Project at a Glance

- Public and private partnership that seeks to build the base of employment in science-based industries in central Minnesota, with emphasis on firms providing services or products to the health care manufacturing, agricultural and food processing industries.
- Increase economic development activity through new, expanded and retained businesses in central Minnesota.

Project Description

The Science Initiative of Central Minnesota is designed to build the science-based manufacturing focus around the science-based and bioscience industry sector and the community’s employment base will have opportunities for higher-income jobs in new and emerging industries.

The need for customized curriculum and training for businesses seeking to expand or relocate can be served by a wide variety of formal education and training opportunities. To be successful, however, programs need to be retooled and fine-tuned to meet the needs of future employers and the workforce. The participating higher education institutions – St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical College, St. John’s University and the College of St. Benedict – are known and respected for their ability to customize curriculum and programs to meet the specific needs of area employers.

Long-Range Vision

- Partnering organizations will expand educational and training services to targeted science-based industries, and the community’s employment base will have opportunities for higher-income jobs in new and emerging industries.

Performance Measures

Expected outcomes after two years include:

- Four defined programs to support science-based manufacturing in development or in existence at one or more area higher education facilities.
- A marketing and sales effort has begun with the hiring of a consultant who represents the community to business prospects and participates in industry events.
- As the initiative evolves, the St. Cloud area will develop a wider reputation for having an educational system that can meet specialized, emerging workforce and training needs, and for its economic advantages to targeted science-based industries looking to expand.
- A science initiative led by St. Cloud State University is aimed at increasing economic development in central Minnesota.

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• Identified expansion of local or new industries creating at least 200 additional jobs (exclusive of the health care delivery system unless identified as a result of this effort, i.e., additional clinical trials attracted to CentraCare Health System)

• An evaluation and succession plan for continuation of the effort after initial startup or "proof of concept" phase

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Project Collaborators
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• St. Cloud Technical College
• St. John's University
• College of St. Benedict
• CentraCare Health System
• St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce
• The Initiative Foundation
• The St. Cloud Area Economic Development Partnership
• Minnesota Workforce Center
• Xcel Energy
• Stearns Electric Cooperative Association
• East Central Energy
• Gray Plant Mooty, PA
• Netgain Technology