



Dedicated to a Strong Greater Minnesota

For Immediate Release
August 22, 2014

Contact: Julie Lew
651-259-1917

CGMC SAYS UNIQUE CHALLENGES POSE GREATEST RISK TO RURAL MN: AGING WORKFORCE, LACK OF BROADBAND AND JOB TRAINING, AND DETERIORATING INFRASTRUCTURE

GROUP SAYS IT'S CRITICAL THAT CITIZENS PROD DAYTON, JOHNSON TO ADDRESS THESE KEY ISSUES ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Rochester, MN—The Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC), an organization of 85 cities from across the state, concluded its annual summer conference today with a serious warning that a unique set of challenges facing Greater Minnesota will likely determine its fate unless action is taken.

Citing recent reports and statistics that highlight an aging workforce, lack of skilled workers, inadequate broadband and deteriorating roads, the group called on the public to join with them in making these issues a top priority during the gubernatorial campaign in the coming months.

CGMC said some of the most concerning trends include:

- Despite a 41.2% increase in full-time vacancies since 2006, Greater MN currently has an unemployment rate slightly higher than the metro area, according to DEED. This compares to the metro area's 5.5% decrease in vacancies during this time. This is likely due to a "job skills mismatch." (Source: Job Vacancy Survey, DEED)
- DEED found in 2013 that 52% of vacancies in Greater Minnesota were hard to fill versus 36% in the metro area.
- Broadband: Only 45% of households in Greater Minnesota are connected at speeds needed for present-day applications (25 mbps)

downloads / 6 Mbps upload), compared with 92% of metro households. (Source: ConnectMN, May 2014)

- The percentage of Greater Minnesota workers under the age of 55 shrank from 85% in 2000 to 79% in 2012. The age of Greater Minnesota's labor force is expected to continue to accelerate going forward. (ACS 2012 estimate and 2000 Census Labor Force statistics)

“These are huge problems facing our state. Unless we have adequate roads, broadband infrastructure and a talent pool of younger skilled workers, Greater Minnesota will slip further and further behind,” said Randy Wilson, president of the CGMC and mayor of Glencoe. “If Greater Minnesota can address these challenges, the entire state will be stronger.”

Wilson said that it is critical for citizens to become involved in the gubernatorial campaign, write letters to the editor and attend candidate forums and demand that candidates address these key issues.

“These are really tough and complex problems, and it is imperative that whoever the next Governor is, he has a vision and a plan for Greater Minnesota and will work with us to resolve these issues,” said Wilson

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