



## Why the Northland?

The Northland is positioned to prosper in a weakened economy because of its collective vision to diversify its industry sectors the last 25 years, its wealth of natural resources, a strong transportation network, a robust telecommunications infrastructure, its progressive business climate, affordable real estate, competitively-priced energy and a skilled, productive and loyal workforce.

Northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin are in the planning and mobilization stages of several new projects that once completed, could inject more than \$3.5 billion dollars into the regional economy. These "large scale projects" are represented in three sectors: ferrous and non-ferrous mining, timber/paper and power generation. If realized they will create 3,500 construction and 4,000 permanent jobs.

The Northland's successful, innovative industries can primarily be found in four clusters: **aerospace, manufacturing, technology and energy**, which are interconnected to the area's transportation network. In the next five years there is 13% growth predicted in a fifth cluster, health care services.

### **Aerospace**

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Aviation manufacturer Cirrus Aircraft is the magnet that has attracted a number of successful suppliers, including Northstar Aerospace and SCS Aircraft Interiors, to the region's aerospace industry cluster. The world's top selling personal aircraft, the Cirrus SR22, is assembled in Duluth.

Lake Superior College is in the planning stages of developing a General Aviation Institute, featuring several education programs for airframe & powerplant, aerospace avionics, aviation management, air traffic control as well as the integration of the existing aircraft maintenance and professional pilot programs.

### **Manufacturing**

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The region supports a vibrant base of metal fabrication and machining companies that make vital components in mining, manufacturing and other industrial applications. A number of these firms offer services to help their customers create new innovations and improve productivity including Hibbing Fabricators, Genesis Attachments and Premier Plastics. The Northern Lights Tech Center at University of Minnesota Duluth's Natural Resources Research Institute houses the area's rapid prototyping lab.

The Northland is home to manufacturers of heavy equipment including Altec Hiline in Duluth and ASV of Grand Rapids. Altec produces aerial lift devices for the electric and telecom industries. ASV designs and manufactures compact track loaders and related accessories.

With plentiful renewable resources and a well-developed transportation system, the Northland features six taconite mines and production facilities, a number of pulp and paper mills and secondary wood product manufacturers.

## **Technology**

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Technology is the keystone of all industry sectors and The Northland is no different. Dozens of companies in the area provide data processing, accounting, and back office customer service utilizing the region's outstanding telecommunications infrastructure. They include United Healthcare, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Delta Dental. With twelve data network providers, SONET ring redundancy and hundreds of miles of fiber optics with lightning-fast bandwidth capacity, the Northland is connected to the globe.

## **Energy**

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Water is abundant and there is reliable and affordable energy including electricity, natural gas and steam. Public and private investment in new generation technologies, renewable energy sources and expanding distribution systems make the Northland a great location for alternative energy projects. Another added bonus is a history of minimal natural disasters, a perfect anecdote for businesses that cannot afford to lose a day of productivity.

## **Available Sites and Quality of Life**

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Low cost commercial and industrial real estate is readily available in the Northland with many communities offering properties in fully-served business and industrial parks, all zoned and ready for growth and development.

The Northland closes the deal with unsurpassed quality of life. Spectacular scenery and outdoor adventures for every season dot the landscape. From the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness to the North and South Shores along Lake Superior to safe neighborhoods, quality schools, affordable housing, state of the art health care and hardly any traffic congestion.

# The Northland's Competitive & Strategic Advantages

## **Abundant Natural Resources**

- Ample water supply protected by the Great Lakes Water Resources Compact
- Plentiful timber with forestry management aimed at sustainability and protection of natural ecosystems
- Multiple deposits of ferrous/non-ferrous minerals with emphasis on environmentally-friendly extraction technology
- Non-polluted air with the area in attainment for Federal Air Pollution Regulations

## **Accessible Infrastructure**

- Easily accessible natural gas, electric, water and wastewater utilities; steam available in parts of Duluth, Hibbing, Virginia and Laskin Energy Park
- Served by regional, competitively-priced, electric utility with some of the lowest costs in the nation
- Utility providers specialized in accommodating needs of large consumers of natural gas, power and water
- More than 400 available sites and business/industrial parks

## **Productive, Loyal Workforce**

- Affordable and competitive wage rates
- Skilled workers save costs and increase revenues
- Annual turnover rates less than 10% for all industries

## **Strategic Location**

- Situated at the western tip of the St. Lawrence Seaway with access to world markets; 2-3 week sailing time to Western Europe, the Mediterranean, West Africa and South America
- Positioned in the middle of the Great Circle routes between Europe and Western U.S.
- Centrally located for freight shipments throughout North America
- No exposure to natural disasters such as seismic activity, tsunamis and hurricanes

## **Multi-Modal Transportation Network**

- Two (2) international airports (Duluth, International Falls); Duluth has the second longest runway in the state with CAT II Instrument Landing System
- Three (3) airports with commercial passenger service including 14 daily round-trip flights (Chisholm/Hibbing, Duluth, International Falls)
- International seaport with high capacity, cargo dock operations (Duluth/Superior)
- Around the clock customs service at three (3) ports of entry (Duluth/Superior, Grand Portage, International Falls)
- Two (2) Foreign Trade Zones (Duluth, International Falls/Ranier)
- Four (4) Class One railways serve key markets in North America
- Interstate highway for border-to-border shipment of goods
- More than three dozen trucking companies

## **Exceptional Education and Industry Resources**

- 13 universities and community/technical college campuses
- Effective academic customized training for a variety of disciplines including business, engineering, medicine and the trades
- Responsive academic leadership supporting investment into growing sectors
- Recruit from more than 6,200 graduating college students each year
- Industry support network through Arrowhead Manufacturers and Fabricators Association (AMFA), High Tech Association, Iron Mining Association, Non-Ferrous and Northland Technology Consortium (NTC)

## **Growing Economy**

- Burgeoning total gross domestic product
- Progressive business climate with looming opportunities to supply new large scale industrial projects
- Numerous business resources including low-cost financial assistance, seed or venture capital, strategic planning, product and workforce development
- Research and development advantages from laboratories that create new economic opportunities in energy savings, forestry, mining, water and rapid prototyping (EPA Mid-Continent Ecology Division Laboratory, Natural Resources Research Institute)

## **Robust Telecommunications**

- Connected to national and global networks through Chicago Network Access Point (NAP), largest Internet exchange point by volume
- Twelve (12) data network providers with fiber optics and wireless services
- Redundancy with SONET ring to most urban communities

## **Quality of Life**

- Cost of Living Index 102-103 (100 national average)
- Average commutes 19-24 minutes
- 2 hour, 15 minute interstate drive to Minneapolis/St. Paul
- Affordable housing
- World class health care from 17 hospitals and dozens of clinics and physician networks
- Renown symphony, ballet, community theaters and concert venues
- More than three dozen museums
- Convenient shopping
- Award-winning restaurants
- Nationally-recognized collegiate athletic programs with two (2) Division 1 hockey programs
- Two (2) hour drive to professional baseball, basketball, football, hockey and soccer entertainment
- Four (4) seasons with year-round opportunities for recreation