

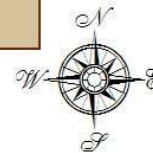
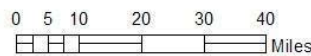
Greater Bismarck – Mandan Area

2009 Labor Availability and Business Needs Study



Legend

- ☆ County Seat
- Major Road
- County Boundary



18 May 2009
Source: SSRI, ESRI,
Ben Prusa



Bismarck-Mandan Development Association

Tel: 701.222.5530 Fax 701.222.3843

www.bmda.org

Table of Contents

	Page
Major Findings	1
Overview.....	1
Scope of Study	1
The Labor Force Population	2
The Work Environment	2
The Current Workforce	3
Potential Job Seekers	5
Meeting Employer Needs	12
Methodology	16

Major Findings

Overview

The Greater Bismarck-Mandan Area's population is centered in Bismarck and Mandan, with an estimated population of 59,503 and 17,736 residents (2008), respectively. The Bismarck MSA (Burleigh and Morton Counties), with a 2008 estimated population of 104,944 and a trade area population of over 200,000, has much to offer . . . abundant and affordable energy, virtually unlimited water resources, available land, modern and reliable infrastructure, accessible government, and a dependable, productive, highly educated workforce. Bismarck-Mandan offers a world-class redundant communication infrastructure, as well as access to major U.S. highways, interstate, scheduled jet service to major hubs, and railways. The community of Bismarck-Mandan is located in the Central Standard Time Zone, a part of the Plains Midwest Region of the United States. This central North American location is ideal for conducting business throughout all mainland U.S. time zones as well as Canada.

In 2007 Bismarck had a per capita personal income of \$35,714 which was ranked 125th in the United States and was 92 percent of the national average, \$38,615. The 2007 PCPI reflected an increase of 5.2 percent from 2006. The 2006-2007 national change was 4.9 percent. In 1997 the PCPI of Bismarck was \$21,720 and ranked 203rd in the United States. The 1997-2007 average annual growth rate of PCPI was 5.1 percent. The average annual growth rate for the nation was 4.3 percent.

Scope of the Study

This 2009 study is a summary of the labor force and business resources of the ten counties of Bismarck and Mandan's economic development region. The study included two components; the labor force was surveyed by telephone in January 2009 and employers' responded to a web based survey in April and May 2009.

- The labor force survey quantified the current and available labor force characteristics collecting demographic, job history, experiences, work skills, wage requirements, attitudes toward employers, training and commuting information. The telephone survey included 1,133 resident interviews in Burleigh and Morton and select areas of ten surrounding counties¹
- The employer study measured workforce demographics, issues concerning employee recruitment, community and quality of life, training and educational services from the employer's perspective. SSRI contacted 889 employers, of which 328 or 37 percent responded.

According to 2008 US Census estimates, there are approximately 102,594 people age 18 or older living in these areas. The survey methodology was based upon a stratified random population sample of residents age 18 or older. The labor force survey methodology was based upon a statistically valid stratified sample in the ten county region based upon the most recent population statistics. Overall the survey results have a $\pm 3.0\%$ margin of error and a reliability of 95%. The survey methodology employed allows us to quantify and profile the regions current workforce and the potential available labor force reserve. Information from a variety of other government sources has been incorporated in an attempt to describe the overall status of the workforce and business needs of the Greater Bismarck-Mandan Area.

¹ The ten surrounding counties includes select areas of: Oliver, Mercer, McLean, Sheridan, Kidder, Emmons, Sioux, Grant along with all of Burleigh and Morton counties.

The Labor Force Survey Population

Approximately 72 percent of the labor force respondents lived in either Burleigh or Morton Counties. Slightly more women (53%) than men (47%) completed the survey. The typical respondent is 48 years old, currently working (63%) and travels approximately 11 miles to work. The largest occupations in the Greater Bismarck-Mandan Area are sales and related (19%), office and administrative support (17%), education, training, and library (9%) business and financial operations (8%), and health care support (8%).

According to the U.S. Census², the population in Burleigh and Morton Counties is well-educated. The Census reported that 91 percent of the population had a high school diploma and 31 percent have received a college degree in Burleigh County (Morton 86 percent high school diploma, 22 percent college degree). Of the telephone survey respondents, 96 percent had achieved their high school diploma (or equivalent) and 35 percent had received a post-graduate or professional degree. Because only adults 18 and older were involved in the telephone survey, consequently the median age of the sample (49) is higher than the general population as reported by the U.S. Census³ (36). The median age for the nation was 37 in 2008. Among survey respondents, 26.5 percent were between the ages of 18 and 34.

The Work Environment

The location of the businesses follows a pattern similar to the population, with most of the firms (86 percent) concentrated in Burleigh or Morton Counties. Within the Bismarck-Mandan area, there are several different types of firms. The services industry was the largest industrial sector with approximately 47 percent of the employers. Typical services industry businesses perform lodging, repair, medical, legal, and educational services; this is consistent with the industrial pattern reported by Job Service North Dakota. The area's economy is becoming increasingly diversified as demonstrated by the increase in manufacturing jobs over the past several years. Bismarck is the state capital as well as the county seat for Burleigh County, and Mandan is the county seat for Morton County. Consequently, there are a number of people who work for government in the Bismarck-Mandan area.

Business Location

County	Percent
Burleigh	70.7
Morton	15.1
Mercer	6.4
McLean	2.6
Emmons	1.3
Grant	1.3
Sioux	1.0
Kidder	0.6
Oliver	0.6
Sheridan	0.3

The average employer respondent has 40 individuals working full-time and 17 working part-time. On average, firms reported having an additional two temporary employees. Employers reported the most difficulty filling part-time positions (20%) followed closely with finding seasonal help (19%) and staffing overtime requirements (19%). Those employers in the construction and educational services were more likely to indicate difficulty with filling seasonal positions than other employers. Media information employers were the least likely to report difficulty with overtime while healthcare providers were only slightly more likely to express difficulty than the average employer.

Over all 29 percent of employers indicated that at least some of their employees work in shifts. In this study, firms of almost every industrial category and employee size operate in shifts. About 25

² U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2005-2007 Estimates, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

³ Average for Morton (38.8) and Burleigh (36.3) Counties, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey

Bismarck-Mandan Regional Business Needs and Labor Availability Study

percent of employers with less than 100 employees and 74 percent of employers with 100 or more employees currently operate with shift scheduling. For firms that operate on shifts, 44 percent indicated that they provide a shift pay differential. The average pay differential ranged between \$.51 and \$1.00 per hour. Only a few firms indicated they provide a pay differential in excess of \$1.00 per hour. Of working respondents surveyed by telephone, 22 percent indicated they work shift schedules. However, an additional 38 percent of working respondents said they would be willing to work shifts.

The Current Workforce

Overview. The Bismarck-Mandan areas workforce displays a strong work ethic. Unemployment is typically low, with the unemployment rate of 3.7 percent⁴ in the Greater Bismarck-Mandan Area and 3.6 percent for the Bismarck MSA, as reported by Job Service North Dakota at the time of this study.

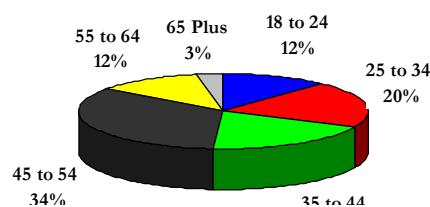
Labor Force Demographics. In the area including and surrounding the communities of Bismarck and Mandan, the labor force (those employed, which includes self-employed as well as those actively seeking work) is estimated to be 63 percent of the population over 18 years of age, or an estimated 64,356 individuals. The potential available labor force is estimated to be 41,267 individuals, or approximately 40 percent of the adult population. An average workforce survey respondent works 40 hours per week and makes \$19 per hour. A majority of these respondents had only one job and worked full-time, defined in this study as 30 hours per week or more. Thirteen percent reported holding more than one job. Generally, if a respondent works more than one job, the additional job is part-time.

Workforce demographics are different from those of the general population. Current employees have a median age of 43.6. As displayed, 32 percent of these current employed respondents are between the ages of 18 and 34. Also, 45 percent are male, 35 percent have a college degree.

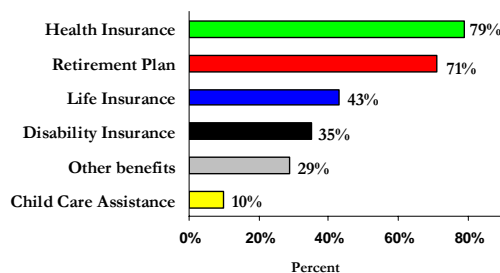
Of the currently employed respondents, 94 percent work full-time - defined here as more than 30 hours a week - and most (90 percent) work year-round jobs. The graphic displays shows the benefits that currently employed respondents indicated they receive at their jobs, with the most common being healthcare insurance and a retirement plan. Fifteen percent of the workforce does not receive any fringe benefits.

Regional Commuting. The average employed respondent travels 16 minutes or 11 miles one-way to work. This, however, depends on the occupation of the employed respondent. For instance, the majority of those in Education, Training and Library occupations travel, on average, 8 miles to work. Many of those

Workforce Age Distribution



Employee Benefits Received



⁴ Unemployment rate for April 2009 (not seasonally adjusted).

Bismarck-Mandan Regional Business Needs and Labor Availability Study

respondents employed in Production Occupations reported travel an average of 28 miles one-way to work.

Labor Union Impact. Work disruptions due to labor disputes were all but non-existent, with the vast majority (in excess of 95 percent) of employers. Only six percent of employer respondents reported at least part of their workforce was represented by a union. Of those that were, the average percentage of the workforce with labor representation among these firms was 57 percent.

Current Work Force. Table 1 presents the occupations of the current workforce by number of employed respondents as well as by tenure with employer, hours worked and hourly wages.

Table 1. Work Force Occupational Summary

Occupational Group	Estimated Number	Percent	Years with Employer	Average Hours Weekly	Hourly Wage
Management	1,622	3%	10	61	\$29.50
Business and Financial Operations	5,408	8%	8	42	\$27.30
Computer and Mathematical Science	865	1%	1	43	\$24.00
Architecture and Engineering	1,947	3%	2	40	\$35.80
Life, Physical, and Social Science	216	<1%	2	45	-- ¹⁰
Community and Social Services	108	<1%	1	36	-- ¹⁰
Legal Occupations	-- ⁵	--	--	--	--
Education, Training, and Library	5,624	9%	7	39	\$14.60
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	433	1%	3	37	\$10.80
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical	1,406	2%	14	42	\$14.00
Health Care Support	4,867	8%	8	38	\$23.40
Protective Service	324	1%	11	57	\$13.80
Food Preparation and Serving Related	4,110	6%	1	29	\$7.50
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	1,731	3%	1	26	\$16.20
Personal Care and Service	1,839	3%	1	39	\$8.40
Sales and Related	12,330	19%	5	42	\$15.80
Office and Administrative Support	9,086	14%	3	38	\$16.40
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	865	1%	9	38	\$16.20
Construction and Extraction	4,867	8%	2	46	\$23.30
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	1,731	3%	3	41	\$22.30
Production	2,163	3%	7	42	\$23.30
Transportation and Material Moving	2,812	4%	3	42	\$14.80
Total / Average	64,356	100%	5	43	\$18.99

⁵ Insufficient data or small count suppressed.

Bismarck-Mandan Regional Business Needs and Labor Availability Study

Low Absenteeism Rates. Most employers reported that absenteeism is low, with 89 percent of employers surveyed reporting a daily absenteeism rate of 0 to 6 percent. Of those, 52 percent reported absenteeism rates of less than 1 percent, and an additional 25 percent reported absenteeism at less than 2 percent.

Employee Tenure. Workers median tenure in the Bismarck-Mandan area —the midpoint of wage and salary workers’ length of employment in their present job—was 6.5 years. Nationally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reports the median number of years that wage and salary workers had been with their current employer was 4.1 years in January 2008, little changed from 4.0 years in January 2006.

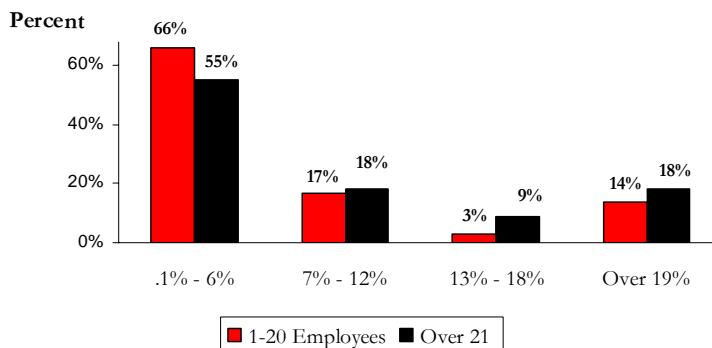
Management Experience. Overall the median number of years of management or coordination experience in the Bismarck-Mandan area is 12.7 years - an increase of nearly two years compared to the 2007 study.

Annual Turnover Rate. Sixty-two percent of employers surveyed reported an annual turnover rate of zero to six percent (Table 2). Lower turnover rates were found in respondents from Wholesale Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, Education Services and Government. Higher turnover rates were found among Retail Trade and Health Care and Social Assistance respondents. Figure 1 presents the annual turnover rate by employee size⁶.

Table 2. Employer Reported Turnover

Range	Firms
Less than 1%	21%
1% - 2%	16%
3% - 4%	13%
5% - 6%	12%
7% - 10%	16%
11% - 14%	3%
15% - 20%	6%
Over 20%	13%

Figure 1. Annual Turnover Rate by Employee Size



Potential Job Seekers

Site developers, economic planners, and others will often refer to the unemployment rate to determine if there is an available labor force; but while the unemployment rate is a consistent measure across the country, it is incomplete. Being unemployed is defined as not working but actively seeking work. However, some individuals who are working would be interested in changing jobs or occupations, others would want additional hours, and some are planning to find work within the year. These individuals are not normally counted as part of the available labor pool in an area. This analysis uses data obtained through a resident telephone survey with adults age 18 or older

⁶ The base for employers with 1-20 employees was 152 businesses while the base over 21 employees was 105 businesses with a range of 21 to 622 employees.

Bismarck-Mandan Regional Business Needs and Labor Availability Study

which allows us to quantify and profile the regions regular labor force and the potential available labor or hidden labor force reserve.

Potential Job Seekers (PJS) Defined. PJS's may either be employed or unemployed and are interested in either taking an additional job or changing jobs if the circumstances are right. In the Greater Bismarck-Mandan area 40 percent of survey respondents' fall into this category, this is equivalent to approximately 41,267 people. Potential job seekers are comprised of:

- The unemployed:
Those who are 18 and older, unemployed, and actively seeking work.
- Individuals who plan to seek a job within the next year:
Those who are not working, not seeking work, but plan to be looking for work within the year would be included in this category.
- People who are working, but would be willing to change jobs:
Using Bureau of Labor Statistics definitions, these people would be classified as employed. This group includes those individuals who are presently working who may or may not be actively seeking work, but would consider changing employers.
- People who are currently working and are willing to take an additional job:
Like the previous group, these individuals would be defined as employed. However, they would be willing to work an additional job and, as such, are part of the possible labor pool for different businesses.
- Individuals who are discouraged and do not look for work:
For the purpose of this study, the discouraged worker is defined as someone who is not working, is not actively seeking work nor planning to find a job within the next year, but would accept a job if it met their minimum acceptable wage requirements.

Table 3 presents the PJS estimated numbers and the overall percentages by category in the region.

Table 3. Bismarck MSA's Potential Job Seekers Summary

	Number ⁷	Percentage
Potential Job Seekers	41,267	40.0%
• Actively Seeking Work	3,970	3.9%
• Planning to Look Within the Year	2,507	2.4%
• Interested in Changing Jobs but no Additional Jobs	21,626	21.1%
• Interested in Both Changing Jobs and Additional Jobs	9,612	9.4%
• Interested in Additional Jobs -but not changing jobs	3,448	3.4%
• Those Discouraged from Looking	104	<1%

⁷ Due to rounding PJS estimates will not be approximate in relation to the base of the population age 18 or older. The survey methodology provides accuracy at plus or minus 3.0 percent with a 95 percent confidence level. The total available potential job seekers (age 18 and older) could range from 40,029 to 42,505 residents.

Bismarck-Mandan Regional Business Needs and Labor Availability Study

Occupational Overview. The number of available workers an employer can expect in an area depends upon individual work experiences, the skills of applicants, the working conditions, wages, and benefits offered. Table 4 presents the current or most recent occupation of potential job seekers, the estimated number and percentage, average current hourly wage and the lowest hourly wage they would accept for employment.

Table 4. Potential Job Seekers Current or Most Recent Occupation Overview

Occupational Group	PJS Number	Percent	Current Pay	Lowest Hourly Wage would Accept to Work
Management	505	1%	\$24.00	\$18.30
Business and Financial Operations	2,396	4%	\$20.60	\$16.10
Computer & Mathematical Science	252	<1%	\$21.80	\$15.00
Architecture and Engineering	1,135	2%	\$17.00	\$14.00
Life, Physical, and Social Science	-- ⁸	--	--	--
Community and Social Services	126 ⁹	<1%	\$15.90	\$14.20
Legal Occupations	-- ⁸	--	--	--
Education, Training, and Library	2,270	4%	\$17.50	\$13.90
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	126 ⁹	<1%	\$13.30	\$10.00
Healthcare Practitioner & Tech.	378	1%	\$16.70	\$12.30
Health Care Support	3,027	5%	\$23.20	\$18.50
Protective Service	126 ⁹	<1%	\$9.90	\$12.00
Food Preparation and Serving Related	1,766	3%	\$6.40	\$7.00
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	1,387	2%	\$18.40	\$12.80
Personal Care and Service	252 ⁹	<1%	\$10.00	\$12.00
Sales and Related	6,433	10%	\$19.00	\$15.50
Office and Administrative Support	7,442	12%	\$12.90	\$11.50
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	378	1%	\$14.80	\$12.60
Construction and Extraction	4,036	6%	\$19.60	\$17.80
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	378	1%	\$28.90	\$18.60
Production	1,766	3%	\$21.90	\$17.80
Transportation and Material Moving	505	1%	\$10.70	\$13.80
Military	-- ⁸	--	--	--

⁸ None found or small count suppressed.

⁹ Small sample size, results may not be representative and should be interpreted with caution.

Discouraged Workers. Less than one percent of the population is estimated to be discouraged and not actively planning to find a job. These respondents report they may consider employment at some point in the future, under the right situation. Reasons cited included (1) a change in their economic situation, (2) family and children issues, (3) impact of the current economic downturn and (4) change in their families' material needs. In general these individuals often have additional requirements they felt needed to be met prior to considering employment.

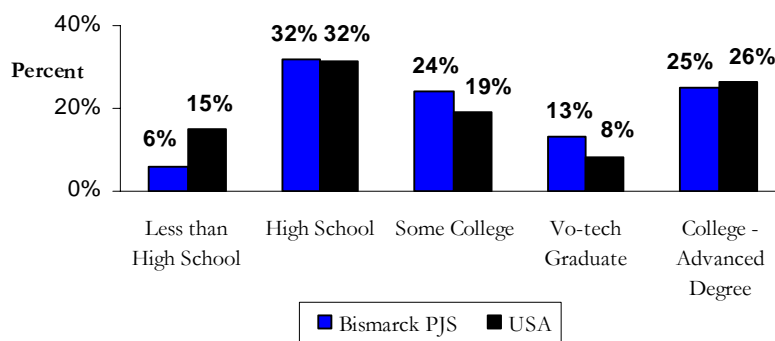
Labor Availability

The Bismarck and Mandan's Economic Development Region offers an employer a well educated, moderate-cost, quality workforce. The skill base of the available workforce ranges across several occupational groups including entry-level clerical and administrative assistants, health care support, sales and related, post, primary and secondary teachers, business and financial operations and construction and extraction as the largest groups.

Demographic Profile. PJSs are similar in age to the workforce population. In general, the median age of a PJS is 43 years old and the workforce is slightly more likely to be represented by males (59 percent) compared to females (41 percent). Similarities exist in regards to educational attainment and employment tenure along with managerial experience (11.3 years) and computer experiences (13 years) as the current workforce. Younger workers (age 18 to 34) represent 35 percent of the potential job seeker labor force.

Educational Attainment. Educational levels are higher than the national average, with 62 percent having post-secondary education, versus 57 percent in the U.S. ¹⁰ In the region, approximately 94 percent of PJSs have at least a high school education, thirteen percent are vocational graduates and one-fourth have a post-graduate or professional degree. Figure 2 presents the PJSs educational attainment compared to the 2008 national averages according to the US Census.

Figure 2. Potential Job Seekers Educational Attainment



Commuting Patterns. The typical PJS drives their own vehicle (90 percent) and travels 12 miles or 16 minutes one-way to work.

Shift Work. Twenty-two percent of the PJS currently work shifts with two-thirds working days followed by rotating shifts (32%). Thirty-eight percent of those not currently work shifts indicate

¹⁰ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2008 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Internet Release date: April 2009

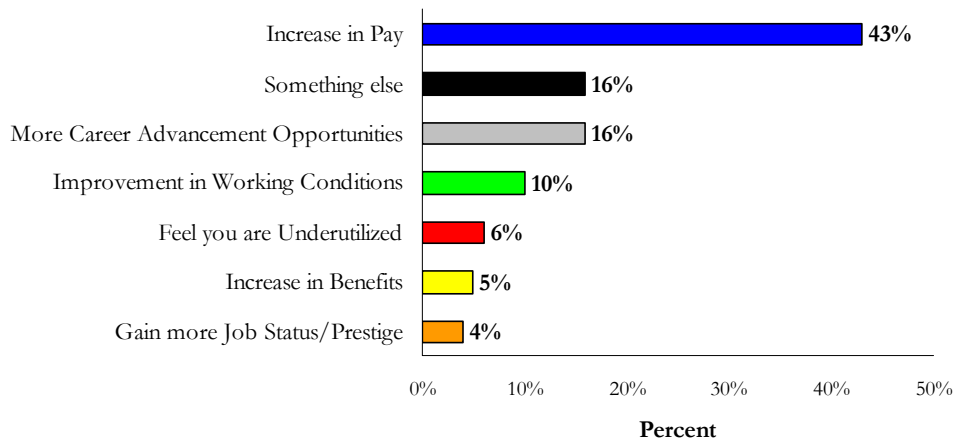
they would consider shift work if it resulted in better pay or benefits. The most popular shift choice for this group is days (46%) followed by rotating shifts (10%).

Seasonal Employment. Generally, year round jobs are preferred (86%) compared to seasonal employment opportunities (14%).

Flexible Scheduling. PJS (90%) are very interested in flexible work schedules¹¹ in which their work hours are arranged around their personal agendas.

Choosing Alternative Employment. The reasons why PJSs would consider alternative employment vary. As presented in Figure 3, the most common reason to choose alternative employment is an increase in salary (43%) followed by additional career advancement opportunities (16%), an improvement in working conditions (10%), the ability to utilize skills more efficiently (6%), increase in benefits (5%) and to gain more job status or prestige (4%). Other mentioned reasons included location (2%), less physically demanding work (2%), fewer hours (1%), different coworkers (1%) and having more vacation time (1%).

Figure 3. Reasons PJSs would Consider Alternative Employment



Commuting Patterns and Choosing Alternative Employment. Table 5 presents a summary of the main reasons to change jobs by the average number of miles PJSs would be willing to commute.

Table 5. Reasons Influencing Job Change and Miles Willing to Commute

Main Reason Influencing Job Change Decision	Percent of PJS	Average Miles Willing to Commute
1. Salary Increase	43%	22
2. Career Advancement	16%	40
3. Improved Working Conditions	10%	21
4. Under Utilization of Skills	6%	56
5. Better Benefits	5%	18
6. Gain Job Status-Prestige	3%	17

¹¹ A flexible work schedule is an alternative to the traditional 9 to 5, 40-hour work week. It allows employees to vary their arrival and/or departure times.

Bismarck-Mandan Regional Business Needs and Labor Availability Study

PJSs indicating an increase in salary was their main reason to influence a job change would be willing to commute an average of 22 miles one-way while those seeking additional career advancement opportunities would commute an average of 31 miles. As a group workers would be willing to commute an average 32 miles one-way.

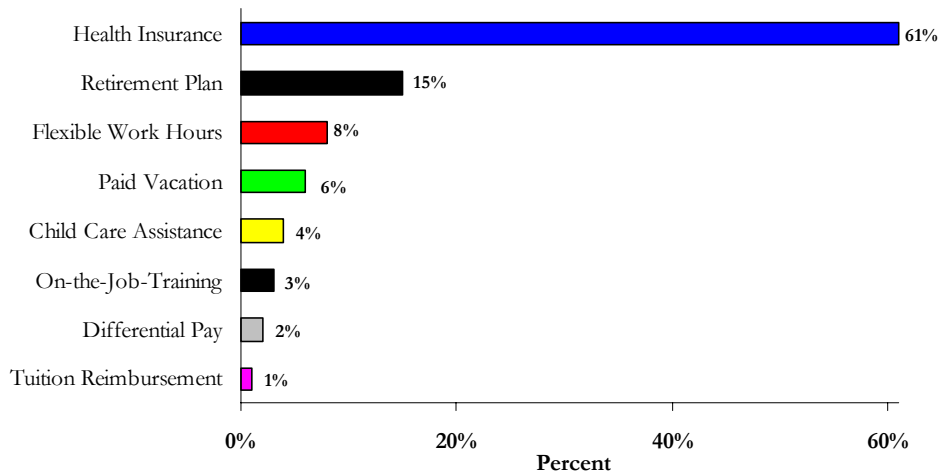
Occupations of Interest. PJSs would be most interested in Business and Financial Operations (13%), Farming, Fishing and Forestry (13%), Construction and Extraction (13%), Health Care Support (12%) and Management (10%) occupations.

Trained in Another Occupation. Half of the PJSs (53 percent) are trained for an occupation other than the one in which they are currently employed. The most often mentioned occupations include Transportation and Material Moving (4%), Business and Financial Operations (4%), Farming, Fishing and Forestry (4%) and Personal Care and Service (4%).

Primary Factor to Accept Employment in Other Occupation. Half of the PJSs indicate a salary increase (51%) would be the most important factor to accept employment in this other occupation. Other lesser factors include an improvement in benefits (20%), career advancement opportunities (11%) and to gain more job status (6%). Twenty percent of PJS trained for an occupation other than the one in which they are currently employed report they would not accept employment in this other line of work.

Job Benefit Preferences. The most desirable benefit to PJS is health insurance (61%) followed by retirement plans (15%) and flexible work scheduling (8%). Figure 4 presents the most important job benefits to the PJS workforce.

Figure 4. Benefits by Rank of Importance



Job Training Received. Forty-four percent of PJS have received job skills training¹² in the past three years. The most common training received was technical training (52%) closely followed by thinking and organizing (35%), interpersonal (35%), safety training (34%) and computer skills (28%). Table 6 presents the most frequent training received, the PJS estimated number of individuals, percentage and the percentage of occupational areas affected.

¹² Respondents were able to choose multiple fields.

Table 6. Job Training Received

Training Received ¹³	PJS Number	Percent of PJS	Occupations Affected
Technical	9,507	52%	28% Health Care Support 15% Education, Training and Library 15% Construction and Extraction
Thinking and Organizing	6,477	36%	16% Education, Training and Library 15% Business - Financial Operations 15% Office - Administrative Support
Interpersonal	6,373	35%	27% Sales and Related 15% Business - Financial Operations 15% Education, Training and Library

Job Change Willingness Overview. Table 7 presents the differences among occupational groups between those who are willing to take an additional job and those who are willing to change jobs.

Table 7. Potential Job Seekers Willingness to Consider Different or an Additional Job by Occupation

Occupational Group	PJS Number	Percent	Interested in New Jobs	Current Pay	Minimum to Accept New Job	Interest in Extra Job
Management	453	1%	118	\$24.00	\$18.30	31
Business and Financial Operations	2,154	6%	1,529	\$20.60	\$16.20	581
Education, Training, and Library	2,947	8%	118	\$17.50	\$13.90	235
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	453	1%	118	\$16.70	\$12.40	59
Protective Service	113	<1%	118	-- ¹⁷	-- ¹⁷	36
Food Preparation and Serving Related	1,587	5%	118	\$6.50	\$7.00	63
Personal Care and Service	227	1%	1,058	-- ¹⁷	-- ¹⁷	823
Sales and Related	5,894	17%	118	\$18.90	\$15.50	81
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	340	1%	1,176	\$14.90	\$12.60	536
Construction and Extraction	3,627	10%	1,881	\$19.40	\$17.80	1,029
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	1,360	4%	118	\$28.90	\$18.60	44
Production	1,700	5%	1,646	\$21.90	\$17.80	1,171

Overall currently employed PJS would generally accept a lower wage to work at an additional job, while those who would consider changing jobs would also be willing to accept a lower wage. Table 9 presents the total PJS estimated number and percentage by occupation, the estimated number

¹³ Thinking and Organizing (problem solving, time management), Interpersonal (leadership, career development), Quality Improvement (customer service, satisfaction), Basic (reading, writing, math) and Product Sales (marketing).

Bismarck-Mandan Regional Business Needs and Labor Availability Study

interested in changing and an additional job, average current hourly wage and the lowest hourly wage they would accept for employment and the estimated number interested in additional jobs but not changing jobs.

Occupational Training Interest. Skill development is a very important component of employment generating strategy. PJS in the Greater Bismarck-Mandan Area demonstrate a strong interest in this strategy demonstrated by their interest in job training. The industry that PJS were most interested in receiving training were in the computer-related fields (49 percent) followed by business services (43 percent), production (36 percent), healthcare service fields (36 percent), engineering fields (30 percent), and construction (29 percent).

Future Educational Plans. Nearly one third of the PJSs (32 percent) plan to advance their education by returning or attending college or a university to pursue a specific degree.

Meeting Employer Needs

The percentage of the population in the Greater Bismarck-Mandan area actively seeking work (unemployed) for the month of April 2009 was 3.6 percent. An estimated 3,970 individuals were looking for work and an additional 2,507 were planning to look for work in the next year. When including those who were already working, over 40,000 people were categorized as Potential Job Seekers, individuals who would take a job under the right circumstances.

Employers rated all basic skill levels among non-managerial and non-professional job applicants as above average or excellent. Average ratings, across all basic skill measurements averaged 50 percent as “excellent or good” and 48 percent “average or fair”. In general there were no significant differences among industry groups. Table 8 presents the basic skills percentages for employers¹⁴ in the Bismarck-Mandan region.

Table 8. Employer Perceptions of Basic Skill Levels among Non-Managerial Applicants

	Excellent				Poor
	1	2	3	4	5
Overall Basic Skills	8%	28%	50%	12%	2%
Proficiency in English	48%	26%	21%	5%	0%
Written Communication	10%	28%	45%	15%	2%
Reading Comprehension	14%	38%	38%	9%	1%
Arithmetic – Math	7%	39%	40%	12%	2%
Thinking and Judgment	6%	34%	40%	17%	3%
Verbal Communication	9%	39%	37%	13%	1%
Team and Cooperative Skills	14%	37%	36%	10%	3%
Trainability for New Skills	13%	40%	39%	7%	1%
Basic Keyboard Skills	11%	37%	35%	12%	5%
Work Ethics	15%	29%	33%	18%	5%
Average	14%	34%	38%	12%	2%

¹⁴ Percentages based upon average of 267 employer responses.

Bismarck-Mandan Regional Business Needs and Labor Availability Study

Basic Job Skill Requirements. Employers were asked to report the skill levels of their applicants on a five-point scale in several specific areas. Table 9 presents employers’ perceptions of all applicants’ basic skill levels and work ethics by industry group. In general the basic skills and work ethics of new employees were above average -- with over one-third rated as “excellent or good.”

Table 9. Employer Perceptions of Basic Skill Levels among Non-Managerial Applicants

Industry Group	Overall Basic Skills of All Applicants			Work Ethics		
	Excellent Good	Average Fair	Poor	Excellent Good	Average Fair	Poor
Utilities (n=8)	62%	38%	0%	63%	37%	0%
Construction (n=23)	17%	74%	9%	41%	54%	5%
Manufacturing-Durables (n=3)	33%	67%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Manufacturing - Non-durables (n=8)	38%	62%	0%	33%	56%	11%
Wholesale Trade (n=17)	35%	65%	0%	41%	53%	6%
Retail Trade (n=43)	30%	65%	5%	40%	51%	9%
Transportation and Warehousing (n=8)	25%	75%	0%	63%	37%	0%
Information Culture and Recreation (n=5)	20%	80%	0%	80%	20%	0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing (n=25)	40%	6%	0%	52%	48%	0%
Professionals, Scientific and Technical Services (n=19)	53%	47%	0%	53%	47%	0%
Management, Administrative and Other Support (n=3)	0%	100%	0%	50%	50%	0%
Educational Services (n=6)	33%	67%	0%	17%	83%	0%
Health Care and Social Assistance (n=51)	45%	53%	2%	43%	51%	6%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (n=5)	40%	60%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Accommodation and Food Services (n=30)	30%	70%	0%	13%	77%	0%
Other Services (n=11)	27%	73%	0%	42%	42%	16%
Public Administration (n=2)	50%	50%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Average	36%	63%	2%	43%	51%	6%

Recruiting New Employees. Employers use several methods to recruit new employees, but four methods, newspaper advertising (51%), utilizing Job Service North Dakota (JSND) (49%), walk-ins/unsolicited resumes (45%) and referred applicants (39%) were the most utilized recruitment resources.

Availability of Unique Computer Skills. In the Employer Needs Survey, respondents were presented a list a of unique computer skills and asked to rate job applicants skill levels in each area. Because this question applies only to a select group of employers, only a small percentage of businesses (on average, 7 percent) responded to this question. Overall employers rated job

Bismarck-Mandan Regional Business Needs and Labor Availability Study

applicants favorably across all computer skill areas with an average “excellent to good” rating of 43 percent while 53 percent indicated skills were “average to fair”.

Table 10. Availability of Unique Computer Skills

	Excellent		Poor		
	1	2	3	4	5
A+ Certification	9%	27%	55%	9%	0%
C++	18%	27%	55%	0%	0%
CAD Skills	15%	40%	40%	0%	0%
Cisco Certification	27%	46%	18%	9%	0%
Novell Certified Training	9%	18%	46%	18%	9%
Oracle Database	8%	39%	31%	15%	7%
Security Systems	13%	33%	47%	7%	0%
SQL	13%	44%	38%	5%	0%
SIEBEL	0%	38%	50%	0%	12%
Web-page Development	13%	29%	46%	8%	4%
Average	13%	34%	43%	7%	3%

Employed Below Skill Levels. Employers were asked if it was common for local residents to be employed below their skill level compared to other areas. Industry groups indicating it was common for local residents to be employed below their skill level compared to other areas included Manufacturing-durables (100%), Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (67%) and Professionals, Scientific and Technical Services (50%). Overall 28 percent of employers reported they frequently experienced residents to be employed below their skills levels while conversely forty-one percent indicated this rarely happened.

Overqualified Applicants. Employers were asked if it was common for applicants to be educationally overqualified. Industry groups indicating it was more likely for applicants to be overqualified include Manufacturing-durables (67%), Transportation and Warehousing (67%), Wholesale Trade (53%), Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing (52%), Professionals, Scientific and Technical Services (50%) and Public Administration (50%). As a group employers reported they frequently experienced overqualified applicants’ thirty-seven percent of the time while conversely nearly the same percentage (39%) indicated this rarely happened.

Older Work Force Demographics. People 55 and older make up the fastest-growing segment of the workforce. In fact, by 2010 the median age will be 40.6 years-and more than half of all U.S. workers. According to fifty percent of employers in the Bismarck-Mandan less than five percent of their workforce is age 55 or older. In addition, 17 percent of employers had 6 percent to 10 percent, and 33 percent has over 11 percent of their workforce age 55 or older.

Industry groups with the largest segments of their workforce age 55 or older include Utilities (67%), Information Culture and Recreation (60%), Management, Administrative and Other Support (50%), Educational Services (50%), Professionals, Scientific and Technical Services (50%) and Public Administration (50%).

Bismarck-Mandan Regional Business Needs and Labor Availability Study

Quality of Regional Training Providers. The majority of employers ranked the quality of training as a major strength for the Bismarck-Mandan area. Overall nearly seven out of ten employers (68%) rated the training and educational services as “excellent or good”. Table 11 presents the employer perceptions of training and educational services by institution.

Table 11. Employer Perceptions of Quality Training and Educational Services

	ExcellentPoor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Bismarck State College	25%	50%	22%	3%	<1%
Dickinson State University	27%	42%	28%	3%	0%
Minot State University	26%	44%	26%	4%	<1%
North Dakota State University	35%	49%	14%	2%	0%
Rasmussen College	21%	33%	35%	10%	2%
United Tribes Technical College	16%	31%	37%	11%	5%
University of Mary	33%	47%	15%	4%	1%
University of North Dakota	34%	53%	12%	2%	0%
Local Private Vendors	12%	36%	45%	7%	0%
Average	25%	43%	26%	5%	1%

Quality of Life. Quality of life amenities also impact employee recruitment. Employers felt that most quality of life indicators, low crime, the educational system, commuting ease, health care and recreational services were “good or excellent” in the Bismarck-Mandan area. Among the highest scoring quality of life indicators were low crime (89%), educational system (81%) and lack of traffic problems (79%). Table 12 presents employers’ perceptions regarding quality of life indicators in the Bismarck-Mandan area.

Table 12. Employer Perceptions: Quality of Life Indicators

Indicator	Excellent to Good	Average	Fair to Poor
Low Crime	89%	10%	1%
Educational System (K-12)	81%	16%	4%
Traffic	79%	18%	3%
Health Care	73%	20%	7%
Recreational Services	63%	25%	12%
Affordable Homes	45%	34%	21%
Arts and Cultural Amenities	42%	39%	19%
Cost of Living	38%	42%	19%
Taxes	33%	39%	28%
Affordable Rentals	29%	41%	30%
Climate	22%	42%	36%
Average	54%	30%	16%

Methodology

Employer Survey

Job Service North Dakota conducted studies (2003-05-07) similar to the 2009 Study of Employer Needs in the Greater Bismarck-Mandan Area. These studies were designed as a continuation of a 2001 study conducted by Younger Associates, LLC and The Wadley Donovan Group. To allow comparable analysis, the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI), in cooperation with the BMDA, developed a questionnaire that incorporated similar data elements as well as additional items to determine the level of difficulty that businesses face in the Bismarck-Mandan area. Respondents were each mailed a letter with a discreet password asking them to go online and respond to the survey. Two separate mailings were conducted; if requested a paper questionnaire with a stamped self-addressed envelope was mailed. Additionally, all business nonrespondents were contacted by phone on two separate occasions; during these conversations SSRI staff members directed them to the web site, along with their unique password and answer any questions pertaining to the study. An online questionnaire was posted on the BMDA website. SSRI contacted 889 employers, a total of 328, or 37 percent of the firms contacted, responded in way that allowed for analysis.

Labor Market Survey

The Workforce Development Division of the Department of Commerce selected the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) to conduct Labor Availability and Underemployment Studies for several North Dakota communities, including designated counties in Minnesota and South Dakota in 2006 – 2009. The goal of the studies are to provide the “core” data elements which have been identified as being needed to support businesses attraction, expansion and retention by a workgroup consisting of representatives from local development organizations, Job Service North Dakota, and the Department of Commerce. SSRI uses a proven research methodology that has been adopted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics which establishes standards for collection of the core data.

The Greater Bismarck-Mandan Area population was defined as adults 18 years of age or older who had the most recent birthday residing in telephone households in the selected labor market county areas. Although 57 percent of the respondents were from either Burleigh or Morton Counties, these respondents represented an estimated 83 percent of the population in study area. Therefore, all responses to the telephone survey were re-weighted to reflect the actual population distribution in the geographical area of this study. As defined by the Department of Commerce, the 2009 study included three North Dakota counties and portions of seven other counties. County sample sizes provide accuracy at plus or minus 5 percent with a 95 percent confidence level. The samples are distributed in proportion to the total adult population age 18 or older in each of the Greater Bismarck-Mandan Area labor market county areas. The survey was conducted January 19 through February 17, 2009 and included 1,133 resident interviews.

The response rate is based upon the most conservative approach methodology adopted by the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO). The CASRO method uses the known status of portions of the sample that are contacted to impute characteristics of portions of the sample that were not reached. The CASRO method of calculating the response rates for the overall labor market area yields an average completion rate of 64.7% if over-quota eligible are assumed to qualify as “good numbers.”