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Minnesota Aging Workforce Summit

Convened by Lt. Governor Yvonne Prettner Solon
Tuesday, May 14, 2013
University of Minnesota
Continuing Education and Conference Center
St. Paul, Minnesota

Sponsored by
Minnesota Board on Aging
Aging 2030
and
Minnesota Department of
Employment and Economic Development

Executive Summary

Lt. Governor Yvonne Prettner Solon convened a group of experts from across the state on May 14, 2013 to explore the issues surrounding Minnesota's aging workforce, and to discuss the implications for job-seekers, employees, employers and the state's workforce development and training systems. Participants shared their insights on what Minnesota must do to capitalize on its own "demographic dividend," its large number of aging workers.

Along with Minnesota's population, Minnesota's workforce is aging, and the number of younger workers coming into the labor force is at an all-time low. These dramatic changes are happening at a time when major restructuring is also underway within many industries, increasing their use of technology and fueling a skills gap. By 2020, 70 percent of Minnesota jobs will require education beyond high school while today only 40 percent of working age adults in Minnesota have a post-secondary degree. Minnesota's aging workers are the most highly educated workforce in history, but do they have the skills needed going forward? As the economy improves and employment grows, how are the state's aging workers doing?

As noted by Minnesota's Aging 2030, redefining work and retirement is a hot topic in Minnesota and around the world. The leading edge of the boomers—born between 1946 and 1951 and now ages 62 to 67-- are at the age when they are trying to decide if they want to retire, or if they can retire. Many boomers became unemployed through downsizing and layoffs in the Great Recession. Some need to upgrade their skills in order to be more competitive in the job market, but are hesitant to do so, either lacking the confidence in their ability to learn new skills or unable to afford the necessary training. These workers and those still working represent a "demographic dividend" to the state.

Major Themes

There were three major themes that emerged from the keynote, panelists and breakout sessions.

1. First, we need as many aging workers as possible to remain in the workforce, but even with their increasing participation rates, we still face shortages in the workforce in the future.
2. Second, we need to address the barriers that aging workers face when they look for employment and educate all employers about the upcoming labor force changes.
3. Third, bold solutions to the needs of an aging workforce will require collaboration among a diverse set of stakeholders including aging job seekers, employers, employees, unions, educational institutions and government.

Themes from Breakout Sessions

Participants self-selected into one of three breakout sessions where brainstorming and idea generation spurred discussion about aging workers, employers and the public workforce development and training systems. The following summary describes the themes that emerged from the sessions.

1. Aging Job Seekers and the Job Search

There is an inherent ageism in the job search and recruitment process that makes it difficult for displaced older workers to regain employment. This can occur in the development of job descriptions as well as the assessment of applications where experience often is secondary to formal education and is used as an easy quantifiable method for eliminating applicants. At the same time, employers are currently inundated with applications for job openings, making it difficult for them to use traditional methods to filter applicants. There are opportunities for the State to assist employers in identifying skill sets (instead of relying on degrees) needed for specific positions, and to expand the availability of customized packages of assistance that we know are effective to help aging workers find new employment.

2. Employers and the Workplace

Aging workers have lots of fears about employers and the process of trying to find work. As a result, if they have a job, boomers are not leaving the workforce as quickly as had been expected. They are staying on longer in order to increase retirement income and take advantage of health coverage and other benefits prior to retirement. Employers need to provide more flexibility in work arrangements for all workers, in order to maximize the use of a dwindling supply of workers. Some employers do not yet understand the seriousness of the coming labor shortages and the need for comprehensive workforce planning in order to survive in this market.

3. Public Workforce Development and Training Systems

DEED's system of workforce centers is straining to meet the need of the workers coming to them for assistance in their job search. Aging workers often need a more customized package of assistance and resources to provide the supports they need. If job seekers already know the type of assistance they need, they are able to get served more quickly. Aging workers are not familiar with the services that workforce centers provide, especially if they have not been unemployed before. Nonprofit and government organizations are seeing large numbers of older adults who want to volunteer to gain skills in order to increase their chance of gaining employment. Additional advocacy is needed to raise awareness about the aging workforce and the demographic shift in employment. There are opportunities for organizations that have never partnered before to come together, including libraries, workforce centers, employers, unions, etc.

Closing Remarks

Lt. Governor Prettner Solon offered closing remarks regarding the social and economic need to address issues that were identified in the summit. The vision includes a State where aging workers who want to continue to work are able to do so and can access a package of services, training and supports when needed to find employment. We need to retain older workers as well as recruit and train younger workers. The demographic dividend will be with us for the next 30 years and then the window will close. We must put policies in place now to take advantage of this dividend and work to change all our systems to accommodate the growing aging population in our state.

Aging Workforce Summit

Background

Along with Minnesota's population, Minnesota's workforce is aging, and the number of younger workers coming into the labor force is at an all-time low. These dramatic changes are happening at a time when major restructuring is also underway within many industries, increasing their use of technology and fueling a skills gap. Minnesota's aging workers are the most highly educated workforce in history, but do they have the skills needed going forward? As the economy improves and employment grows, how are the state's aging workers doing?

According to Minnesota's Aging 2030, redefining work and retirement is a hot topic in Minnesota and across the country. The leading edge boomers—born between 1946 and 1951 and now ages 62 – 67) are now at the age when they are trying to decide if they want to retire, or if they can retire. Many boomers became unemployed through downsizing and layoffs during the Great Recession. Some need to upgrade their skills in order to be more competitive in the job market, but are hesitant to do so, either lacking the confidence in their ability to learn new skills or unable to afford the necessary training. These aging workers and those still working represent a “demographic dividend” to the state as they work for pay or volunteer to help their families and their communities.¹

As a result of the impact of these demographic and economic trends, Lt. Governor Yvonne Prettner Solon convened a group of experts from across the state on May 14, 2013 to explore the issues surrounding Minnesota's aging workforce, and to discuss the implications for job-seekers, employees, employers and our workforce development and training systems. Participants shared their insights on what Minnesota must do to capitalize on its own “demographic dividend,” its large number of aging workers.

Summary

Welcome – Lt. Governor Yvonne Prettner Solon; Katie Clark Sieben, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development; Jean Wood, Executive Director, Minnesota Board on Aging

Lt. Governor Prettner Solon welcomed participants to the summit – the first of its kind in the state – focusing on the critical factors of an aging workforce. She highlighted the unprecedented demographic challenge that will stretch the resources of state government and change the shape of the state's economy. The recent economy has particularly affected older workers and boomers, many of whom lost their retirement savings in the Great Recession and are facing long periods of unemployment or underemployment. Projections for the future labor force also show that the number of new, younger workers in Minnesota will drop drastically,

¹ Minnesota's Aging Workforce Aging 2030 Policy Series May 2013, http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/aging/documents/pub/dhs16_163538.pdf

from 30,000 to 3,000 annually over the next 30 years. This is a serious challenge for Minnesota and the nation.



There are also significant opportunities. Minnesota's aging workforce is the highest educated workforce ever. We need to be smart in how we support aging workers and the aging workforce. It is important to support aging workers looking for employment. One method is through the Senior LinkAge Line® One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors. Already seniors can find information on services and in 2012, an effort called *Share Minnesota* was begun to connect boomers to volunteer opportunities. In 2013, *Start Minnesota* will build on the existing infrastructure to help seniors connect to resources to find employment. The Senior LinkAge Line® One Stop Shop will be available to help seniors who are looking for work to get connected to information and resources in their communities to assist in their job search.

Katie Clark Sieben, Commissioner of the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) noted that Minnesota's network of workforce centers serves as an important gateway for job seekers of all ages to find help. She also noted that the Minnesota Senior Community Service Employment Program provided training and assistance in locating employment for 2,500 participants in 2011.

Jean Wood, Executive Director of the Minnesota Board on Aging, described the role of the Senior LinkAge Line® and MinnesotaHelp Network. These programs provide state and regional information about services to help older adults remain independent in the community. Over the last two years, the Board on Aging has been working with the Lt. Governor to build a One Stop Shop capability within the Senior LinkAge Line® that includes connections to job supports for aging workers.

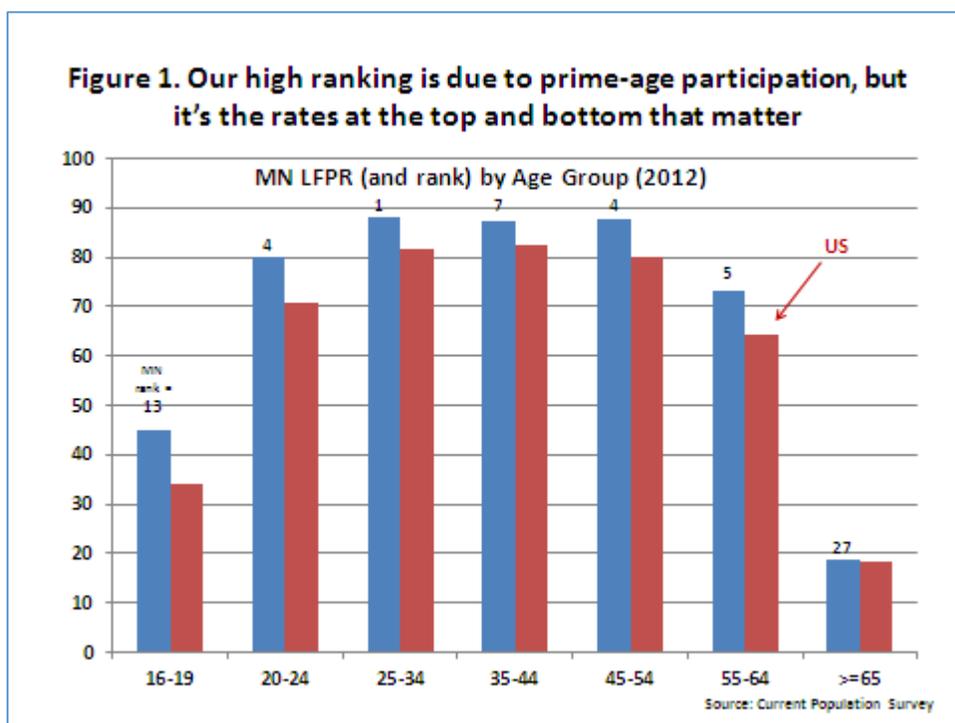
Lt. Governor Prettner Solon described Aging 2030, a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Board on Aging, and Minnesota Department of Health. This Initiative is designed to help Minnesota prepare for the many demographic and economic impacts brought about by the permanent shift to an older population.

The summit was also sponsored by Twin Cities Public Television (tpt). Throughout the morning, tpt recorded individuals attending the summit and captured their thoughts and insights on aging workers and the impact on Minnesota's workforce and economy.

Keynote Address

Minnesota's Aging Workforce: Current Status and Future Projections

Steve Hine presented the summit's keynote address. He is Research Director and Director of the Labor Market Information Office, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.



Mr. Hine set the stage for the summit by posing several questions related to the issues Minnesota must address including:

1. What are the consequences of an aging population on the size of our workforce?
2. How long-lasting will these consequences be?
3. How large will they be? Will worker shortages result?
4. Where will consequences be most acute?
5. What can be done?

Baby boomers began to turn 55 in 2001 and 65 in 2011. The share of the workforce ages 55 - 64 has increased 70 percent over the last decade while other age groups have held steady or declined.

The impact of an aging population on the workforce depends on population growth AND the labor force participation rates. Minnesota's labor force participation rate is third in the U.S. at 70.3 percent (U.S. average is 63.7 percent). There are a number of factors that influence participation rates, but overall the U.S. has a declining labor force participation rate, especially among men.

Minnesota's high ranking in work participation is due to prime-age participation, but it is the rates at the top (old) and the bottom (young) that matter. Our prime-age participation rate is 88 percent, so we don't have a lot of room for improvement in the rate of participation by our middle age cohorts. They are very high compared to other states. So our greatest potential opportunity for growth is to increase the rates for both teens and aging workers (see Figure 1).

There has been significant research on labor force participation rates (LFPR), since this is at the heart of determining what type of policies are needed to maximize the rates for all ages. Based on the State Demographer's projections, there will be a steady decline in our labor force participation rate until 2019 and then it will drop to negative numbers until 2025. In this scenario we expect to add 16,000 individuals to our workforce over an 11-year span. In contrast, in the 1990s we added 440,000 to our workforce over a 10-year span. So, it will be a different world in terms of labor supply.

This small supply of workers will constrain our ability to add jobs. Even with the slack in the economy we will be moving into a time of severe labor shortages. We will have labor shortages by late 2014. Even in optimistic scenarios, labor shortages will be severe and persistent.

Not all sectors of the economy will be affected simultaneously. The older workforce is concentrated in certain areas. Just over one-fourth of 55 – 65 year-olds hold jobs in the legal field. Around 20% of aging workers hold jobs in each of these fields: management, education, office and administrative jobs or sciences. Thus, some sectors with a high number of boomers will be affected more significantly than others.

In order to prepare and plan for these demographic shifts, we need to reduce and remove barriers to workforce participation and fully utilize the workforce we have. We can remove barriers in the following ways:

- retain aging workers.
- mitigate long-term unemployment.
- promote youth involvement/awareness.
- confront racial barriers.
- allow more flexible working arrangements.
- remove frequent impediments to work (transportation, childcare, etc.).
- promote in-migration and immigration.

We can fully utilize the workforce we have through:

- improved worker mobility , e.g., better housing markets, portable health coverage, incumbent worker retraining.
- increased productivity, e.g., improve workforce exchange, better align skills and training with needs, and advance and implement technological change.

Panel Presentation Moderated by Lt. Governor Prettner Solon

Lt. Governor Prettner Solon introduced the panel members who offered their comments on the issues laid out by Steve Hine in his keynote. She asked the panelists to address the following questions: What are your first reactions to the information on the demographic shifts in the workforce? Where do opportunities exist? Where are the challenges?

Cynthia Bauerly, Deputy Commissioner of Workforce Development, DEED

Cynthia Bauerly noted that the demographic trends teach us that we need to work together across sectors to support workers of all ages, abilities, races, etc. DEED serves job seekers 50 and over through nine different programs in the agency. For example, workers over 50 represent over one-half of individuals in the dislocated worker program. Other programs such as FASTRAC, rehabilitation, displaced homemaker also serve aging workers. Workforce centers serve large numbers of aging workers, and there are some common work-related issues among aging workers. Many need additional computer training, assistance in writing and updating their resume and training in interviewing in today's job market. Many experience age discrimination in their job search.

If we are to keep people in the workforce, we need to help people consider their next career rather than their next job. Aging workers have a lot to teach younger workers and are an important part of the workforce. DEED works with businesses to help them understand the value of aging workers. DEED understands the value of the Lt. Governor's One Stop Shop and is very supportive of the Senior LinkAge Line® initiative to help aging workers find employment.

Inez Wildwood, Chair, Governor's Workforce Development Council; Workforce Planning and Talent Development Manager, Minnesota Power/Allete

Inez Wildwood began her response to the keynote data by noting that the boomers have always known they are an important generation! In addition, the statewide data presented is amplified in rural Minnesota. Greater Minnesota saw its highest graduation rates in 2010. We won't see the same numbers until 2020. With outmigration it might even be more bleak.



The Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) is a federally mandated business-led, Governor-appointed board for the State. Its role is to analyze and recommend workforce development policies to the Governor and Legislature. The website www.gwdc.org lists a significant number of initiatives and reports. One is called "All Hands on Deck." In 2012, a subcommittee of the GWDC completed a study of the needs of aging workers and made four key recommendations.

1. Prioritize additional skill attainment for the aging workforce. The baby boomers and older generations are highly educated and hard workers, but technology is moving very rapidly and outside the expertise of these groups of workers.
2. The subcommittee also recommended creating work and learning opportunities for aging workers. Finding ways for new learning and job experiences for individuals to see what options are available is very important. The State should create lifelong learning accounts for affordable lifelong learning for adults.
3. The State needs a plan to extend the work life of aging workers including recognizing employers that are working to keep the older generation engaged. Policies that deter aging workers need to be re-envisioned.

4. We should increase opportunities for aging workers to do small business development and become entrepreneurs.

The report also included other recommendations related to other worker groups. We need to expand work opportunities for people with disabilities, which includes a significant number of older adults. We want Minnesota to become a model employer for people with disabilities.

Jeralyn Jargo, Vice President of Continuing Education and Customized Training, Century College

From an educator's standpoint, in terms of youth, the K-12 pipeline is dwindling and there are fewer younger students coming to community colleges. There really seems to be a disconnect between life as a K-12 student and the reality of work. Youth need to know what "hands-on" work is. It is about building awareness about the world of work in youth.

On the other end of the spectrum there are a growing number of aging individuals coming to community colleges. Many of these individuals have never developed a resume, interviewed or job searched. Going to a community college is also very difficult and daunting for older adults. There are cultural assumptions that do not work for aging individuals.

Century College has developed a Plus 50 initiative. Typically, older adults come back to school due to a life-changing event, e.g., divorce, graduation, lay off. It is tough to feel vulnerable and move into transitions, especially going back to school. Many have life experience that they want to convert into school credit. There are individuals applying to the college without a high school education. The college partners with workforce centers to help job seekers. The state needs every worker no matter what it will take, and the agencies need to work together both on the K-12 issues and the needs of the plus-50 group.

Eric Nesheim, Executive Director, Minnesota Literacy Council

Eric Nesheim described the work of the adult basic education (ABE) network in Minnesota. The ABE network serves over 74,000 Minnesotans each year in over 500 sites. The Literacy Council works with the ABE network, General Educational Development (GED) degrees, adult diplomas, English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship programs. They also collaborate with DEED and MnSCU. Minnesota has a well-developed adult education system in Minnesota and it is very inter-connected. Even though Minnesota supports the network and specifically the Literacy Council, the Council is only able to serve one-tenth of the actual literacy needs in Minnesota.

The Council tends to break the aging worker population into two groups: 1) adult learners looking for a job, in transition and often desperate; and 2) volunteers.

Five years ago, 16 percent of those served in the adult basic education system were over age 45, and now, 22 percent are over 45. The majority are underemployed, unemployed or not part of the workforce. Older adults often come to them with very specific needs that require

intensive one-on-one support. The resumes of these older learners include lots of energy, expertise and talent, but there is often a technology gap. They rarely see people come in for “preventive” education; most have an immediate need for training and development.

In addition, they have about 3,000 volunteers who are helping with programs throughout the state. One-third of the volunteers are seniors. There was a significant increase in the number of older workers wanting to volunteer during the recession. They wanted to gain experience, help in some way, and were looking for a career shift. They had volunteers to help with databases, technology, public relations, marketing, etc. The volunteers in turn were able to improve their resume while helping the Council.

Ray Campbell, Senior HR Consultant for Asquith Group; Former Job Seeker

Ray Campbell noted that the statistics outlined by the keynote speaker have to be addressed through creative strategies within companies and within the workforce. Many aging workers are already profiled as “too old” or not able to return to the workforce.

The boomers are very driven and hardworking, and are very resilient overall, but there are some disturbing numbers. About 62 percent of Americans are going to postpone retirement due to the Great Recession. Many of these individuals are part of the “sandwich generation,” the middle generation that is taking care of parents as well as children in school. These double pressures—plus the need to find work if they have been laid off or terminated—are having negative effects on this group. The suicide rate has jumped over the last few years. They cannot find employment or are underemployed. They cannot stay above water and get ahead.



Many features of the process now used by most employers to recruit and hire workers pose problems for aging workers. Online job applications are difficult for aging workers for a number of reasons. Many older professionals – engineers, architects, etc. – cannot get through the application process. The features used actually screen out aging workers from the pool of those being considered for employment. We need to think about new techniques for hiring workers that don't have this effect. As companies deal with growing labor shortages, they will have to change the way they recruit and retain employees.

Panel Discussion

Lt. Governor Prettner Solon asked Assistant Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly what are the most critical needs seen in the workforce centers? The assistant commissioner noted many workers are struggling to keep up with the use of technology. The disconnect between the available jobs and the “ready-to-go workforce” is also a challenge the state must face. In some parts of the state there are open jobs but no housing to house the workers. Employees are entering the workforce without transferable skills. The State has a significant role to play but DEED cannot do it alone and needs to work through partnerships with other parts of the public sector as well as employers.

Lt. Governor Prettner Solon asked Ray Campbell what supports he needed and found most useful in his job search. Mr. Campbell mentioned the workforce centers as a resource. He had worked in HR and one would think that would help him find another job, but there is a sense of personal vulnerability when you have lost a position. You begin to question yourself. You have to keep going. One thing the job services at the workforce center helped with was resume review. Unfortunately, the workforce centers do not have adequate capacity to handle all the needs.



Lt. Governor Prettner Solon asked Inez Wildwood about her discussions with other employers and their response to the demographic shift. Ms. Wildwood said there is a large amount of denial by employers even among those already experiencing skill shortages. It is hard to move from the current economy and imagine a twenty-year period where we will not have enough people to fill the available jobs. In terms of aging workers, she said ageism is alive and well. It is not necessarily a major driver, but it does affect the application process. Applicants often do not have the degrees called for, but have the training, needed experience and/or certificates and continuing education. We need to work with employers to teach them how to determine and describe skill sets in ways that do not hinder applicants, especially older applicants.

Breakout Discussions

Attendees broke into three discussion groups around specific topics. In each group, the attendees were asked to: 1) identify good things that are happening; 2) identify significant gaps; and 3) suggest potential roles for the State in addressing these topics.

Group 1: Job Search and Job Seekers

Good Things that are Happening

- Mentor groups and networks have been created for specific career fields.
- Volunteering at an organization/company you want to work at has become quite common, and is helping aging job seekers connect with potential employers.
- Some employers are allowing those with equivalent skills to qualify for positions instead of requiring a specific degree.
- Some employers are networking with specific schools that teach skills they need in their workforce, e.g., Hennepin County Technical College.
- The Wells Fargo “Boomer Connection” is a model for a development and support group for boomers within the workplace. The group has sponsored forums, provided information to boomers at Wells Fargo about opportunities, benefits, preparing for retirement, etc.
- Libraries offer free use of computers for job searches; one library is collaborating with Goodwill to staff the computer lab and help job seekers.

- The health care sector is a growing field, and it is seeking older adults to work as caregivers/personal care aides as well as in other positions.

Significant Gaps

- Aging workers who have worked at one job or one company for most of their career have trouble defining their skills.
- Companies need help defining what they are looking for in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs).
- People don't know how to do the research needed to find jobs or learn more about companies.
- People lack networking skills; need more training and opportunities to network.
- The transition period to a new field can be long and difficult.
- Ageism is occurring! Employers assume that something is wrong with an aging worker; they may wonder how long an older worker who is hired will stay in the job.

Roles for the State

- Sponsor more age 50+ retraining programs.
- Create a campaign to highlight value of aging workers to dispel ageism; encourage employers to reduce practices that continue ageism in the recruitment and retention of their workers.
- Blunt the negative effects of globalization! Can the state put more protections for aging workers in place? (It harms some and benefits others.)
- Train employers to do a better job communicating the type of skills that they need, in ways that do not hinder older applicants.

Group 2: Employers and the Workplace

Good Things that are Happening

- The top employers for aging workers (nominated by AARP nationally) have gotten the message. They are providing flexible work arrangements around the country and solving their labor shortages at the same time.
- There are growing numbers of customized training sources for aging workers, especially through community colleges.
- DEED sponsors workshops for employers on how to establish on-the-job-training and focus on knowledge transfer strategies, which help aging workers.
- A creative employer would be wise to go after the mature worker and develop a strategy and model for success, including both paid and unpaid work.

Significant Gaps

- Aging workers have many fears about employers and their job search. These include fear of age bias, how to bring up their need to caregive for a family member, fear of putting age on their resume, worry that they will be seen as a "short timer," fear of

being seen as blocking opportunities for younger workers, and special issues for women especially single women who are dependent on one salary.

- There are fewer growth opportunities for Generation X (defined as workers between ages 30 and 48) because boomers are not leaving the workforce and retiring at normal retirement age as had been expected.
- Many of the HR staff in organizations are younger and relatively inexperienced, and more businesses are outsourcing their HR functions. These factors separate the HR staff from any personal knowledge or relationships with workers in that workplace.
- Organizations used to invest in in-house training for their staff, but there is less and less of that provided. Training is a big need for aging incumbent workers who are good workers but need training to remain productive.
- Employers often do not communicate with aging job seekers (or job seekers of any age) about the reasons why an applicant didn't get the job.
- Many employers have not yet faced the realities of the upcoming critical demographic changes (large labor shortages) and do not have a comprehensive workforce plan that addresses this situation.



Roles for the State

- Provide incentives for employers to hire and keep aging workers.
- We need flexibility in the workplace arrangements across every generation. Flexibility may mean different things to different generations in the workplace.
- Organizations are in a “policy prison” and cannot break out. They have created policies that restrict retirement, movement between jobs, work and family balance. The State can help employers stop managing their people and start managing the work to achieve their objectives.
- The State needs to have a conversation with employers about their workforce and the state's economy. CEOs, CFOs, those involved in training and development, unions, other representatives of the workers need to be at the table to talk about strategies for using our changing workforce to get the work done.

Group3: Public Workforce Development and Training Systems

Good Things that are Happening

- GWDC has the aging workforce as one of its priority issues.
- There is a large statewide network of organizations focused on aging issues, including many that are working on aging workforce issues. Experience Works is a great example of a model program.

- Nonprofit and government agencies are seeing a huge increase in the number of mature adults wanting to volunteer, to gain job skills and experience, and contribute to community needs.
- Aging workers are advocating for change with legislators, and the number doing this is increasing.
- The DEED Workforce center network is a great resource for both employers and job seekers. Talent management is a big topic, and DEED networks have set up seminars around the state to listen to businesses, and work with them on talent management, including the role of aging workers.
- Minnesota has a mature basic education system, with many partnerships between United Way, ABE, local advocacy agencies and training and education institutions.
- Public libraries are another important community resource and partner.



Significant Gaps

- Aging job seekers from ethnic, immigrant and tribal communities prefer to have a one-to-one relationship with a job counselor, and this is not always possible because of limited resources.
- Job support agencies need to improve their coaching of mature applicants to help them land the job, and to work with employers to be more open to mature candidates.
- The needs of mature job seekers differ by age cohort (the needs of a worker in their 50s are different from one in their 80s).
- The DEED business services representatives need to work with local employers on aging employee retention and managing a multigenerational workforce effectively.
- Many local governments have used early retirement packages to prompt retirement of mature employees as a way to cut budgets. This saves money but leaves a talent and knowledge gap to fill. Then, these retirees often look at new careers after public sector employment. Is this practice the best use of our experienced public sector workers?
- There has been huge growth in interns, including younger and more mature individuals. The internship has become an established part of the process to find employment.
- Nomenclature for aging workers needs to change, so boomers will participate. The group “formerly known as seniors” will not participate if they perceive the program as a traditional senior program.
- Do aging workers know about workforce center services? If they have been employed for many years and have not looked for work, they will not be familiar with the services that are available to job seekers.
- There needs to be more opportunities for aging workers to develop self-directed employment and entrepreneur options.
- The aging of the workforce has implications for the role of labor unions. Are they at the table and are they addressing these labor force issues?

Roles for the State

- Streamline the education and training system for aging workers, to increase the “just-in-time” features, increase the aging worker’s ability to navigate the system and provide a more holistic approach, including support for caregivers, help with other needs such as access to transportation, housing and health care.
- Public retirement system (PERA and MSRS) rules need to facilitate retired workers returning to public sector part-time. The State needs to create and use more part-time positions in order to incent aging workers to continue some level of employment.
- The State of Minnesota policies should reflect best practices for mature workers in its workforce.
- The GWDC should continue to play a role and advocate for the implementation of its recommendations on the aging workforce.
- There should be training of managers and supervisors on management of a mature workforce, including emphasis on policies that maximize the use of the aging workers in their units.



Closing Remarks

Lt. Governor Prettner Solon offered closing remarks regarding the social and economic need to address issues that were identified. The vision is that aging workers who want to continue to work are able to do so and can access a package of services, training and supports needed to help them do this.

LaRhae Knatterud from Aging 2030 stated that we need to both retain older workers and recruit younger workers, and be bold in stating this policy. The demographic dividend will be with us for the next 30 years, and then that window closes. One of the key themes of Aging 2030 is “Redefining Work and Retirement.” We need to think broadly about changes in all of our systems—including our workforce system—to accommodate the growing aging population.