



Mine it. Make it. Grow it.

**NORTHEAST MINNESOTA.
NORTHWEST WISCONSIN.
WE GET BUSINESS.**

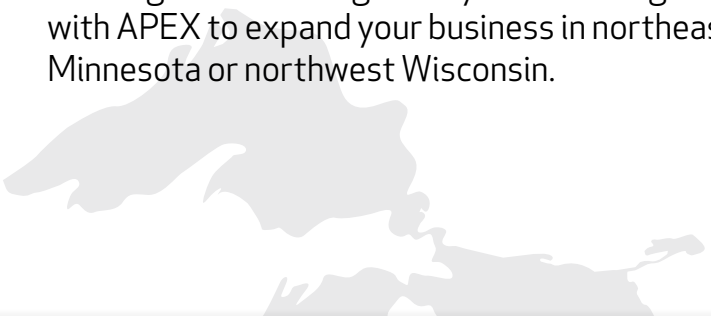


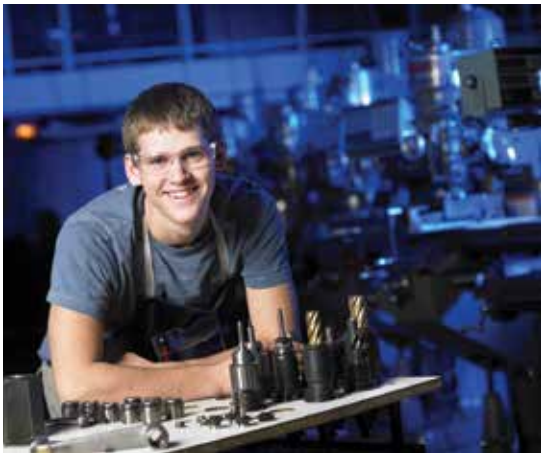


With attractive communities positioned throughout the region, this area offers the resources and infrastructure your business needs.

Companies locate here because of our strategic location, productive workforce and rich natural resources. They thrive here because of our progressive outlook in recognizing and seizing opportunities for economic growth.

Leverage these strengths to your advantage: work with APEX to expand your business in northeast Minnesota or northwest Wisconsin.





LABOR & WORKFORCE

Employers consistently praise the well educated, productive, loyal workers of northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin.

- Regional labor pool of over 173,240 productive citizens
- Average unemployment rate of 6.5% over the past 10 years (peaked at 9.7% in 2009)
- Low turnover rate of less than 2%, compared to 15% nationally

A recent survey of employee attitudes, conducted by UMD School of Business and Economics, stated:

- 93% agreed "Hard work makes a man or a woman a better person"
- 84.4% agreed "Wasting time is as bad as wasting money," versus 78% statewide
- 84% agreed "A good indication of a man or woman's worth is how well they do their job," compared to 77% statewide



EDUCATION

Over 90% of the region's population are high school graduates; 20.9% go on to earn bachelor's degrees or higher. As a state, Minnesota has led the nation for 7 straight years in ACT scores.

The state's average score was 22.9; in Duluth, it was 23.1.

Over a dozen universities, private colleges and two-year tech schools work diligently to meet the needs of area businesses in research and development, workforce planning, customized training, technical assistance and small-business development services. 5,000 undergraduate degrees and nearly 500 graduate degrees are awarded each year, feeding the regional labor pool with competent and highly motivated professionals eager to put their skills to work.

This unique combination of high productivity, eased training initiatives and competitive wage rates results in direct bottom-line savings for local business.



CORE INDUSTRIES

We benefit from a diverse economy with an effective balance of traditional and emerging industry clusters including:

- Aerospace/Aviation Manufacturing
- Clean Energy & Biofuels
- Healthcare/Biotech
- IT/Data Storage
- Mining & Metallurgy
- Precision Machining
- Heavy Fabrication, Castings & Steel Production
- Forest Products
- Education/R&D
- Tourism & Hospitality
- Call Centers/Back Office

INFRASTRUCTURE

Well-developed road, rail, and international seaway systems move raw materials and finished goods quickly and at competitive costs, while the Duluth International Airport facilitates timely business travel and customer visits for area businesses. This region has access to a broad industrial base and world-class supply chains, locally, domestically and abroad. Other features include:

- International seaport (one week to the Atlantic Ocean)
- Four major railways (BNSF, CN, CP & UP)
- International airport (Category II landing capabilities)
- Reliable, redundant electric utility infrastructure
- Electric utility rates among the lowest 10% nationwide
- Redundant, 10G+ fiber optic networks
- Extensive natural gas pipelines
- First-rate commercial and industrial buildings
- Abundant natural resources (minerals, timber, water, wind, etc.)
- Competitive financial incentive programs



BUSINESS CLIMATE & COSTS

APEX can connect you with incentives and competitive grant and loan programs that are appropriate for your company and project.

Wages, benefits and workers' compensation rates are very competitive, providing bottom line advantages for labor-intensive business.

The median regional wage rate is favorable at \$15.48 an hour, compared to a statewide median wage of \$17.60 an hour and a national rate of \$16.55 an hour.

SELECTED MEAN HOURLY WAGES | Duluth-Superior MN-WI (MSA) Positively Minnesota Dept. of Employment & Economic Development

	MSA	National
Data Entry	\$13.02	\$13.46
Customer Service Reps	\$15.12	\$14.93
Production Workers	\$13.48	\$13.60
Assemblers & Fabricators	\$19.20	\$13.18
Hand Laborers	\$11.81	\$11.48
Machinists	\$19.38	\$18.77
Welders	\$17.87	\$17.27
Accountants & Auditors	\$26.00	\$30.13
Computer & Information Systems	\$42.14	\$56.56
Engineers	\$35.78	\$44.17

Source: Minnesota DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Wages updated to second quarter 2011.

YOU'LL LOVE THE AREA

Four distinct seasons offer year-round opportunities for fun and relaxation. Outdoor enthusiasts will enjoy the area's crystal clear lakes, lush forests and rugged shorelines. Yet even the most sophisticated tastes and interests will be satisfied by the region's rich culture and premier arts and entertainment venues.

Affordable housing with median price of \$140,000. World-class health care, featuring two large health systems that employ over 12,000 people throughout the region.

Recreational opportunities include 107 parks, over 300 miles of hiking trails and thousands of lakes and streams. Not to mention downhill ski resorts, cross-country ski trails and snowmobile routes that create a direct link from Duluth to Canada.

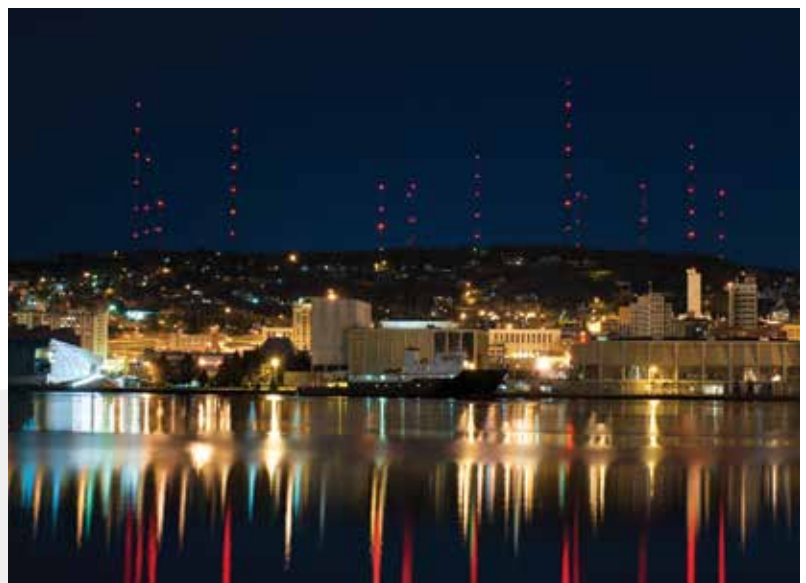


EXPERIENCE THE NORTHLAND

Experience the Northland region first hand. Come as our guest. Spend a weekend. Visit with business and community leaders. Get to know the local people and culture. **Establish or expand your business. Grow it here with us.**

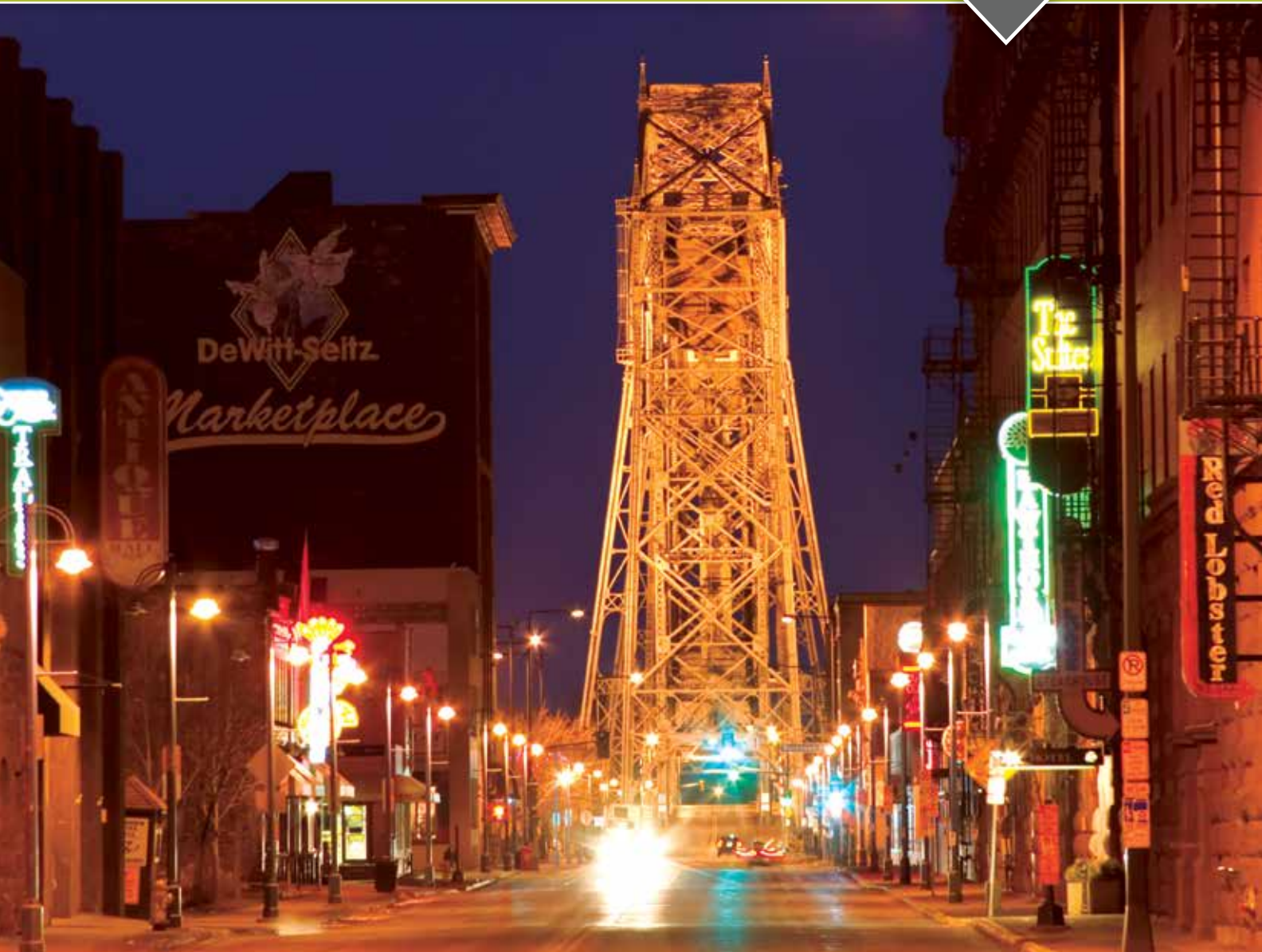
Call to arrange your Northland Experience:

877.431.3880



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APEX is the private-sector led business development engine for northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. Our member-investors represent some of the most influential companies in the region, with a collaborative approach to promoting sustainable economic growth throughout the Northland. With our results-driven approach to business and economic development, we have the right people, the right resources and the right attitude to help your business grow.

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