

FARIBAULT EXPERIENCING STRONG EMPLOYMENT DATA



Faribault is experiencing strong employment numbers in terms of people who want to learn new skills. Faribault is in Rice County in Minnesota.

Sue Wold, the business services representative for the Minnesota Workforce Center, spoke with the Faribault Daily News.

"I feel pretty good about the job outlook over Rice County and the Faribault area. There are fairly strong manufacturing and construction opportunities, and more construction jobs will become available as spring arrives. Construction has been pretty strong in the area with the construction of SCC and other projects. Manufacturing has been strong as well, although employers are having a **hard time filling jobs**."

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's Hiring Difficulties Survey reported that two-thirds of the **manufacturing jobs in the area** were hard to fill. This number is pretty much the same as what was reported in the spring of 2012, which came in at 68 percent.

The highest numbers of open jobs are in the manufacturing industry. Then comes health care, transportation and maintenance.

According to the 2013 Grow Minnesota report, 40 percent of business surveyed plan to add to their employee ranks in 2014. The survey found that the remainder of businesses surveyed plan to keep their employment levels the same.

The Faribault Chamber of Commerce president, Kymn Anderson, said, "When we asked if they would be losing or cutting jobs, nobody said yes. In fact, nobody has said yes to that question in the last three years."

For the rest of southern Minnesota, the survey results were almost identical, with just over half of the businesses surveyed saying they would keep their employment levels the same in 2014 as in 2013.

"The biggest concern we hear from businesses is finding the right workers," Anderson said. "Businesses across the board are having trouble recruiting employees with the right skillset. We need to determine what kind of skills must be developed both among the incumbent workforce as well as young people entering the workforce."

In the month of December, the unemployment rate in Rice County came in at five percent, according to data released by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. It was the highest unemployment rate for the county since the month of August. It also was more than one percentage point lower than the rate for December of 2012.

Rice County Economic Development Director Deanna Kuennen said, "As we climb out of the recession, we're going to see our existing businesses hiring more and more. Outlooks are improving. When you couple that with SCC's efforts and focus, it gives us an advantage. In the big picture, it will help contribute to **job growth in this area** and help local businesses find the people they need."