The Director’s Cut

While the broader influence of universities on the regional economy is better understood, the impact of university involvement in urban areas and economically distressed inner cities remains relatively undocumented. Despite limited supporting data, many universities significantly impact the vitality and revitalization of inner city economies through their operating and academic activities. The results of these activities build vibrant surroundings, allowing the city as a whole to attract and retain businesses and skilled workers. The mission of the Office for Business and Community Economic Development (BCED) is to contribute to the economic growth and development of Minnesota communities. Our plan for neighborhood regeneration is to build upon the resources that the community already controls and to harness those that are not yet available for local development purposes. We are confident that BCED, along with other partners, can play an integral role in helping the community assemble its assets and capabilities into new combinations, and new structures of opportunity.

In direct response to the community’s appeal for a partnership that would support local community development activities, and support the triple bottom line, BCED has expanded its existing operation to establish the Business and Technology Center (B-Tech Center) at UROC. BCED will use the B-Tech Center as a vehicle to build upon its existing efforts by creating satellite operations that support current and new programs, which are targeted initially at the residents of North Minneapolis. These programs will later be replicated and expanded to serve the broader Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The B-Tech Center will provide resources that support community economic development activities and that connect and benefit public, private and community stakeholders, businesses, and nonprofit organizations located in this community. Our primary goal at the Center will be to assist in: building community capacity; fostering economic growth and diversification; business development, retention and expansion; entrepreneurship; supporting innovation and the development of human capital; providing youth development opportunities and programs; and providing technology training and resources. The Center will also increase the productivity of businesses, community organizations, residents, and special interest groups working in the community. It will also act as a clearinghouse for information, a gathering place for education and networking, and a laboratory for innovation, technology and research. B-Tech will build upon the long history of partnerships and relationships that BCED has established with professionals in the corporate, government, and non-profit communities, as well as with professional schools and other offices across the University community to leverage specific resources and assets that can be used to serve the needs and interests of our inner-city communities.

Finally, we believe that business development is the cornerstone of a community’s economic development strategy and it is where we will focus a large percentage of our resources. Business development includes three primary activities: business retention, business expansion and new business/entrepreneurship development. All are important in creating a healthy business climate and diversified business base. One of the fundamental goals of our office will be to help facilitate the expansion and diversification of businesses that serve our community; because in the end we know that doing so will create jobs, stimulate commerce, diversify the community’s economic base, generate tax revenues, and stimulate community reinvestment and revitalization. The by-product of these outcomes will result in an improved quality of life for the families and citizens who reside in these communities.

Sincerely,

D. Craig Taylor
Director, Office for Business & Community Economic Development and the Business & Technology Center

Craig Taylor, Director, and Sharon Banks, Senior Project Manager, were honored by the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal in the 2010 Minority Business Awards. Craig Taylor was awarded Advocate of the Year, and Sharon Banks was named a Corporate Executive Honoree. The staff at the Office for Business & Community Economic Development are proud of their dedication to the community!

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Local WMDBE and nonprofits: Apply by Sept. 3 to improve operations

The Office for Business & Community Economic Development offers the Management Assistance Program (MAP) for Small Businesses and the Management & Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) for Nonprofits to improve the quality of life in Minnesota’s urban communities by enhancing the overall performance and building capacity of the businesses and nonprofits that serve such communities. Businesses and nonprofits send in detailed project proposals regarding areas of improvement for their organizations, and are matched with U of M graduate students who develop a plan to meet the requested needs of the organizations.

The deadline for Fall semester projects is September 3, 2010, for interested businesses and nonprofits to apply with a specific 50-60 hour project for a graduate student to complete over the semester. Previous participants have described the experience as “…a great capacity building opportunity, especially for growing organizations.” Organizations have received assistance in the past in the areas of fund development, marketing plan development, market research & analysis, accounting, demographic studies, human resources and web design, just to name a few.

Businesses and nonprofits must meet certain requirements and fill out an application to qualify for MAP and MTAP: check out bced.umn.edu/MAP or bced.umn.edu/MTAP for more details. U of M graduate students should consider applying to the MAP or MTAP programs to serve as consultants to a local business or nonprofit. Students will gain quantifiable accomplishments to add to their resumes, exposure to potential careers and new industries, and hands-on experience aiding in the advancement of local organizations and the community. For their work over the semester, student consultants receive a stipend at the completion of their projects. For more details on requirements, and to apply as a student consultant, visit bced.umn.edu/Student_Opportunities.

The application deadline for student consultants is September 17, 2010.

BCED engages in STEP-UP summer job program for local youth

The Office for Business & Community Economic Development is proud to be supporting the STEP-UP Summer Jobs Program for the third year in a row! The City of Minneapolis’ STEP-UP Program, operated by AchieveMpls, recruits, trains and places youth, ages 14–21, in paid summer jobs with local employers. Last summer, 174 employers hired 1,282 Minneapoli youth to work at hospitals, law firms, corporate offices, nonprofit organizations and many more places of business. STEP-UP interns are competitively selected and complete a comprehensive work readiness training program certified by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce before beginning work.

Our STEP-UP student this summer is Mahogany Ellis-Crutchfield, who has been very active with our department’s programs, such as Junior Entrepreneurs of Minnesota, Entrepreneurial Entrees, MyProduct, Juniors Investing for the Future, and more. She is helping our office with the Targeted Businesses database, the MAP/MTAP program, our Construction program, and in a variety of other areas as needs arise.

U of M Targeted Business Program builds opportunities for WMDBE

On July 7th, over 80 women business owners and supporters joined the Office for Business & Community Economic Development as we hosted the Women’s Business Development Council’s monthly networking meeting. The program included both University staff and businesses owners. Opening remarks came from Associate VP Mike Volna from the U of M Controller’s Office, and were followed by Karen Triplett, Director of Purchasing Services, who discussed University procurement policy and also shared tips on how to get business. Three women business owners also presented on their experience in successfully pursuing business at the University. BCED’s staff is proud to be a community partner to WBDC and looks forward to hosting future events. This event followed BCED’s May event in which we hosted the members of the Midwest Minority Supplier Development Council (MMSDC) to share information on the University marketplace.

In addition, June 30th marked the close of the University’s 2010 fiscal year. In the fourth quarter, the University purchased non-construction goods and services from over 640 different targeted businesses. These purchases totaled almost $6.5M in total expenditures.

BCED would also like to extend congratulations to Innovative Office Solutions! After first strategically positioning itself as a vendor to the State of Minnesota, Innovative Office Solutions won the University’s contract for office supplies in June. This represents a huge success for a small, woman-owned business and a significant victory for the supplier diversity initiatives at the University.

U of M students aid local organizations through Community Health Initiative

Through the Community Health Initiative (CHI), seven community-based organizations serving Minneapolis and St. Paul have been matched with graduate students from one of the following: the School of Public Health, School of Medicine or School of Social Work. During the summer-long full-time placement, each student works on a project that is identified by the organization and utilizes the professional skills of that student. Among the projects occurring this summer are: AIDS prevention outreach, domestic violence education, psychiatric services, and adoption assistance. This work is made possible through a corporate partnership with Medica and Healthways.

This fall, CHI will be posting four part-time positions with Healthways. The available positions will be in the area of marketing, health coaching and accounting. To be eligible, you must be enrolled as a University student in a health-related graduate program and be from a group that is historically underrepresented in the health-care profession. Visit www.bced.umn.edu to learn more.
Broadband Access Project provides computer labs to Twin Cities

The Broadband Access Project (BAP) provides training to underserved communities in hopes of promoting the use of technology to access education, healthcare, workforce preparation and community revitalization resources for residents in four federally-designated poverty zones in the Twin Cities.

Four computer labs are currently open to their surrounding communities. Classes ranging from Computer Basics to Microsoft Office are free, and open to local community members, small business owners, and nonprofit groups.

The lab at the Asian Community Technology Center (417 University Ave, St. Paul) is open Monday-Friday, 8:30AM-7:00PM, and offers these classes: Basic Internet Skills (Wednesdays, 9:30AM-12:00PM) and Job Search Skills (Wednesdays, 4:30PM-7:00PM).

The lab at the Church of St. Philip (2507 Bryant Ave N, Minneapolis) is open Tuesday-Friday 8:30AM-4:30PM and Sundays 11:30AM-1:30PM. These classes are available: Internet Basics (Tuesdays, 10:00AM); Computer Basics (Fridays, 10:00AM); and Job Search (Fridays, 2:00PM).

The lab at Lifetrack Resources (709 University Ave W, St. Paul) is open Monday-Friday, 1:00PM-6:30PM, and offers these classes, all from 1:00PM-4:00PM: Excel Basics (August 10th and 31st); Internet Basics (Aug 11th and 28th); Microsoft Office (Aug 12th); Computer Basics (Aug 17th); and Word 2007 (Aug 18th).

TryScience camps spark kids’ interest in the sciences

Over fifty urban youth were exposed to the exciting world of science during TryScience camps conducted by the University of Minnesota’s Digital Divide Initiative (DDI). The TryScience camps were held at Phyllis Wheatley Community Center and the Church of St. Philip, both located in North Minneapolis.

TryScience participants work with DDI volunteers to learn about science.

TryScience camps were designed to expose young people to the sciences while they had fun. Led by DDI staff and volunteers, participants learned about seeds, soil, plants, rocketry and renewable resources.

Junior Entrepreneurs of Minnesota youth summer program a success

The Junior Entrepreneurs of Minnesota (JEM) business and leadership boot camp was successfully wrapped on July 15th. Participants came from all over the Twin Cities, and represented diverse ethnic backgrounds, but they all found a way to work together in groups to develop creative and thoughtful business ideas. The instructors and guest speakers were all highly impressed with the students’ curiosity, drive, and hard work.

In addition to the development of a business idea, the JEMers also contributed their time and dedication to creating a garden at the St. Olaf Residence for seniors in North Minneapolis. The students, guided by staff at St. Olaf and gardening expert Martha Zemur, constructed compost bins, built wheelchair-accessible garden beds, and planted and maintained sections of the garden.

TryScience is designed to increase the number of young people entering the sciences. According to an IBM representative, “America faces a future of intense global competition with a startling shortage of scientists. We must act now to prepare the next generation of science, engineering, and technology leaders.” In order to avoid this future shortage of science and technology professionals, the Office for Business & Community Economic Development (BCED) offers TryScience through DDI.

B-Tech Center Business Development Services program growing

The Office for Business & Community Economic Development’s (BCED) newest facility in North Minneapolis, the B-Tech Center, continues to offer access to technology and business support services for local residents and enterprises.

The B-Tech Center, located at the Urban Research & Outreach/Engagement Center (UROCE), 7341 Plymouth Ave N, is comprised of the Digital Divide Initiative (DDI), Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP), and Business Development Services.

Such workshops are organized by the B-Tech Center’s Business Development Services Manager, Jeffrey Seltz, who is also our resident business consultant here at B-Tech. He plans to offer other workshops, or the Youth Entrepreneurship Program at the Office for Business & Community Economic Development, please contact Selemon Asfaw at asfaw007@umn.edu.

Check us out on Facebook to keep up-to-date on our current offerings: facebook.com/umbtechcenter.
MICS Construction Services is a union tenant improvement contractor specializing in Carpentry/Drywall/Framing, Painting/Wall Covering, and Office Furniture Sales and Installation. MICS also specializes in facilities maintenance programs. They work with most of the major GCs and Property Managers as well as major corporations throughout the Twin Cities. Their customer base includes General Mills, Medtronic, St. Jude’s Medical, Smith Medical, Ryan Construction, BorSon Construction, STAHL Construction, Morcon Construction, PL Wilson, Northmarq Properties, and Fluid Interiors, as well as the University of Minnesota, to name just a few of their clients.

Below are a few of the U of M projects with which MICS has been involved:

- Carlson School – System Furniture Installation
- CMRR Laboratory Equipment Installation
- Lions Research
- Alumni Center – System Furniture Installation

The goal at MICS is to be your contractor of choice for small interior capital projects. MICS is uniquely set up to support your interior construction needs because of our ability to provide four services as outlined below.

- General Contracting
- Interior Construction
- Interior/Exterior Finishing
- Installation

MICS also has the following MBE/SDB certifications:

- NMSCD – National Minority Supplier Development Council
- CERT – Central Certification
- MDOT – Minnesota Department of Transportation
- MAC – Metropolitan Airports Commission

Please contact the appropriate office for more information on the above programs.

The Office for Business & Community Economic Development offers:

- AIR Program (for U of M departments)
- Broadband Access Project (with UROC)
- Comcast Cable Scholarship & Internship Initiative (for U of M undergraduates)
- Community Health Initiative (for Twin Cities nonprofits and businesses)
- Community Resident Construction Employment and Training Initiative (for Twin Cities residents)
- Construction Expo (for construction-related organizations)
- IBM Computer Training Lab (for businesses and resident)
- Management Assistance Program (for Twin Cities businesses)
- Management and Technical Assistance Program For Non-Profits
- Small Business and Targeted Business Program (Supplier Diversity Program) (for Twin Cities businesses)
- Small Business Executive Education Program (for Twin Cities businesses)
- Small Business Seminar & Networking Series (for Twin Cities businesses)

The Office for Business & Community Economic Development B-Tech Center offers:

- Business Development Services (for Twin Cities business owners)
- Digital Divide Initiative (for Minneapolis children and families)
- Youth Entrepreneurship & Leadership Development Program (for Twin Cities high school students)

Please contact the appropriate office for more information on the above programs.

Office for Business & Community Economic Development
2221 University Ave SE, Suite 136
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Phone: 612-624-0530
cbcd.umn.edu

Office for Business & Community Economic Development B-Tech Center
at UROC
2001 Plymouth Ave N, Suite 106
Minneapolis, MN 55411
Phone: 612-624-3404
uroc.umn.edu/programs/b_tech.html
facebook.com/umbtechcenter

Public Computer Labs
Open - Ongoing - In Minneapolis and St. Paul (see page 3 for locations, hours and classes). The Broadband Access Project (BAP) has created public labs to provide Internet access, computer programs, and classes on a variety of topics to local residents.

Computer Classes - Ongoing - See bced.umn.edu/IBM-Lab for offerings at BCED and B-Tech; classes are available on a variety of topics from Microsoft to computer literacy.

Registration for Construction Expo - Ongoing - Check out bced.umn.edu to register for a booth or for regular admission.

Open Consulting Hours for Registered Business Users - Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00AM-1:00PM - At the B-Tech Center; registered users can come in to receive assistance on a variety of business areas. SCORE will join us in late September for additional consulting help.

DDI’s H Youth at State Fair - August 26-September 6, 9:00AM-9:00PM - Try Science youth participants will be at the 4-H Building showing off what they’ve learned in a special exhibit.

Construction Expo - October 7 - A variety of construction-oriented businesses and organizations come together to demonstrate products, share ideas and network. Visit bced.umn.edu/2008_4-H_Expo_Photos.html for photos from the 2008 Expo.

Global Entrepreneurship - November 1-December 16 - Twin Cities high school students can join us Monday-Thursday, 4:15pm-6:45pm, to learn business skills in a variety of work-shops. Keep an eye on facebook.com/umbtechcenter for more details.

Local small business profile: MICS Construction Services

MICS Construction Services is a union tenant improvement contractor specializing in Carpentry/Drywall/Framing, Painting/Wall Covering, and Office Furniture Sales and Installation. MICS also specializes in facilities maintenance programs. They work with most of the major GCs and Property Managers as well as major corporations through out the Twin Cities. Their customer base includes General Mills, Medtronic, St. Jude’s Medical, Smith Medical, Ryan Construction, BorSon Construction, STAHL Construction, Morcon Construction, PL Wilson, Northmarq Properties, and Fluid Interiors, as well as the University of Minnesota, to name just a few of their clients.

Below are a few of the U of M projects with which MICS has been involved:

- UMD Civil Engineering Building – All Interior Painting and System Furniture Installation
- Hansen Hall – System Furniture Installation
- Peik Gym – Classroom Remodel
- Carlson School – System Furniture Installation
- CMRR Laboratory Equipment Installation
- Lions Research
- Alumni Center – System Furniture Installation

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- MAC – Metropolitan Airports Commission
- Metropolitan Council
- State TGB – Targeted Group Business
- SDB – Small Business Administration

MICS is affiliated with the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce, the Metropolitan Economic Development Council (Construction Partnership Program), the National Association of Minority Contractors, the Midwest Minority Supplier Development Council (Minority Business Enterprise Input Committee), and the Roseville Rotary.

As a union shop with bonding capacity of $250,000 and an annual revenue over $3 million, MICS offers high-quality services to all clients. Their largest single contract is $460,000; and with 3 vans and 4,000 square feet of office and warehouse space, MICS can meet the needs of projects of many sizes and scopes. To ensure great service and timely completion of all projects, MICS employs 25 tradespeople, three supervisors, one project manager/estimator and one office manager/controller.

Michael Hudson, President and Owner of MICS, has just been presented with a Minority Entrepreneur of the Year award for 2010 from the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal, a recognition of dedication to his company and to the community.

Contact: Mike Hudson
1722 Terrace Drive
Roseville, Minnesota 55113
Email: mikes.hudson@micssmn.com
Phone: 651-379-9593
Fax: 651-379-9593
Web: www.micsmn.com