

Hire Wire+/SW MN Regional Promotion
Southwest MN/Hennepin County
“Come for the jobs, stay for the lifestyle”

This project started in 2014 as a partnership between the two workforce boards of Hennepin-Carver and Southwest – the original concept was to expand the use of the Hire Wire tool that Hennepin-Carver was using with their job seekers, and modify it for employer/business use. Hire Wire provides job seekers with “tools that transform their professional experiences and backgrounds into unique narratives...through the use of HireWire, the job seeker is provided an online platform that hosts their story in a way that no resume or database template can. Images, audio and streaming video coupled with mobile communications draw the employer to the candidate and the value they can bring to the job, i.e., the job seeker’s story.” [<https://stacknology.com/about.php>]

Hire Wire+ is an adaptation of Hire Wire that promotes the same platform to employers in southwest Minnesota. It offers a venue for them to market their businesses and job openings to job seekers from the metro area, as well as provide information on the southwest Minnesota region and lifestyle.

As part of the Hire Wire+ project, the team realized that we needed to promote more than just jobs – we needed to increase awareness of the region as a whole, and the advantages and opportunities offered in the region. Many job seekers are interested in relocating for work, but the challenge for them is a lack of information about greater Minnesota.

In 2015 the team partnered with Pioneer Public Television to produce a 5-minute video highlighting southwest Minnesota. It features interviews with individuals that have relocated to the region and found satisfying employment, and a lifestyle that they love. The team identified a regional slogan for southwest MN: “Come for the Jobs, Stay for the Lifestyle”, and has carried that theme throughout the regional promotion, encouraging others to use it as well.
(<http://www.swmnpic.org/why-southwest-minnesota/>)

That year the project also featured a metro/regional job fair in Windom with the intent of bringing a busload of job seekers from the metro area, but succeeded in only attracting a few metro job seekers. (However, it was successful in attracting local job seekers).

The group learned from that experience, and in May 2016 partnered to bring job seekers from the metro area for a “SW MN Lifestyle and Jobs Tour”. This was an opportunity for job seekers to learn about all that southwest MN has to offer, not only jobs. This tour was preceded and marketed through a social media campaign on the SW MN Careers Facebook page, using short clips from the original video, and quote cards from those interviewed. (<https://www.facebook.com/SWMNCareers/>) It was also highly promoted by Hennepin County through their Job Clubs and career fairs. More than 40 job seekers from the metro area participated in the tour, visiting businesses, area parks, and schools.

Based on that success, the team is planning a second “SW MN Lifestyle and Jobs Tour” coordinated with a Regional Job Fair in Windom in October, and has plans for a third one in the northern part of the SW MN Region in 2017.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

While it is too soon to know whether job seekers from the metro area are re-locating to SW MN; the feedback from the tour participants is very positive. This project is helping to increase awareness of not only job opportunities beyond the metro area, but also showcases the lifestyle and the amenities of southwest Minnesota, which are so important as individuals make career decisions. At least one positive job seeker outcome has resulted from this project – in the start-up phase, a student from Southwest State University did his senior project with the SW MN Workforce Council and Stacknology, to help develop the process for Hire Wire+. He is now working for Stacknology to help businesses in southwest MN develop their Hire Wire+ employer accounts.

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

One of our challenges has always been how to inform others of our region – this project is providing an avenue to do just that. It is increasing awareness of not only the job opportunities and benefits of southwest MN; it has also increased awareness throughout communities and organizations in the region of the services provided by the Workforce Council. The partnership developed with Pioneer Public Television has been critical to helping create quality media to help promote southwest Minnesota. The Come for the Jobs, Stay for the Lifestyle slogan is gaining momentum in the region – below is an example of how one community is using it:



In addition, the Hire Wire+ platform offers businesses the opportunity to market themselves and their open positions to job seekers locally and in the Twin Cities metro. (<http://hired.mn/v/c5hklsqc>)

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

- SW MN Workforce Development Board
- SW MN Private Industry Council
- Hennepin-Carver County Workforce Board
- MN Job Skills Partnership Board
- DEED - Business Service Specialists
- Pioneer Public Television
- Stacknology
- Redwood Area Economic Development
- Southwest State University
- Area businesses and Chambers of Commerce

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

Businesses and Chambers of Commerce have contributed resources for the bus tours; all partners have contributed time and resources to develop and promote the project.

Ideas for replication/lessons learned

This project is an excellent example of a multitude of partners working together toward a common goal. The grant funds from Hennepin-Carver Workforce Board were a critical springboard to getting this project started. Using social media to create regional awareness was a learning process – we also learned the importance of the direct personal communication and follow-up with the job seekers as the bus tours were being organized.