



Wright County
Economic Development Partnership

Partnering for Opportunities

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



LETTER FROM THE 2023 CHAIR, Scott Johnson, Xcel Energy



As we welcome 2024 and the promise it brings for Wright County, I want to take a moment to look back at the Partnership's accomplishments over the past year and what it means for the organization and its partners moving forward. As an organization we interacted with 28 potential business start-ups, 4 Wright County Award Winners, 8 Business Retention and Expansion visits and dozens of additional businesses involved in MN Manufacturing Month, Annual Holiday Social, Chamber of Commerce events and more. We are very grateful to have gained 13 new private sector business partners in 2023! Setting the WCEDP up for success in the future is the best way to summarize the organization's accomplishments over the past year.

The WCEDP focuses on the objectives and priorities that will guide both immediate and long-term actions. We will continue to focus the actions of the Partnership around business retention and expansion, entrepreneurship, workforce development, promotion, marketing, and building economic development capacity across the County.

The Workforce Pathways Committee has raised the importance of informing Middle and High School students in 9 regional school districts about in-demand careers, existing businesses in the county and educational pathways to promote a successful quality of life. We have continued to utilize the ZoomTour Tool that features available sites, employers, and career opportunities. These tours can be found on our Workforce Pathways Wheel and on the newly refreshed website.

Working together, the WCEDP is here to serve all businesses, residents, and communities in Wright County. While the organization has a key leadership role in promoting the growth of business and employment, it's through the actions of all our Partners that we best accomplish this mission.

We appreciate the continued support and leadership of the County Board to recognize economic development as an important part of making Wright County a great place to live, work, and conduct business.

Lastly, it's been a pleasure to serve the organization and the County in the role of Chairperson for the past 2 years and I look forward to working alongside Patrick Baumgard as the 2024-2025 Chairperson. The strength of the Partnership is truly in the people that contribute so much to the betterment of our County and the team. We are blessed to have an excellent staff – Jolene and Missy are outstanding professionals and it's been a pleasure to be working with a dedicated and talented Board of Directors.

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hats off to our Board of Directors for always pushing forward and finding solutions instead of excuses.



Scott Johnson,
Chair
Xcel Energy



Patrick Baumgard,
Vice Chair
Sentry Bank



Randy Voeller,
Sec./Treasurer
CorTrust Bank



Brian Koslofsky,
Past Chair
Wright Tech Center



Darek Vetsch
Wright County
Commissioner



Phil Kern,
EDA Rep.
City of Delano



Gene Janikula
Woodland
Township



Tim Zipoy
Central MN Jobs &
Training Services



Marc Weigle
City of
St. Michael



Mike Melton
Community Asset
Development
Group,
Intent Built



Kelly Hinnenkamp
City of
Annandale



Sheila Zachman
Commercial Realty
Solutions



Rob Stark
Edward Jones



Chris Barta
Franklin Outdoor
Advertising



Annette Kuyper
Wright Hennepin,
CEA

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR, Jolene Foss, Executive Director



Hello Friends of the Wright County Economic Development Partnership!

Thank you so much for recognizing the vast importance of regional economic development in Wright County! My great gratitude to the WCEDP 15-member volunteer Board of Directors and to all the numerous individuals that contribute your time and energy to this purpose.

The result of regional economic development is higher levels of education, greater employment opportunities, and higher income levels. Communities are strengthened with economic development because increasing numbers of jobs improve the quality of life. Through economic growth, means are provided to boost public goods and services that citizens need like roads and bridges, healthcare, education, social protection like law enforcement and basic public services.

2024 will be a year that we will continue to have high quality relationships with residents, networks of business owners and professionals, and talented entrepreneurs who make this organization fulfilling.

This year we continued the (16 Cities in Wright County) Administrators and Economic Development Staff meetings to share important information about successes and challenges faced, opportunities available and future projections. We also are happy to have continued to join with the 10 Chambers of Commerce in Wright County for the same mission of limiting the separation of resources, to increase collaboration and a unified vision for healthy business and labor growth.

We have ongoing objectives to promote the county, each city, and every business. We are actively involved in supporting important positive government decisions regarding funds to improve childcare, housing, workforce development, businesses opportunities to expand and relocate here and more.

The CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) program is exceeding expectations in its 9th year serving 8 member School Districts and helping to foster an atmosphere of entrepreneurialism in Wright County. The Workforce Pathways Initiative is still going strong as we partner with Central MN Jobs and Training Services and continue to identify and assist Wright County businesses with their workforce needs. This committee has expanded to involve informational presentations to the future job seekers grades 7th-12th at the regional school districts regarding existing businesses and in-demand careers. And ongoing support of the Wright Technical Center and the specialized education provided is paramount to the health of the County.

Capacity Building Seminars have provided information on important topics throughout the year such as Business Succession and Transition with the University of MN, Workforce Trends with MN DEED and CMJTS, Wright County Economy with SCSU Dean of School of Public Affairs King Banaian and Launch MN's Welcoming Wednesdays with organizations like USDA Rural Development, Women Venture, SCORE Mentorship, and MN Business Finance Corporation.

Thank you to our significant Partners, essential Board Members, critical City Leaders, valued County Commissioners, and key Executive Assistant/Marketing Coordinator Missy Meidinger for the confidence you have continued to show in this organization.

To express appreciation,

Jolene Foss

Jolene Foss

VALUE AND SUPPORT STATEMENT: WHAT IS IT THAT THE PARTNERSHIP DOES?

Wright County communities and businesses are prepared for growth!

We invite you to explore the opportunity of working together with us to further our impact!

Mission Statement

To support a healthy and diverse environment for businesses and residents that provides employment opportunities and enhances the overall economic vitality of Wright County

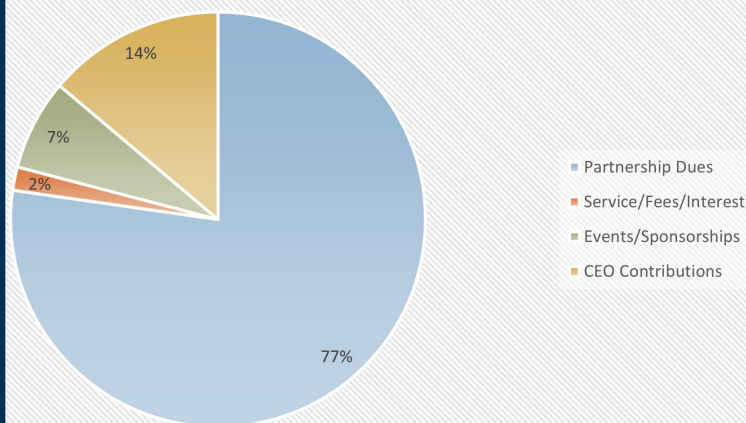
WCEDP fulfills its mission by providing technical and financial assistance to businesses in Wright County and those looking to locate in Wright County. The Partnership also provides economic development assistance to the 16 communities. WCEDP is a non-profit corporation financially supported by local community governments, the county, and area businesses dedicated to supporting and creating a sustainable economic profile in Wright County. We maintain a powerful and resourceful website at www.wrightpartnership.org.

We fulfill our mission working alongside our partners through these key area:

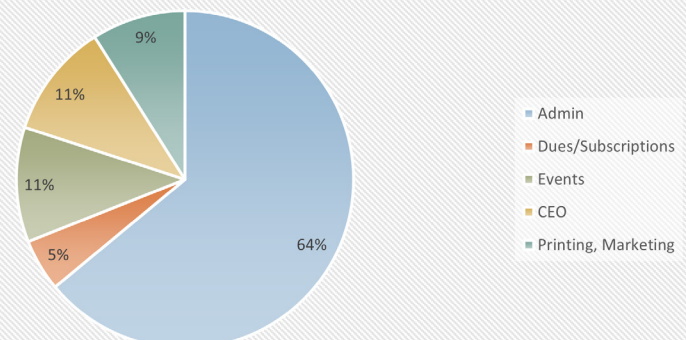
- Business Development
- Site Selection and Promotion
- Marketing the County
- Financial Packaging (Administer Wright County Enterprise Loan Fund)
- Liaison with Regional & State Organizations
- Business Consulting (In conjunction with the Small Business Development Center - SBDC)
- Capacity Building Seminars
- Workforce Pathways
- CEO
- Direct Networking

2023 Financial Summary

2023 WCEDP Revenues and Support



2023 WCEDP Expenditures



The certified public accounting firm Schlenner Wenner & Co. prepares taxes each year.

ANNUAL EVENTS & FUNDRAISERS



2023 Outstanding Citizen
of Wright County
Bill Hanson



2023 Outstanding Partner
CorTrust Bank



2023 Start-Up Entrepreneur
Forget Me Not Cafe

ANNUAL MEETING: This event is held annually in January. This is a free event, we treat our members to breakfast along with a great speaker. During the event we nominate our slate of officers for the Board of Directors for the upcoming year. We take the time to showcase our Member Investors and to remember the past year's events, we honor our Award Recipients in the following categories:

Outstanding Start-up Entrepreneur of the Year, High Economic Vitality Business of the Year, Outstanding Member Investor of the Year and Outstanding Citizen of the Year.



2023 High Vitality Business
Rachel Contracting

ANNUAL GOLF EVENT: 2023 was the 21st Annual WCEDP Golf Event. We had our largest turnout and it was a beautiful day! Thank you to our Premier Sponsor Ayars & Ayars, our volunteers, golfers & the golf committee for making 2023's event another success!

We are looking for this year's premier sponsor, interested? Contact Missy Today



HOLIDAY SOCIAL: We enjoyed being able to continue with our Holiday Social. We enjoyed another full house with many more new faces.

Save the date for December 12th, 2024 at the St. Michael Cinema for this great Annual event partnered with CRS.

Capacity Building Seminars: In 2023 we continued to host capacity building seminars including topics about Wright County Employment Trends and Workforce Tools in Action & Business Financing Available in Wright County.

We enjoyed having speakers like Dr. King Banaian Dean of the School of Public Affairs at St. Cloud State University, Labor Analyst Luke Greiner from MN DEED, State Director Colleen Landkamer from USDA Rural Development, and more.



THANK YOU TO OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES



MAPLE LAKE



THANK YOU TO OUR LOCAL CHAMBERS



COLLABORATING PARTNERS



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS CONTINUED



Rademacher Family Limited Partnership

Valued **PARTNER** benefits of Wright County Economic Development Partnership



Providing site promotion, marketing and location availability.

Access to resources including business development, entrepreneur support and financial packaging.

Retaining valuable existing workforce talent and employers.

Technical expertise for business expansions and relocations.

Networking and marketing Wright County to build a healthy economy.

Events offering valuable information on relevant topics.

Recruiting and attracting new opportunities for a higher quality of life.

As a Partner of WCEDP you will be featured online in the Partner Directory with a direct link from our website to yours!

For more information on becoming a Partner visit our website www.wrightpartnership.org or contact our office at 763-496-5632 today!

PARTNER NEWS



BUFFALO HOSPITAL

2023
Practice Greenhealth
ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Practice Greenhealth
SYSTEM FOR CHANGE AWARD

Buffalo Hospital has earned a Greenhealth Partner for Change Award from Practice Greenhealth.

Buffalo Hospital has earned a Greenhealth Partner for Change Award from Practice Greenhealth.




Chamber Director Linda Althoff receives the "Rookie of the Year" award from Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Executives Chair Kristy Barse.



Executive Director Jolene Foss was named Economic Developer of the Year By EDAM



WRIGHT TECHNICAL CENTER
Wright Technical Center Celebrated 50 Years of Career & Technical Education!




International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49 group partnered with WTC to create "Operating Engineers Pathway" that is now offered at the WTC.



Thank you for voting us...
Best Commercial Cleaners & Best House Cleaning Business!

SERVPRO OF WRIGHT COUNTY
24-HOUR SERVICES: 763-295-1161
SERVPROWRIGHTCOUNTY.COM
@SERVPROTEAMHICKMAN



In 2023 the Workforce Pathways Committee updated the "Workforce Pathways Wheel"



WCEDP, SBDC & Partner Bankwest worked together to assist new business in Rockford called, Marisela V. Nelson Interpreting LLC.




Larson Building broke ground on a new office expansion in downtown Buffalo



Over 18 Amateur- #1 Photo



Over 18 Professional- #1 Photo



Under 18 - #1 Photo



I-94 Chamber Welcomed New President Mindy Smith

This is only a few of the great things happening with our Partners!
Don't forget to send your news, events, and announcements to us throughout the year!

WRIGHT TECH CEO:

CEO – THE CEO CLASS TEACHES LEADERSHIP. ENCOURAGEMENT. CREATIVITY.

WCEDP continues to be a guiding force in the operation of the Wright Tech CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) class which began its *ninth* year in September with 22 students and runs throughout the school year. This is our largest class yet. Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare our high school youth, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. The CEO program is much more than a textbook course. Rather, students are immersed in real life learning experiences with the opportunity to take risks, manage the results, and learn from the outcomes. Business and community support is growing each year as they meet the kids and see the immeasurable benefits for Wright County.

Students 2023-2024



2023-2024 Class



Visit with Jolene Foss from WCEDP



Class visit to J&J Athletics



Class visit at Tree Of Life Wellness Center

THANK YOU TO OUR INVESTORS!

- Alexander Exteriors
- B&D Plumbing, Heating & A/C Inc.
- Bankwest
- Bauer Design Build
- Bolton & Menk, Inc.
- Calbrandt
- Catalyst Supply
- Community Development Bank
- CorTrust Bank
- Die Technology / Nanotech Precision
- J & B Group
- Kid's Haven
- Lake Central Bank
- Levrg LLC (Radio - Active)
- Marksman Metal Co
- MBFC
- Modern & Neighborly Properties LLC
- North Risk Partners
- North Star Real Estate - Edina Realty
- Old National Bank formerly Klein Bank
- Paumen Computers
- Pellco Machine
- Pfeifer Property Management
- Thomes Insurance Agency Inc
- Tuffy's
- Ultra Machining Company
- Vantage Point Partners
- Whirltronics
- Wright Hennepin Electric
- Wright Technical Center
- Xcel Energy

THANK YOU MENTORS & SPEAKERS!

WRIGHT TECH CEO®

WHAT IS CEO?

Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) is a new class from the Wright Technical Center for students who are interested in starting their own business someday.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS:

- Students practice and develop people skills in a variety of business settings.
- Lessons aren't taught by teachers, but by local entrepreneurs who share their business story and give students advice for starting their own business.
- Students tour local companies twice a week where they can see firsthand what goes into running a business.
- Every student in the class writes a business plan and starts their own business with help from a local business mentor.

WRIGHT TECH MEMBER DISTRICTS

The Wright Tech CEO program services eight member school districts in both Wright and Sherburne Counties.

The eight local districts include:

Annandale



Buffalo



Delano



Howard Lake
• Waverly • Winsted



Maple Lake



Monticello



St. Michael-
Albertville



WE NEED YOUR HELP

■ BE AN INVESTOR:

CEO is completely funded by investors who want to give students this opportunity. Investors in CEO contribute \$1000/year for three years. We seek to involve as many individuals, businesses and organizations as possible to ensure that students are exposed to a wide variety of opportunities and experiences. Our investors not only provide funding, but also provide the core network of resources.

■ BE A SPONSOR:

Business or organizations that wish to financially support CEO at a smaller level can choose to become a sponsor.

■ BE A MENTOR:

Investors, speakers or supporters that wish to be involved on a more personal level can sign up to be a mentor. Each student will be paired with at least one mentor. The mentor can provide advice and insight as needed as well as serve as a gateway to the expertise of the local business community.

■ HOST THE CEO CLASS:

The CEO class meets at a different business every quarter on days when they are not touring. If you have a meeting place that can hold up to 20 students, let us know. It needs to be available most weekdays from 7:30-9:00AM and have wireless internet.

■ HOST A CLASS TOUR OR BE A GUEST SPEAKER:

Business tours and guest speakers are core to the success of this class. They provide the knowledge our students need to start and run a successful business. In addition, these business leaders play the critical role of energizing and inspiring our students!

WHAT DO STUDENTS THINK?

CEO students were given an anonymous survey about the class:

100% of students see more opportunity in their community because of the CEO class.

100%

FACILITATOR



Mark Lee

Mark was born into an entrepreneurial family and saw firsthand the ups and downs of owning a business. When he started teaching after a career in the Ag Industry, he wanted all students to have that exposure. CEO is making that happen!

He had this to say about CEO: I believe in the phrase "it takes a village to raise a child." It's powerful when local entrepreneurs are sitting down with students and talking to them not only about business, but also the struggles of life, the rewards of putting yourself out there and the need to work your tail off day-after-day-after-day if you really want to succeed. Please visit our online calendar at WrightTechCEO.com and join us someday to see for yourself what an impact this class is having on students.

When asked, 100% of the students would "recommend" or "highly recommend" the class.

MEMBER INVESTOR INFORMATION

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NEW PARTNER INVESTORS WELCOME! CONTACT US:

Jolene Foss, Executive Director – 763-496-5593 – jolenef@wrightpartnership.org
Missy Meidinger, Executive Assistant – 763-496-5632 – missym@wrightpartnership.org
www.wrightpartnership.org