New Governance for a New Rural Economy

(Abridged version: 10/15/04)

RCCA Annual Conference

Myrtle Beach, SC

October 3-5, 2004

Joe Sertich, Ed.D., President

Northeast Minnesota Higher Education District
Minnesota’s “Arrowhead” Region:

True North

Natural Resource-Based Economy for 100 Years

The “Three Ts”

Taconite
Tourism
Timber
Mining Industry Changes Affect the Region

Early 1980s: 50% of jobs - 60% of regional income
Today: 10% of jobs - 10% of regional income

An economic decline led to job losses, business closures, an exodus of young people who could no longer count on finding a job in the region.
Trustees Create Northeast Minnesota Higher Education District Effective October 1, 1999

Regional Legislative Delegation

Five colleges in six towns
500 – 600 college employees
8,000 to 10,000 learners
(5,000 FYE’s)
13,000 square miles
130,000 residents
Mission: to provide quality higher education to the communities
“Economic development works best when our efforts are coordinated.”

Richard Anderson
I Point, Inc.
Marquette, MI

Community Vitality
Consequence of Challenges

- Turn problems into progress
- Allow our deep traditions to emerge
- Get smart about how our economy is making itself up as we go along

and

- Get in behind it quickly to support it

Motivation = motive for action
NORTHEAST MINNESOTA HIGHER EDUCATION DISTRICT PLAN

Five Principles:

1) Institutional Autonomy
2) Student and Community Access
3) Institutional Cooperation
4) Institutional Stability

5) *Promote effective relationships with the community including advocacy and service to business and industry and connections to regional and statewide economic development initiatives*
True North is:

A regional, economic, community, education and workforce strategy.

True North is:

A regional branded term for public, private and higher education institutions.
True North embraces five components of healthy communities:

- Government
- Health & Social Services
- Education & Training
- Community Infrastructure
- The Economy
The Next Step: Identify northeastern Minnesota’s Assets and…

Move toward the “Fourth T”

Technology
True North: New Perspectives

Making Northeast Minnesota A Viable Place to Live, Learn, Work & Grow.
Entrepreneurs innovate and companies become engines of innovation

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota in Aurora
Visionary leaders with clear economic development strategies:

- Preserve Local Autonomy
- Utilize place-based capacity
  - Build trust
- Generate investments
- Relate to others in new ways
- Facilitate inclusive collaborations
Triangulating regional planning to allow government to highlight quality of life as well as tax forgiveness
Never underestimate the power of partnerships
Manning, et al (2004) says collaboration led by college leaders with their communities and better focused missions will result in survival for rural regions.
Myth Makers and Agents of Change:

How Did the Creation of True North change the Region?

TechNorth Prep Center became the flagship enterprise for True North

As leaders, our charge is to GET THE WORD OUT

Be visible
Network
Tell your story to as many people as you can
Share the success

The TPC Network was embraced by community colleges as an impetus for economic growth. Each True North college community developed a TPC site.
RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE ALLIANCE

POLICY

America’s rural community colleges offer unique “place-based” capacity to engage rural people and institutions in the process of building and sustaining viable places to live, learn, work and grow. Our goal is to position and fund rural community colleges as neutral enablers of community development that leads to sustainable regional economies. To that end, rural community colleges must build the ability to support policies across multiple authorization and appropriation frameworks. Rural community colleges offer a yet-to-be realized community-centered platform to focus on policies to more effectively serve rural America.
Sharing the True North Story
Connectivity

- Multi-point multi-channel distribution systems
- Broadband satellite
- Third generation wireless

Abraham (2003)
Build off of existing assets

e-learning at Hibbing Community College

E-learning to “innovation acceleration”
Now is the time for leaders to play forceful roles in community development that leads to economic growth for the rural regions they serve.
QUESTIONS?

For a complete transcript of
“The Arrowhead Region: A Landscape in Transition
Contact Beth Pierce 218-741-9544 pierce@wafishermn.com