

**WASHINGTON COUNTY
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD MEETING
East Ridge High School
Woodbury, MN
September 16, 2009**

WIB Members and Partners Present

Nigel Bath	Duane Gatzke	Jeralyn Jargo
Stacy Kennedy	Jane Klein	Kim Luchsinger
Peg Killen	Ernie Pines	Dave Schaps
Cherylee Sherry	Patrick Singel	Corrine Watson
Russell Williams		

Workforce Center Staff Present

Nina Arneson	Carrie Gatzke	Beth Jameston
Rachel O'Connell	Deb Reckner	

Guests

Randi Weitz, Manpower St. Paul
Amy Shillings, Washington County Workforce Center

WIB Members and Partners Not Present

Lori Brink	Brenda Carlson	Jim Finley
Jeanine Swanson	Lowell Reiks, Jr.	Janelle Schmitz

- 1. Welcome to East Ridge High School:** Principal Aaron Harper welcomed everyone to East Ridge High School. Ernie said the building is about 400,000 square feet on a 320 acre campus. Anyone within the South Washington County School District can attend the school. Every classroom has an interactive smart board. Classes are laid out with a community/pod concept where classrooms can be clustered to utilize technology.
- 2. Call to Order and Introductions – Nigel Bath, Vice Chair**
Nigel Bath called the meeting to order and members and guests introduced themselves.
- 3. Adopt Agenda – Nigel Bath**
A Motion was made to adopt the Agenda, it was seconded, and the Motion carried.
- 4. Approve June 2009 minutes – Nigel Bath**
A Motion was made to adopt the June 17, 2009 minutes, it was seconded, and the Motion carried.
- 5. Committee Reports**
Business and Marketing – Beth Jameston: The committee talked about focusing on a project for next year. Jane asked if a goal of the group was to market the Workforce Center. Nina replied that one goal was to bring more businesses to the Workforce Center and give them information on Workforce Center services.

Youth Committee – Cherylee Sherry: The committee will work in partnership with Deanne DeGraff and Century College this year. Members will participate in an all-day high school counselor meeting and help with workshops on Career Day, which will be held March 12 at Century College. Jeralyn Jargo asked if WIB members knew of dynamic individuals from various career fields, especially in the agricultural/natural resource field, who could help with Career Day. Cherylee met with the state monitor for the Youth Program. One recommendation was to have a youth as part of the Youth Council.

Policy and Law – Pat Singel: The legislature is not in session so there isn't much to report. More budget cuts are expected because of un-allotments.

6. Update on the Dislocated Worker Program – Deb Reckner:

This has been the most difficult year for the Dislocated Worker program and at \$3 million it is now larger than the MFIP program. The Dislocated Worker program is for people who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Funding comes from the Department of Labor and the state of Minnesota, one of three states that provide additional funding. Small layoffs of 50 or less make up the majority of the program. Large layoffs of 50 or more, such as the Tenere or Andersen projects, are competitively bid to provide services.

The first graph (handout) shows a 60% rise in enrollment from July 2008 to July 2009. A caseload of 75 was previously considered the maximum, but by March caseloads were over 100 with a waiting list of 300 to get into the program. To address this problem, the Dislocated Worker team devised a new process to serve people in groups. Three more counselors and a trainer were hired, in part through Stimulus funding. In the new process, people attend an information session and are funneled into job search or career exploration and are more prepared before they meet with a counselor. Even though numbers haven't gone down, there is no longer a waiting list. The director of the Dislocated Worker program from DEED is in Washington and will share the Dislocated Worker process from Washington and Anoka Counties, which are similar.

Performance measures on the previous year are being finalized showing the number of people employed, retention rates, credential rates (skill upgrading and training) and average earnings (if a person's income dropped, that would not meet standards). All performance standards were met this year and next year the state will have somewhat lower standards to reflect the economy. The top three training areas were transportation technologies, production (such as CNC machining), and computer technologies. The top industries for placement were manufacturing, health care, transportation, and finance/insurance.

There will be challenges in the coming year. In any recession the last thing that recovers is jobs, which may take 3-5 years to come back. There will still be a high demand for services in the upcoming year; the six employment counselors now have an average caseload of 150. As the economy comes out of the recession, some sectors will hire more than others. There is money for training for green jobs, but the jobs haven't caught up. Jane asked if they work with Beth when she learns about positions. She said in her industry, companies are hiring for contract positions rather than as employees. Beth replied that she sends positions she learns about to employment counselors. Jeralyn said they are identifying emerging sectors for Career Day and have a need to place internships in those fields.

Deb said it is encouraging to see more people getting jobs and mass layoffs have slowed. She predicts more small layoffs with the exception of Delta Northwest which may lay off 600 later this year.

7. Update on Stimulus Spending – Deb Reckner

Deb reported Stimulus funds have been received for the Dislocated Worker, Youth and Senior programs. The money enabled them to serve from 170-200 people on the Dislocated Worker program and 50 in the automotive industry, with 70% of funds going into training. About 100 additional youth were served in the Youth program, three in the Senior program and 20 low income adults on the WIA program. A detailed report is on the Washington County website: http://www.co.washington.mn.us/client_files/documents/com/COM-ARRA9-15-09comp.pdf

Natasha Fleischman reported on the Fast Trac program. Additional funds have helped with transportation and Early Childhood Education for single mothers studying for their GED. All Stimulus funds received by the Workforce Center were distributed to Forest Lake, Stillwater, and South Washington County Schools.

8. Update on Summer Youth Program – Carrie Gatzke

The Summer Youth Program served 150 youth this summer. Stimulus funds made it possible to add three crews to Tree Trust and 65 youth were placed on individual worksites such as Washington County Libraries and the Courage Center. Tree Trust projects included building walkways, small bridges at area parks, and an amphitheatre in Oakdale. About 25 youth will continue working through September 30. Some older youth will enroll in the year round program for GED and short term training. A Special Project provided work readiness training for 10 youth which included a tour of Century College to do career planning.

9. Update on Racial Disparities Project – Amy Shillings

The Racial Disparities Group is comprised of county employees, community members and business people with the goal of ending disparities for the customers we serve. This year a grant was received for the Extra Program, focusing on disparities for African American customers. We partnered with East Suburban Resources to secure supported and unsubsidized job positions where advancement was possible. Participants have mentors to help them and incentives (such as gift cards) were provided at different benchmarks. Some accomplishments through the program included: one person hired at Perkins moved into a management position and became a mentor; another person was able to purchase a vehicle, and several saw an increase in wages after being hired. Common barriers include transportation, criminal backgrounds, and child support arrears which took much of their income.

10. Report on Tri-WIB Activities – Nina Arneson

The Tri-WIB Leadership group met September 11. The group decided to go back to the recommendations of the Tri-WIB meeting a year ago and focus on a project relating to youth. There will be a 3-step process: first, to have a “road show” that will present information to schools on business and industry sectors that will emerge after the recession; second, to have students take educational tours of facilities to learn about careers; and third, to connect youth

with OJT's, internships or volunteer opportunities, potentially including the summer Youth Program. Stacy pointed out that Career Day with Century College already involves Ramsey County and they could possibly work in partnership with Dakota/Scott. The Leadership group will meet again in a couple weeks.

11. Business Services Update – Beth Jameston

Beth received requests for information from a car dealership about financing for the auto industry and traffic count on Highway 36. She also received inquiries from retail businesses for data reports on population, housing and future trends for their area. She continues to work with the city of Hugo on a business retention and expansion project. She updated research information with Rachel Vilsack from DEED and found the industries that remain strong include healthcare, social assistance, transportation, material moving, management of companies and wholesale trade.

12. Announcements

Corrine announced United Way has brought Fare for All, an emergency food shelf network, to Stillwater Junior High School. Over 180 people used the service, which has no income requirements and is used by those who are unemployed or underemployed. The emphasis is on healthy foods such as meat and vegetables, rather than packaged food. The website has dates and locations: <http://www.emergencyfoodshelf.org/OurFamilyOfPrograms/ffa/>

The next WIB meeting will be October 21 at the Woodbury Vocational Rehabilitation Services office, 6043 Hudson Road, Woodbury. Directions: take 94 to Century Ave., take a left on the frontage road, and the office is located behind the Country Inn.

13. Adjourn – Nigel Bath

A Motion was made to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded, and the Motion carried.