

Michigan Works! provides pre-employment testing for Hiawatha Telephone Company

Hiawatha Telephone Company (HTC) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Hiawatha Communications, Inc. (HCI), a closely held, privately owned telecommunications company. HTC employs 12 local citizens, who provide basic local exchange, toll access service and Internet and DSL service to approximately 6,500 customers.

"I turned to Michigan Works! when relocating back to the Munising area, and because of their prompt assistance, I was contacted by several local businesses with job opportunities. I am very appreciative of all their help."

—Amy Peterson—

Michigan Works! has had the opportunity to work with HTC on several occasions now. Most recently, HTC received assistance from Michigan Works! with their hiring process, which included the use of interview rooms, handing out applications to reduce traffic at the HTC offices and testing the job seekers to determine the best-qualified candidates for the job

openings. The testing services that HTC used from Michigan Works! included the TABE, Wonderlic, ERI and OPAC tests.

Through this most recent hiring process, HTC has hired Amy Peterson. "I turned to Michigan Works!," said Amy, "when relocating back to the Munising area, and because of their prompt assistance, I was contacted by several local businesses with job opportunities. I am very appreciative of all their help."

HTC's service area is the north central portion of the Upper Peninsula, covering approximately 2,400 square miles located in portions of Alger, Chippewa, Delta, Luce and Schoolcraft counties. Service is provided through

nine (9) telephone exchanges.

HTC, formerly known as the Munising Telephone Company, has been in continuous existence for over 100 years, and remains committed to providing basic local exchange and toll access service along with the most modern network services, like internet, as required to meet the information needs of our customers at affordable prices.

HTC provides service utilizing the latest digital switching and fiber optic technology available. All switching centers are at the latest generic level consistent with the services requested by end users and long distance companies. All interoffice facilities utilize fiber optic technology. Fiber optic facilities are being deployed in the local distribution network to meet anticipated broadband demands. Such demands are expected from school, medi-



Jay Brogan, Vice President, COO of Hiawatha is pictured here with Amy Peterson

cal facilities, and various government and/or public entities.

As a result of HTC's self-directed, aggressive modernization program, HTC has properly positioned itself to deploy the latest technology and modern telecommunications service as market conditions dictate.

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Officials Celebrate the Grand Opening of the Midwest Skills Development Center

The Lake Superior Community Partnership Foundation and their Electrical Line Technician Advisory Board, recently held the official *Grand Opening* of their Midwest Skills Development Center. Nearly 200 visitors stopped by to celebrate the grand opening, tour the facility and meet the instructors and students.

The Midwest Skills Development Center (MSDC) was established to meet current and future workforce needs in the Upper Peninsula. The initial program, to be held at the MSDC, is the



Students get their first look at some of the skills they will acquire through the training.

electrical Line Technician Program. Students will be trained to install, maintain, and operate electrical systems to supply electric energy to residential, commercial, and industrial customers and joint gas and electric underground generation facilities. The center is housed in a classroom building located at 411 "A" avenue in Gwinn, MI. Bay de Noc Community College will certify the program.

The Line Tech program has been developed as a response to the utility companies' need of trained workers. Projections of upcoming natural attrition, as well as the rebuilding of infrastructure show a growing need for these technicians.

Geographically, the two line technician schools closest to the Upper Peninsula are in Alpena, MI and Green Bay, WI. Both schools currently have one to two year waiting lists.

The Michigan Works! Service Center in Marquette County has been working

with the Lake Superior Community Partnership throughout the process. Michigan Works! conducted computer-based "Accuplacer" assessment for 82 applicants to the school. "Accuplacer" assesses the abilities of basic math, algebra, reading, and sentence skills.

Michigan Works! also provided conference room space for the panel to interview 47 candidates in two days. Classes began on Monday, August 25, 2003. The students were seen that week assembling their newly acquired



State Representative Adamini and Will Carne, President of the Job Force Board, observe some of the demonstrations during the grand opening.

tools, and learning to climb poles, the essential skill of a line technician. The pole climbing portion is progressing quite fast," says Valgene Dobson, a

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President's Corner: *Career and Employability Skill Preparation*

Today's Central Upper Peninsula business and industry is constantly being challenged to keep sharpening its workforce edge in a competitive economy. As revealed in the environmental scan of the Job Force Board, technology has and will increasingly change the way business is done.

These changes have also impacted our education institutions and are being felt across all career areas including those traditionally requiring a baccalaureate degree. The Job Force Board, and its Career Connections Group have identified that Central UP business and industry has expectations for well-prepared, motivated employees who possess the required academic skills in mathematics, communications and science.

Initial surveys have revealed that business and industry across the region are seeking people with good work ethics, teamwork skills, critical thinking and a desire for continued learning. Our business and industry fear that they are experiencing a decline in the number of qualified employees.

Today's ever evolving marketplace

The rise and fall of the dot.com giants has heralded a new era in the world of business. Gone are the days when consumers would buy all of their needed goods and services from the corner market. Gone are the days when the family owned store could rely on its constant and loyal customers. But are these days truly gone, or is the market place just evolving?

Darwin's theory of evolution states that animals experience gradual change and mutations, and of these changes, those animals that have been best suited to survive will live on, while the weaker cousins are left behind. Many individuals felt that evolution had hit the market place, and hit it hard, when the dot.com craze first took off. The pure players (companies that only do business over the internet) were ubiquitous. They flooded our advertising, our investments, and even our news reports. But evolutions took its course. The plethora of dot.coms grew too quickly for them all to survive, so many were left to the pages of history.

If you wanted to take this metaphor of

A survey of regional business and industry revealed that only 11 (18%) out of 140 businesses surveyed responded that its applicants/new hires possessed the employability skill level the business desired. These skills were not the technical skills, but the "soft" skills the business community desires of its workers.

The Career Employability Skills Committee of the Career Connections Group along with business and education has redefined "Employability Skills," that is an accepted common definition by regional business and education partners.

Personal Management Skills

- Accept responsibility for actions
- Reliable— get to school/work consistently and on time
- Take initiative and work without supervision
- Complete tasks on time and know expectations
- Demonstrate interest in continuous learning in school or at work

evolution a step further, the dinosaurs were once massive, all powerful beings akin to the dot.coms. And like dot.coms, when the bulk of dinosaurs died off, they did not disappear. Birds, crocodiles, and other present day dinosaur kin can be likened to the dot.coms of today. However, before, during and after the reign of the dinosaurs, the mammal could be found. We all know what happened after the fall of the dinosaurs, the mammal evolved and took over the reign of the world- hence, me writing this article today.

But what does this string of abstract thought mean to today's market place? The world was slow to change before the twentieth century. Technology, thought processes, and culture, though ever-changing, were changing at a pace nowhere near what happened in the last hundred years. In regards to the market place, one could say that prior to the twentieth century, we were experiencing the equivalent of "prehistory." The brick and mortar stores, the mammals, were present, but because of the rise and decline of the giant dot.coms, it is just now the time for our market

Applying Academic Skills

- Comprehend written and verbal information
- Follow instructions
- Carry out math calculations with accuracy
- Solve problems using math skills
- Write and speak clearly and to the point
- Locate information from a variety of sources
- Use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling

Team Work Skills

- Work with others in all types of situations
- Interact efficiently with co-workers and customers
- Listen carefully to others
- Support group goals and provide leadership when appropriate
- Promote own ideas effectively and appropriately while respecting the contributions of others

This definition will is being promoted

place to evolve into our future.

The market place has learned a lot from the rise and decline of the dot.coms. The dot.coms that have survived are shrewd businesses that must be given the respect deserved, and not mistakenly grouped in with their failed cousins. Remember, that although many dot.coms came and went, the ones that are around today were the strongest, and are therefore powerful business players.

In a recent survey published jointly by Shop.org, a division of the National Retail Federation, and Forester Research, it was found that online sales in 2002 accounted for roughly \$76 billion dollars. This accounted for 3.6% of all retail sales in 2002, which is a 48% increase from 2001. And the number is expected to grow. Projections indicate that online sales in 2003 will come close to \$100 billion, much greater than in 1998, when the then fledgling online retail sales accounted for only \$13 billion.

But who is profiting from all of these

and distributed to over 500 teachers within the region. What is unique about this definition is that it was developed in partnership by business and education in response to identified business needs.

This also parallels the Job Force Board's "Ready for Work" initiative. The Ready for Work workshops were developed in response to the above survey as well. When developing the workshops and talking with the business community to ensure alignment with their needs, business indicated that it was not just youth who lacked entry-level skills, but adults as well. Thus, the workshops have been designed to address both the adult and youth employability skill needs.



By: Will Carne,
President of The Job Force Board



By: Orrin E. Bailey
CEO of Michigan Works!
The Job Force Board

online sales. Actually, the standard brick and mortar, and catalogue retailer has evolved into the multichannel retailer, who uses stores, catalogues and the Internet to reach their customers. It is the multichannel retailers who are the current power players in online sales. According to the Shop.org / Forester Research survey, the pure players of online sales held 54% of the business three years ago. Last year, this number had dropped to 28%, and it is projected to drop another 3% in 2003, therefore the majority of online sales can be attributed to multichannel retailers.

For businesses in an area like the Upper Peninsula, this is great news. The world is opening up new and exciting venues for us to sell our products and

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Healthcare Roundtable may expand throughout Michigan

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board's Healthcare Roundtable has recently received statewide attention. The group, which was originally formed to resolve the healthcare workforce shortage in the Central Upper Peninsula, has formed partnerships expanding into the Eastern portion of the Upper Peninsula. In addition to this expansion, The Michigan Health & Hospital Association has shown interest in expanding the initiative throughout the state of Michigan.

Originally, the Healthcare Roundtable was developed due to local concern about the healthcare workforce shortage in the Upper Peninsula. This shortage prompted Michigan Works! The Job Force Board to develop the Health-

care Roundtable as a broad based partnership among a variety of healthcare providers and educators to research the healthcare workforce shortage and its implications on Upper Peninsula Healthcare providers.

Prior to the inception of the Roundtable, The Job Force Board completed an environmental scan to measure these pressures in our area. Data obtained in this scan revealed declining student enrollments in our region's school districts, an aging workforce, and a migration of youth from ages 19-27 out of the Upper Peninsula. At a time when the entire Nation is experiencing a shortage of healthcare professionals, the situation in the Upper Peninsula can potentially be even worse due to declining number in our younger workforce.

These are not short-term or cyclical problems as the Upper Peninsula faces an aging, retiring workforce; fewer young people are choosing healthcare careers and health occupations in our area. In the past, there have been temporary or short term shortages of healthcare professionals that were addressed by employing flextime, higher wages, bonuses, increasing immigration and scholarships. However, these solutions

will not provide the long-term solutions needed at this juncture.

The need for healthcare employees continues to grow for a variety of reasons, including the noted changing demographics. However, the quality of the healthcare careers also continues to grow. Of the top 20 jobs projected for the year 2010, ten are in health care. To fill the shortage of healthcare professionals, and to communicate the vast benefit of these professions to individuals looking into career choices, The Job Force Board's Healthcare Round Table is in the process of developing long-term solutions.

To meet the growing need for healthcare workers, the Roundtable has developed the mission:

"To create a workforce to meet the Upper Peninsula healthcare industry needs"

And vision:

"To attract and retain a high quality workforce by creating a positive image for healthcare occupations."

The Healthcare Roundtable's primary goal is to have less than a 5% vacancy rate in health care occupations in the Upper Peninsula by the Year 2005.

But the lack of healthcare workers is

not unique to the Upper Peninsula. Upon hearing of the Job Force Board's initiative, the Michigan Health & Hospital Association was not only intrigued, but also interested in becoming involved. The Michigan Health & Hospital Association, which has been based in Lansing since 1918, is one of the largest statewide associations. It has 250 members, 185 who are health care providers with the rest being consultants, law firms HMOs and banks. The Michigan Health and Hospital Association acts as the principal advocate on behalf of hospitals, health systems and other health care providers committed to improving the community health status.

Because of their interest in the Healthcare Roundtable, representatives from the Michigan Health & Hospital Association have met with Michigan Works! The Job Force Board to discuss the issue, and its statewide implications. Following this meeting, the Michigan Health & Hospital Association, along with representatives from Michigan Works! The Job Force Board, presented to the Director's council of Michigan Works! in Lansing. The Director's Council is composed of Directors of each of Michigan's 25 Michigan Works! Areas.

It is the goal of the Health & Hospital Association to expand the Job Force Board's Healthcare Roundtable to each Michigan Works! area throughout the state. As the frontline working with businesses and job seekers in Michigan, Michigan Works! is perfectly suited for such projects, and has much experience in addressing the workforce needs of our state.

In the creation of the Healthcare Roundtable, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board has once again shown its commitment to the *continuous quality improvement* of our area and has also shown its groundbreaking and success oriented attitude toward workforce development. The Healthcare Roundtable is in the forefront of our state and shows that the Upper Peninsula is rich in hard-working, energetic individuals who openly lead the business and workforce development on a much larger scale than just in UP.

Healthcare Roundtable Members

Al Hendra
Marquette General Hospital

Teri Arsenau
UP Rehab Medicine

Sandy Spoelstra
LSCP

Gerald Betters
Pinecrest MCF

Roger Burgess
OSF St. Francis

Linda Lewandowski
Bay College

Cameron Howes
NMU



The Healthcare Roundtable, which started with the seven members listed above, has expanded to over 17 members, and may expand to members from throughout the state of Michigan.

Today's ever evolving marketplace

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services. The "Mom and Pop Store" on Ludington Street in Escanaba can expand its current business by adding a new medium to its retailing arsenal. Web pages, when compared to the cost of printing and mailing catalogues, are relatively inexpensive, and easy to update. This, combined with the fact that American consumers are now very familiar with the medium, makes it a great opportunity to grow business. But we must learn from the past experience of the fallen dot.com giants.

In a recent conversation with Karen Widmar, of Boomerang Marketing in Chatham Michigan, Karen shared some tips to e-commerce success. First of all, she states that you need a good marketing plan to drive your online sales. Online sales are not an "if you build a website, they will come" situation. If you do have a brick and mortar store, make sure that your customers know about both your

website and store location. You can do this by purchasing a position on a search engine, banner advertisements, and direct mail, or any other numerous marketing possibilities. But remember that you need a "good" marketing plan. Dumping more money into advertising than can be afforded has caused many online businesses to fold.

When people do visit your website, try to get information from them, like their addresses, e-mail addresses and phone numbers. And get permission to contact them before hand. Make it known to the customer that you will not abuse the information that they supply. If you are able to collect contact information from customers, you can send them e-mails, and flyers announcing sales, or giving them special promotional offers. These messages can be detailed, and well-formatted files, or plain text messages, but remember, that if you do contact the customer, make the contact somehow valuable to

the customer. If the customer does not find value in your contact, it will cause them to see you and your business in a negative light, because they will feel that you've wasted their time.

Overall, the times are changing. The evolving market place is providing ever-expanding opportunities for businesses to seek profit. Now is the time to look at the success and failures of past companies. If you learn from the mistakes of others, and improve on or help to create new models of success, your business will be strong; only the strongest will survive and prosper.

If you have questions about how to grow your business, or are not sure what resources are available to help you do so, feel free to contact you local Michigan Works! Service Center at 1-800-285-WORK, you might be surprised at the wealth of information available to help your business evolve for tomorrow.

Lt. Governor John Cherry Jr. joins us under "The Big Top"

A grand thank you to all who attended Lunch for Governor Granholm. Those in attendance know the opportunity to dine with the Governor is a chance of a lifetime. Unfortunately, the Governor had to miss our luncheon.

Chamber Board Member, Ann Jousma-Miller filled the silence best when she confronted the disappointment. "Yes, of course we were disappointed. People had worked hard (vendors, volunteers, and the planning committee preparing for this event, but we were not

stranded in an elevator or walking tens of miles in the heat home after work. We were here, safe."

Certainly the Governor would have preferred to dine here in Delta County rather than dealing with a devastating power outage, yet she unselfishly went where she was most needed. The people of Delta County can be grateful we were here enjoying food, friends and conversation.

The Delta County Chamber of Commerce is thankful for the immediate action taken by Lieutenant Governor John Cherry Jr. Mr. Cherry did not miss a beat when he stepped in for Governor Granholm at the luncheon. The Chamber has always been proud of their ability to create community partnerships, and Mr. Cherry was the first to recognize what a great community partnership it took to put on such a wonderful luncheon.

Mr. Cherry went on to discuss keeping and creating jobs in Michigan. "We need to make sure that we're relentless stewards of our state motto, 'if you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you.' But we also need to ensure that when you, who live on this pleasant peninsula, seek a job, you need

"We ... need to ensure that when you, who live on this pleasant peninsula, seek a job, you need not look too far," said the Lt. Governor when speaking about workforce development in our area.

not look too far." Mr. Cherry reminded us that it is our choice to live here in the Upper Peninsula, and it is our right to do so.

The people of Delta County can be proud of their community and the positive roles our businesses play in marketing events such as the *Lunch with the Governor*. The Daily Press, *Michigan Works! The Job Force Board*, and International Paper proudly sponsored the *Lunch with the Governor*.

When asked what Escanaba Public Safety Captain Jim Hansen thought of the event, he said, "What a great concept! My compliments to Linda LeQuia of the Log Cabin (The events food coordinator) and the rest of the businesses. They did a wonderful job feeding that number of people so smoothly in the heat."

Aramark Uniform Services, The China King, Cooper's Donuts, Bagel and Frozen Custard, Dobber's Pasties, The Donut Connection, The Island Resort and Casino, Fazoli's, Ferdinand's, Kathy's Fish & More, Gordon's Food Service, The Log Cabin, Pacino's Pub, the Swedish Pantry, Sysco Food Service, The Terrace Bay Inn, and



Lt. Governor John Cherry Jr. stood in for Governor Granholm as the "Guest of Honor" at the Lunch with the Governor during the U.P. State Fair.

Wendy's provided the first class dining buffet. Bink's Coca-Cola, Hereford and Hops, The Michigan Grape and Wine Council, and Peninsula Beverages provided the refreshments.

The flowers that cascaded from the stage and graced each table were courtesy of Delta Floral, Flinn's Flowers and Garden Center, and Wickert Floral and Greenhouse. And of course, we must thank the Delta County Ambassadors for their endless support with a special acknowledgment to ambassadors Karen McGraw of CellularOne who tirelessly helped to plan the big day.



Norm McKindless and Jim Zobel, both members of The Career Connections Group, joined Orrin Bailey, CEO of Michigan Works! The Job Force Board, for the Lunch with the Lt. Governor.



Many prominent area individuals, including Mrs. Michigan, attended the Lunch with the Lt. Governor. She is pictured here with James Anderson of Michigan Works!

New Leadership Academy kicks off!

The Chamber's new program, the River Cities Regional Community Leadership Academy, is kicking off on October 7, with 18 participants!

"We are very pleased with the number of participants," said Jim Phillippo, Leadership Chair. "Since this is the program's first year, we were expecting about 12 to 13 participants."

The greater response, he added, is probably due to the excellence of the program's curriculum, developed by business and community leaders who are experts in their fields.

Starting with a "get to know each other" half-day session on October 7, participants will meet on a monthly basis to explore an area of our community, starting with Education on October 21.

"The idea behind the program is to take emerging business and community leaders and give them more knowledge about services and programs offered within our communities," Phillippo said. "Not only do they end up with a great understanding of how communi-

ties work, but they also create an impressive network that can be utilized in their professional lives as well."

One of the best aspects of the program is that participants will have the opportunity to visit various businesses, schools and other community entities. "This is not a typical classroom experience," he added. "It's an interactive program where we visit, meet with panelists, discuss issues and learn about the a specific area of our community."

This new program will be offered annually and would not be possible without the participation of our sponsors, which include: Angeli's County Market, Bay Area Medical Center, Menominee Intermediate School District, *Michigan Works! The Job Force Board*, National City, University of Wisconsin-Marinette, Wisconsin Public Works, and the River Cities Regional Chamber of Commerce.



Line Technician School

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former Empire Mine employee. "We are learning about the fundamentals of electricity, and the instructors are doing a great job of keeping everyone involved."

The 35 students are instructed by Bill LaFountain and Jerry LePage. Jerry is on a sabbatical from UPPCO to teach the course, and Bill is retired from Marquette Board of Light and Power.

Students are learning practical as well as classroom topics, such as operation

and troubleshooting of power distribution systems. "We are getting settled, and learning fast," said Jamie Sutherland, student. "It is a really great opportunity, and we are all looking forward to getting a diploma at the end of April, and going to work!"

