

November 5, 2009

Dear Decision Maker:

Minnesota's business leaders recognize that the economic vitality of a region rests in its ability to increase intellectual capacity.

So, with more than \$6 billion in large-scale economic development projects underway and planned in northeastern Minnesota, the region, through a comprehensive learning initiative, is aggressively moving to educate and train a new generation of workers.

The newly-created Arrowhead Institute of Technology is a technology-based learning structure providing secondary and college level students with the customer-driven skill sets required to qualify for thousands of job openings projected over the next 10 years in northeastern Minnesota.

Under a collaboration of K-12 schools, colleges and private industry, the Arrowhead Institute of Technology re-engineers educational delivery through the identification and implementation of industry-focused learning programs designed to match the workforce requirements of a series of major mining, mineral and energy projects.

These new projects are projected to create 2,500 permanent, 6,400 construction and thousands of spin-off jobs. The projects will, each year, also produce tens of millions in new revenue to local, state and federal units of government, K-12 education and the University of Minnesota.

By participating in Arrowhead Institute of Technology programs, learner-workers through classroom and unique business site education, receive ladder training in support of these emerging regional economic sectors.

In support of responsible regional growth and the learner-worker needs of industry, the Range Readiness Initiative, a collaboration of public and private partners, is preparing the region for the opportunities and challenges associated with the development of multiple large-scale development projects.

On behalf of the Range Readiness Initiative, I invite you to learn more about northeastern Minnesota's major economic development projects at: www.rangereadiness.com

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Sandy Layman
Commissioner, Iron Range Resources
Chair, Range Readiness Initiative Leadership Team



What is the Range Readiness Initiative?

A Coordinated Regional Response

Conceived in 2007 under the leadership of Iron Range Resources, the Range Readiness Initiative began as a forum of private and public sector experts from across the region, who gathered to identify the potential challenges, issues and opportunities associated with pending developments planned for the northeast Minnesota's Taconite Assistance Area. The group now meets regularly to develop shared strategies and solutions, and to coordinate technical and financial resources in a more efficient and effective manner.

The Range Readiness Initiative is organized into the following work teams: [projects](#), [workforce](#), [housing](#), [community readiness](#) and [opportunities development](#). For more information or to contact the work teams, please visit the RRI website:

<http://rangereadiness.com/>



The Latest News in Iron Range Mining

Regional Collaborations Launch Arrowhead Institute of Technology

With analysts predicting a need for some 20,000+ well-educated new workers in northeast Minnesota over the next decade, a broad coalition of regional partners has launched a new technology-directed learning structure to meet the demand.

The Arrowhead Institute of Technology is a comprehensive educational program designed to meet the workforce needs of several large economic development projects, including [Mesabi Nugget's](#) \$270 million iron nugget plant near Aurora; [Essar Steel Minnesota's](#) \$1.65 billion steel mill near Nashwauk; and [PolyMet Mining Corporation's](#) \$602 million non-ferrous mining facility near Hoyt Lakes.

The Arrowhead Institute of Technology offers focused learning opportunities for secondary, higher education and graduate students, in collaboration with the [Applied Learning Institute](#), the [Northeast Higher Education District](#), and private industry. Upper level programs include mechanical engineering, masters of engineering, industrial technology, process automation, industrial lab technician, industrial construction, and more.

The [University of Minnesota Duluth](#) and [Minnesota State University in Mankato](#) are partners in delivering engineering programs, and Arrowhead Institute of Technology programs are available at K-12 schools and colleges throughout northeast Minnesota. High school programs ladder into higher education

programs at [Itasca Community College](#), [Hibbing Community College](#), [Mesabi Range Community and Technical College](#), [Vermilion Community College](#), and [Rainy River Community College](#).



Approved by the legislatively-created Iron Range Higher Education Committee, these programs are designed to provide technological competencies in support of emerging regional economic sectors, while further addressing the documented gap between the needs of regional industry and learner-workers. Each program assists in retaining high school and college students, replacing baby-boomer retirements, aiding people with employment barriers, and attracting potential workers from other areas. Each program is funded through the Taconite Production Tax.

Technical learning and skills-training through the Arrowhead Institute of Technology will play an essential role both in sustaining the region's technologically-driven economic activity and in driving new, creative economic enterprise on a regional and global scale. Please join us in applauding this investment in the future of our region's workforce!