

21st Century Workforce Development and Youth Entrepreneurship

Cultivate a new, innovative and highly skilled workforce and entrepreneurship pool by helping strengthen partnerships between the business community, schools, educators, students and parents. Exposing students to an array of entrepreneurship and career opportunities in northeast ND and supporting the 21st Century Workforce Main Street ND pillar.

Grades
3-8

Marketplace for Kids

Grades
3-6

Youth Entrepreneur Camp

Grade
7

Manufacturing Day

Grade
8

Explore NVCTC

Grade
10

Northern Valley Career Expo

Grades
9-12

North Valley Job Shadow Program

Grades
11-12

Cooperative Work Experience

NEW in 2019

- Job shadow program
- Social media video campaign
- ESP Explore Manufacturing events
- Strategic plan development with the Northeast Manufacturing Group, secondary and higher education, students, government, and economic development partners

21st Century Workforce Introduction

Since 2013, we have been evolving our regional economic development focus to ever-include people development. Motivated to create a stream of talented workforce candidates and stabilize a rural population, we have focused on our students. These efforts have been guided and supported by several economic development strategic plans, educational partners/goals, manufacturers, and public input.

The program was initiated to provide early stage exposure to entrepreneurialism and regional businesses and has evolved to include higher impact efforts to create job shadow and internship programs that directly link our students to career opportunities.

We are continually grateful for all the area partners in these efforts. North Valley Career and Technology Center (NVCTC), Pembina and Walsh County JDAs, 23 school districts, and more than 75 regional businesses, including more than 20 manufacturers, have aligned and eagerly joined in the process.

Dawn Mandt, Executive Director



Over the past several years we have been working on creating, organizing, formalizing, and sustaining our career exploration opportunities for our young people. Along with the help from our partners, we are excited to have a robust lineup for our students to experience as they navigate through their school experience.

This initiative is organized to expose students to career exploration opportunities throughout our region. Through this exposure, students are typically more excited for their future, which improves attitudes and opens doors, which ultimately improves academic performance. By involving students in career exploration, they are more likely to plan their future education, both high school courses and post-secondary options, to accommodate their pathway to success.

Through strong partnerships, we are excited to continue providing students with these opportunities.

Michael Hanson, Director



Marketplace for Kids (Grades 3-8)

Marketplace for Kids exposes students in grades three through eight to a broad range of careers. Throughout the day, students attend five, 25-minute classes led by area business owners and community service providers. Sample classes include: Think Like an Architect, Write & Illustrate Your Own Book, Careers in Manufacturing, and Unmanned Aircraft Systems. The event rotates annually between Cavalier and Grafton and was started in 2014. In 2019, more than 700 people participated in the 6th annual event which included 51 business projects presented by 4th and 5th grade student entrepreneurs at the Hall of Great Ideas Showcase.



Youth Entrepreneur Camp (Grades 3-6)

Youth Entrepreneur Camp is a five-day summer camp for grades 3-6 held in Grafton. Young entrepreneurs become business owners and learn how to build a successful business. The students develop their own community and currency, run their own town and turn their great ideas into money making businesses. They also learn how to shoot commercials using iPads. The camp was started in 2014 and has been sustained by summer school programs.



Manufacturing Day (Grade 7)

The Pembina County JDA, Walsh County JDA and NVCTC joined forces to plan the first Youth Manufacturing Day (MFG DAY) event held in 2016 as part of a national initiative.

Manufacturing is one of the leading employers in both counties, providing more than 1,200 jobs. MFG DAY was implemented with the goal of helping change the perception of the manufacturing industry and inspire next-generation workers to pursue a career in modern manufacturing, while also retaining workforce in our rural communities.

MFG DAY is held annually in October. Up to 13 schools and more than 200 seventh grade students from Walsh, Pembina and northern Grand Forks Counties visit two manufacturing businesses. The students hear personal stories from young ambassadors who share their modern perspectives on the industry and how they have found great careers in manufacturing. Tours of the manufacturing facilities are also given.

Past and present participating manufacturing businesses from Walsh and Pembina Counties include American Crystal Sugar (Drayton), Bordertown Retail Systems (Neché), CVR Industries (Neché), Food First (Walhalla), Harriston Industries (Minto), Safe-T-Pull (Park River), Marvin Windows and Doors (Grafton), Midwest Fabrication (Grafton), Morgan Printing (Grafton), Motor Coach Industries (Pembina), Rimco (Neché) and Woodside Industries (Cavalier).



CVR Industries, Neche



Safe-T-Pull, Park River



Explore NVCTC (Grade 8)

Explore NVCTC was initiated in 2015 by the Red River Valley Education Cooperative (RRVEC) and NVCTC. The Explore event exposes 8th grade students to career and technology courses and educates them about the direct application and skill requirements for starting and growing a business. A motivational speaker (like Brooks Harper) kicks off the day followed by four, 25-minute breakout sessions led by NVCTC staff and area business leaders.



Northern Valley Career Expo (Grade 10)

The Northern Valley Career Expo is held annually in October. More than 1,700 10th grade students from around the Northern Red River Valley (northwest Minnesota and northeast North Dakota) attend this one-day event at the Alerus in Grand Forks. The main objective is to expose students to regional employment opportunities, including educational and training paths to the high-wage, in-demand careers in our area. In addition to more than 20 occupational breakout sessions, this event provides a venue for regional employers/educational providers to interact directly with students by showcasing career opportunities at their business. Businesses feature hands-on exhibits and connect with students. Students explore the exhibits and visit with employers and educational/training institutions that attend.

This event was started in 2012 and is organized by the Grand Forks Region EDC, North Dakota Job Service, University of North Dakota and Grand Forks Public Schools.





North Valley Job Shadow Program (Grades 9-12)

The job shadow program launched in fall 2019 through a partnership between NVCTC and the Red River Regional Council. Every NVCTC student in grades 9-12 (nearly 200) will participate in at least one half-day job shadow in the program area in which he/she is enrolled. To prepare for the job shadow, students watched a video on job shadowing, received a job shadow handbook and took a survey to identify what they are interested in and where they would like to job shadow. The students were then lined up with a local business, whom they are required to call to schedule their four-hour job shadow. Students are encouraged to take a selfie with their job shadow host to be used in a Facebook post. Upon completion of the job shadow, the student completes a post-survey and gives a brief presentation to their class. A Facebook post includes the post-survey information and selfie serves as a thank you to the local business.



There are more than 75 local businesses signed up as job shadow hosts and more continue to be added.

Cooperative Work Experience (Grades 11-12)

NVCTC in Grafton offers high school students cooperative work experience for credit. Work based learning experience provides real-time career exploration opportunities for students.

Students enrolled in the program must be a junior or senior who have completed courses within the CTE program and need to commit to a minimum of one class period per day. Placements can be one semester or a full year and are arranged by the instructor and NVCTC director.

“Working with the co-op at NVCTC is a great program to be a part of, it allows the students to get first-hand work experience in a real job setting that helps them prepare for a career. The student becomes part of the workforce on a daily basis and they start learning more on the job skills and become a great asset to the company. Working with the students brings joy to veteran employees as they teach and watch them progress as the year goes on.”

- Sunny Guzman, Shop Foreman, Kringstad Ironworks



Northeast Manufacturing Group

The Northeast Manufacturing Group was formed in 2016 as a result of a Business Retention and Expansion Program implemented by the Pembina County JDA. There are more than 1,200 manufacturing jobs in Pembina and Walsh counties and workforce is one of their biggest barriers to expansion. The Northeast Manufacturing group meets quarterly and is comprised of more than 20 manufacturing businesses from the two counties.

The group is in the process of developing a strategic plan with representatives from secondary and higher education, students, government, and economic development. The goal is to support manufacturing growth by better aligning industry and education, recruit talent and address the labor shortage. A second strategic planning session will be held early 2020 to develop actionable next steps.

Some of the manufacturers are also participating in “Explore Manufacturing” events hosted by six area North Valley Extended School Programs. These events take place after school hours and all families and students are invited to attend.



Explore Harriston Industries Event, Minto

- American Crystal Sugar Company
- Arrow Industries Inc
- Bordertown Retail Systems
- CVR Industries USA, Inc.
- Enduraplas
- Hamilton Systems
- Harriston Industries
- Harvest Fuel Inc. (Food First & SweetPro Feeds)
- Case IH (formerly K-Line Agriculture)
- Kerian Machines
- Kringstad Ironworks
- Marvin Windows
- Midway Seed, LLC
- Midwest Fabrication
- Morgan Printing
- Motor Coach Industries
- North Border Enterprises
- Plasticom Inc.
- Remington Seeds
- RIMCO, Inc.
- Safe-T-Pull

2019 Survey Results:

9 Pembina/Walsh Manufacturers & 104 NVCTC Students

- 89% of manufacturers feel that students are not being fully prepared to enter the workforce.
- 78% of students feel that the classes they are taking are preparing them for their career.
- 395 manufacturing employees will need to be replaced over the next five years due to retirement.
- Average manufacturing company annual turnover is 24%.
- 80% of students are excited about the future and 85% are interested in tuition reimbursement or sign on bonus.



Participating School Districts

The schools that participate in each program may vary from year to year.

School District	County	Marketplace for Kids	Youth Entrepreneur Camp	MFG DAY	Explore NVCTC	Job Shadow Program	Cooperative Work Experience
Cavalier	Pembina	•	•	•	•		•
Central Valley	Trails				•		
Drayton	Pembina	•	•	•	•	•	•
Edmore	Ramsey	•		•	•		
Emerado	Grand Forks				•		
Finley-Sharon	Steele				•		
Fordville-Lankin	Walsh	•		•	•	•	
Grafton	Walsh	•	•	•	•	•	•
Hatton	Trails				•		
Hillsboro	Trails				•		
Hope-Page	Steele				•		
Larimore	Grand Forks				•		
Manvel	Grand Forks	•		•	•		
Midway	Grand Forks	•		•	•	•	
Minto	Walsh	•	•	•	•	•	•
North Border - Pembina	Pembina	•	•	•	•		•
North Border - Walhalla	Pembina	•	•	•	•		•
Northwood	Grand Forks				•		
Park River	Walsh	•	•	•	•	•	•
St. Michael's Catholic School	Grand Forks	•					
St. Thomas	Pembina	•	•	•	•	•	•
Thompson	Grand Forks				•		
Valley-Edinburg	Pembina/Walsh	•	•	•	•	•	•

Partner Organizations



North Valley
Career and Technology Center



Committed to the future of rural communities.

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