



## In the News: The Laborers' International Union of North America's (LiUNA) Training and Networking Event



**Bryce Bjork** and **Susan Boehm** from Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI) recently attended LiUNA's Training and Networking Event. The event opened with the founder of Northstar Policy Institute giving the first seminar. A new report by North Star Policy Institute finds that Minnesota's Construction Industry has pulled ahead of Wisconsin's since the Great Recession, fueled by a strong recovery that has boosted both employment and average worker pay (<https://northstarpolicy.org/new-report-minnesotas-construction-industry-pulls-ahead-of-wisconsins>).

Next, LiUNA representatives went over pre-wailing wage versus non-prevailing wage analytics based on "An Examination of Minnesota's Prevailing Wage Law, Effects on Costs, Training, and Economic Development," by Frank Manzo IV, M.P.P. and Kevin Duncan, Ph.D. These studies investigated 2,183 total bids on public projects. The results indicate that winning bids based on the payment of prevailing wages are no more costly than bids that do not require prevailing wages.

LiUNA featured two testimonials by members who have had their and their families' lives changed by becoming Union members. The Construction Apprenticeship Magazine handout points out that "apprenticeship programs have also proven to provide a greater return for employers. Economic Return on Investment (ROI) has shown that employers gain a return for craft training of as much as \$3 to every \$1 that is invested; accounted for by improved safety, elimination of rework, and increased productivity of the craft worker."

Finally during the luncheon, in a packed bay of tables, we heard several motivational speakers. A representative from the Department of Labor and Industry spoke about how important Apprenticeship Programs are and how they are the "other four year degree," in which you "earn while you learn!"

*Submitted by: Bryce Bjork, Construction Careers Navigator, WDI*

