found, the PostEverywhere program then cancels itself. This is all done for a flat fee of \$19.95 per month.

The BMDA, working with Mark Draeb, identified a number of equity investors to help assemble an initial equity fund that would generate the funds necessary to assist Grizella make the relocation from Denver to Hebron. Included in the funding package were the following: Lewis & Clark RDC, ND State Development Fund, City of Hebron, Hebron EDC, Mandan Growth Fund, Bismarck Vision Fund, Morton County Development Fund, Stark County Development Corp., MDU, and Mor-Gran-Sou.

The relocation of the company should be completed by mid-September. Initial employment will be three persons, but grow to over 20 in the next 18-24 months. These will be high quality jobs including software programmers, marketing specialists, graphic

design, UNIX administrator, quality assurance, call center support services, and administrative services. The salaries, wages, and benefits will be exceptional for the area, and will provide new economic strength to Hebron and the surrounding area.

The BMDA wishes to thank all of the equity investors in this project. They were critical to the success of this project.

The BMDA also wants to thank Mark and Jon Draeb for their willingness to bring this high tech project back to their home town. Good luck in your efforts!

## **Bismarck-Mandan Ambassador Program kick-off**

"Bismarck-Mandan has so much to offer new and expanding businesses," said Warford. "We hope the ambassadors program will help our efforts to effectively position ourselves to prospective businesses and convince them we have what they need to grow and prosper," says Bismarck Mayor John Warford. "I believe the program has a lot to offer for the future of the Bismarck-Mandan community."

Warford kicked off the ambassador program at a well-attended forum in late June. Attendees included Mandan Mayor Ken LaMont, commissioners from both Mandan and Bismarck and Burleigh and Morton Counties, Bismarck and Mandan city department heads, business leaders in the community, BMDA and Chamber of Commerce members, and faculty and staff from Bismarck State College and the University of Mary.

The goal of the program is two-fold: 1) to develop and nurture state and community pride and to ask our citizens to help generate business leads that, in the end, will bring career opportunities to our state; 2) to develop contacts and relationships with North Dakota natives who hold influential positions around the country and are willing to promote business expansion opportunities in Bismarck-Mandan.

## Bismarck-Mandan Development Association Members

Thank you to the following businesses and individuals who have joined or renewed their membership with the Bismarck-Mandan Development Association June, July, and August 2003.

- Aaction Movers
- Applied Business Experience, LLC
- Applied Engineering, Inc.
- Barlow's Econo Foods
- Basin Electric
- Bismarck Tire Center
- Bismarck Tribune
- Bismarck-Mandan Board of Realtors
- Bismarck Ramkota Hotel
- Bismarck State College
- Border States Electric Inc.
- Brady, Martz & Associates P.C.
- Bucklin, Klemin & McBride, P.C.
- Capital Trophy
- Century 21 Morrison Realty
- Cloverdale Foods Company
- Coca Cola Bottling Co. Midwest Inc.
- Dakota Appraisal & Consulting, Ltd.
- Dakota Awards
- Dakota Gasification Company
- Dakota Pharmacy
- Dennis F. Meyer, Inc.
- Ditch Witch of North Dakota
- Document Solutions
- Eastgate Funeral Service
- First Southwest Bank - Bismarck
- First Southwest Bank - Mandan
- Fleck Interstate Investments
- GFG Food Service
- Heartview Foundation
- Hedahls Inc.
- Heyer & Loos Engineering
- Jobbers Moving & Storage Company
- Kirkwood Bank & Trust Company
- Knife River Corporation
- LaFarge Dakota, Inc.
- M & W Beef Packers, Inc.
- MedCenter One-Mandan

- Mid Dakota Clinic
- Midwest Business Systems
- Midwest Motor Express, Inc.
- Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Ctr.
- Missouri Slope Areawide United Way
- Montana Dakota Utilities Company
- ND Community Foundation
- Northwest Contracting, Inc.
- Prairie Knights Casino & Lodge
- Rausch Furniture Company
- Security First Bank of North Dakota
- Swenson Hagen & Co., P.C.
- Sykes Enterprises
- Tschider & Smith Law Office
- Twin City Implement
- Ulteig Engineers, Inc.
- United Building Centers
- Waste Management of ND
- Woodmansee's Office Supply

If you would like to learn more about becoming a member of the Bismarck-Mandan Development Association, call 701-222-5530 or e-mail [info@bmda.org](mailto:info@bmda.org).

### BMDA office makes a move

The BMDA office moved to a new location, but staff members didn't have far to travel. The office remains on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Wells Fargo Bank Building at 400 East Broadway Ave.; it's just on the other side of the building. The new space provides a larger conference room and more individual office spaces for BMDA's growing staff.

### DID YOU KNOW IN BISMARCK-MANDAN . . .

. . . . 85.2 % of employers reported that daily absenteeism is below 6%?

Bismarck-Mandan Available  
Labor and Business Needs  
Executive Summary, July 2003