**Project at a Glance**

- Serve small business development and learning needs through the TechNorth Prep Center Network through five state community and technical colleges in northeast Minnesota
- Strengthen alliances with economic development agencies in the region to promote visibility, viability and growth

**Project Description**

The Northeast Higher Education District strives to continue the pioneering work of the TechNorth Prep Center Network in northeast Minnesota rural communities served by the district’s five member institutions: Hibbing Community College, Itasca Community College, Mesabi Range Community and Technical College, Rainy River Community College and Vermilion Community College.

The project was launched successfully in 2003 as an education, training and workforce response to the exponential growth of the information technology marketplace worldwide. Participants in regional planning meetings included the Northeast Higher Education District, communities, businesses, economic development officers, project managers, local workforce investment boards, students, and incumbent and transitional workers. The primary goal was to engage these participants in a regional information technology jobs and skills framework through the local TechNorth Prep Center Network sites. From these meetings, each of the sites evolved differently.

Phase II continues with numerous project partners joining with the Northeast Higher Education District including the Northland McKnight and Blandin foundations, Range Area Municipalities and Schools, and state-of-the-art information technology resources from around the country. A strong ally is Iron Range Resources, which provided the essential fiber connectivity linking the sites through a regional initiative called Do I.T. (Information Technology).

Phase II includes implementation of five individual site plans and an aggressive information technology skills accelerator program to serve the students and workers, area businesses and the K-12 districts in rural Minnesota.

---

**Education and training services are provided by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to rural Minnesota companies like this recreational vehicle manufacturer.**
northeast Minnesota communities. These initiatives will include “main street” customized information technology assistance, training and placement. In addition, area business clients will be provided with an outsourcing alternative for some technical applications.

Performance Measures:
- Increase the number of information technology workers and skill levels across the region’s K-12 districts, member colleges, businesses and industries, and others
- Increase local responsiveness and workforce development capacity of the TechNorth Prep Centers to better meet the information technology needs of communities and high-tech businesses

Project Contact:
John Ondov
Project Director, Northeast Higher Education District
Phone: (612) 868-9874
Fax: (218) 254-7972
lifelab@mchsi.com

Participating Institution:
Northeast Higher Education District
President Joe Sertich, Phone: (218) 254-7976
Hibbing Community College
Hibbing
www.hcc.mnscu.edu
Itasca Community College
Grand Rapids
www.itascacc.edu
Mesabi Range Community & Technical College
Eveleth and Virginia
www.mr.mnscu.edu
Rainy River Community College
International Falls
www.rrcc.mnscu.edu
Vermilion Community College
Ely
www.vcc.edu