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**City of Duluth - Communications Office**

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**DATE: 1/23/2018**

**SUBJECT: Northeast Minnesota Workforce Solutions Series Tackles Workforce Challenges, Event to be held February 13**

**BY: Pakou Ly, Communications Office**

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## **Northeast Minnesota Workforce Solutions Series Tackles Workforce Challenges**

### **Event to be held February 13**

[Duluth, MN] – State job gains of 8,900 positions in December 2017 are a great boost to the state’s economy. Yet, the questions remain: how do you fill those jobs and with whom? Employers around the state are facing a looming challenge of filling skilled openings as the “Baby Boomers” age out of the workforce, 98,000 jobs statewide remain unfilled and the state is experiencing a low unemployment rate of 3.1% (December 2017). In the Duluth–MSA area it’s 3.7%. There is growing concern statewide; so much so that the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is investing \$160 million toward job training and placement programs for 2018. For these reasons, the City of Duluth, Duluth Workforce Development Board, the Northeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board, and several public and private partners, are teaming up to engage employers in this critical discussion in the first of a three-part series, Northeast Minnesota Workforce Solutions Series, with the kickoff event taking place on Tuesday, February 13, 2018.

The Workforce Solutions Series will open up with remarks from Duluth Mayor Emily Larson and Commissioner Mark Phillips, Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation. Both encourage businesses to get engaged as soon as possible to get ahead of the looming workforce gaps.

“We hear from employers about their challenges and know that we cannot address this issue alone. Whether your business is located in Duluth, Hibbing or Two Harbors, the urgency is mounting. The Northeast Minnesota Workforce Solutions Series will engage employers in this discussion and strategic planning by offering three opportunities for collaboration, innovation sharing, and learning from industry experts on attraction and retention methods,” said Mayor Emily Larson.

“The workforce challenges and opportunities that face northeastern Minnesota stem from a variety of complex issues that will require creative and collaborative solutions,” said Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Commissioner Mark Phillips. “This conference will provide employers with the tools to attract and retain a vibrant, skilled workforce for today and tomorrow.”

The keynote speakers are corporate change expert Gerry Hoeffner, President of Personnel Dynamics Consulting Group, and the State of Minnesota Demographer, Susan Brower. Both will shed light on the issue backed up with data, research and tools. Mr. Hoeffner will address human resource management strategies to help companies thrive and survive and lead the group on an interactive tool that assesses employee turnover rates and associated costs.

Event details available at <http://duluthmn.gov/workforce-development/2018-workforce-solutions-series/> :

Date: February 13, 2018

Time: 1-5 pm (Registration starts at 1 pm and the program commences at 1:30 pm)

Location: Clyde Iron Works Event Center, 2920 West Michigan Street, Duluth

Register online at: [https://z.umn.edu/Workforce\\_Kickoff](https://z.umn.edu/Workforce_Kickoff)

Fee: \$20/person in advance, \$25/person at the door

The event is recommended for business owners, people in the human resource management field, or managers/supervisors seeking solutions and opportunities to network.

The series is sponsored by the City of Duluth Workforce Development Board, Northeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board, University of Minnesota Center for Economic Development, the NORTHSPAN Group, NORTHFORCE, Duluth Seaway Port Authority, and Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation.

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