

# Workforce **LINK**

WINTER 2007

Peninsula Council for Workforce Development

## From the Chairman's Perspective



### Seizing the new year

By Dr. Robert P. Leber  
Chairman, PCFWD & GPWIB

I hope your holiday season was joyous and relaxing, and that 2007 turns out to be a happy, healthy and prosperous year for all.

Before we get too far into the New Year, we should take a moment to reflect upon 2006 because it was a grand year for the Greater Peninsula region. Clearly our workforce development activity over the last year has been exciting and productive. We have received numerous accolades at the regional, statewide and national levels on our "demand driven" regional workforce development system. Our success has been directly related to the multiple partnerships formed with employers, training providers, strategic allies, municipalities and many others.

2007 will be another busy year. We want to build upon our successes in 2006, and continue to

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## Summit piques partnerships

Healthy alliances between education and business will help produce a skilled workforce for the future.

Nearly 400 members of the area's business, education and non-profit communities attended the Business & Education Partnership Summit in Newport News this past October to learn more about how they can help ready students today so they can successfully compete in the "real world" tomorrow.

"I was thrilled by the great turnout of the business community," says Richard B. "Rick" Donaldson, chairman of the Newport News School Board. "Their participation and support for the summit showed their commitment to our students. We see this as a great step forward as we work to improve educational opportunities for the area's children."

The underlying purpose of the summit, which members of the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development helped plan, was to promote mutually beneficial partnerships between local businesses and area schools.

The summit — held at Christopher Newport University and sponsored by the Newport News Educational Foundation, the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and Newport News Public Schools — featured presentations from 10 speakers including Gov. Timothy M. Kaine; C. Larry Pope, president and chief executive officer of Smithfield Foods; and John A. Stegeman, president and chief executive officer of Ferguson Enterprises.

"Ferguson takes the education of our youth very seriously," Stegeman says. "We feel it's our corporate responsibility to ensure that the children of today are prepared to succeed in tomorrow's business world." Working hand in hand with the area's educational institutions, he adds, will allow local businesses to remain competitive in today's expanding global economy.

Dr. Ashby C. Kilgore, interim superintendent of Newport News Public Schools, agrees. "Our schools are educat-



Gov. Tim Kaine, the keynote speaker at the Business & Education Partnership Summit, stresses the importance of businesses and organizations actively supporting education.

ing tomorrow's workforce, and we want to ensure that today's students learn the skills needed to get the best jobs

**One of the best partnerships to come out of the summit is the BizEd Partnership found at [www.pcfwd.org](http://www.pcfwd.org).**

possible and help the Peninsula and Virginia thrive economically. As the governor said, we are competing in a worldwide economy, and it is going to take the best minds in both education and business working together so students can succeed."

Currently, the Newport News schools division partners with 290 businesses that do such things as donate services or goods or send employees to read to elementary school students on a regular basis. Long-time program supporter Northrop Grumman Newport

News, for example, encourages its employees to participate by giving them flex time each week.

To help boost the numbers of businesses and organizations willing to partner with local schools, PCFWD has

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**PENINSULA COUNCIL**  
For Workforce Development

## Chairman's Perspective

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implement and support programs and initiatives that increase the total quantity and quality of the skilled workforce within our local region and the Commonwealth.

As we begin the New Year, I suggest we consider several points made in a recent edition of *Education Week*. The publication noted that education is a thread that weaves through our national consciousness. In the 21st century, it may be the most important factor determining one's life chances. To that end, education is:

- A leveler,
- A stepping stone,
- A barometer of social and economic health, and
- A foundation of the "American Dream."

Additionally, as noted in a recent article in *The Daily Press*, we cannot afford to assume that the purpose of public education is to prepare all children for college. We need to recognize that the curriculum and career paths offered in our schools must allow for and support other directions in life – particularly when considering this compelling fact. Of 100 students who enter ninth grade in Virginia, only 20 will end up earning bachelor's degrees. The other students need educational opportunities that provide job skills just as much as the college-bound students.

This is where business-education partnerships such as the Youth Career Café are so important. In this edition, you will read about several initiatives in our region that provide work readiness skills so that all individuals entering the workplace have opportunities to succeed. We hope you are already involved in one or more of these initiatives.

I sincerely want to thank you for your contributions to this effort in 2006 and look forward to our working side by side in 2007. 

## Grants pour in for Youth Career Café

PCFWD recently got a windfall of \$35,000 to aid in its quest to prepare the Peninsula's youth for the workplace.

Northrop Grumman Newport News awarded a \$25,000 grant to support its Youth Career Café. The Hampton Youth Commission awarded a \$5,000 grant to develop a Web-based job information center for youth. And Howmet Castings, a subsidiary of Alcoa in Hampton, shared its good fortune with PCFWD by way of a \$5,000 grant, also earmarked for the café.

One of only three corporate-wide winners, Howmet Castings was awarded a 2006 Community Leadership Award from the Alcoa Foundation. The award allowed Howmet to provide grants to select local groups.

"This funding will be used to continue improving and expanding resources provided through the Youth Career Café," says Matthew James, president and CEO of PCFWD. "The grants recognize that our workforce development system continues to do an exceptional job supporting the youth in our region."

The Youth Career Café is designed to help young people ages 14 to 21 increase their workforce readiness skills. Youth also learn to navigate the business world by expanding the connection between career and academic experiences. The café opened at the Coliseum Mall in May 2006 and since then has served more than 1,180 students and 25 businesses. 

## Summit

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joined forces with the public school system and developed a "BizEd Partnership" section on its Web site at [www.pcfwd.org](http://www.pcfwd.org).

"We are excited about developing this pilot with Newport News Public Schools, and we expect to expand the Biz Ed Partnership to other local school divisions in the near future," says Matthew James, president and CEO for the PCFWD.

Local companies can find partnership opportunities and individual educators and schools can post requests.

"This is one of the best partnerships to come out of the summit," says Patrick Finneran, director of community relations and legislative services for Newport News Public Schools. "The business education-partnership Web site that Newport News Public Schools and the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development designed is already producing results and bringing in new partners to help our schools meet student needs and, in the long run, produce more highly qualified graduates."

Members of civic and service groups as well as military and faith-based organizations are also encouraged to join in partnerships with the public school systems. 

*It's official!*

## Web site is up, running and open for business

The new Peninsula Council for Workforce Development Web site at [www.pcfwd.org](http://www.pcfwd.org) was officially unveiled this past September. Employers, educators and jobseekers can use the Web site to connect and access resources provided by a variety of strategic partners.

"The new Web site was a long time coming," says John Olson, chairman of PCFWD's Communication Committee. "A much-needed communication tool, it will let the world know about the many workforce development projects on the Peninsula."

For instance, an events calendar lists workshops, job fairs, training sessions and more that can help individuals do everything from writing resumes to learning basic computer skills. And if businesses want to get more involved with the overall workforce picture, they can sign up online to become a council member and check out who's already on board.

Whether you're someone seeking a job today or dreaming of one tomorrow ... whether you're a company in need of filling positions or wanting to make an impact on the area's workforce by lending your expertise ... this Web site is a great place to start the process. Don't delay. Check out [www.pcfwd.org](http://www.pcfwd.org) today. 



## GPWIB receives incentive award

In December, the Greater Peninsula Workforce Investment Board (GPWIB) was one of only five local boards in Virginia to be awarded a \$50,000 Incentive Award for Exemplary Performance from the Virginia Workforce Council. In fiscal year 2005, GPWIB met or exceeded all 17

**Our continued success has been achieved through the dedication and efforts of our volunteer board of directors and the outstanding work of the staff at the Peninsula's One-Stop Career Centers.**

Federal Workforce Investment Act performance benchmarks.

"I am extremely pleased that the state has recognized our ongoing commitment to workforce excellence on the Peninsula," says Dr. Robert Leber, GPWIB chairman and director of education and workforce development for Northrop Grumman Newport News. "Our continued success has been

achieved through the dedication and efforts of our volunteer board of directors and the outstanding work of the staff at the Peninsula's One-Stop Career Centers."

GPWIB is part of a network of 16 workforce boards in Virginia. It is governed by a 50-member board of directors and supported by the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development (PCFWD), in conjunction with the Greater Peninsula Workforce Development Consortium (GPWDC).

PCFWD was created to develop a regional "business-driven" workforce development system. Its primary mission is to identify the employer workforce development needs of Peninsula-based employers. After determining their needs, PCFWD aims to implement regional solutions by establishing partnerships with related training and education providers.

GPWDC is a consortium of elected officials of the seven cities and counties of the Virginia Peninsula. It serves as the grant recipient/administrative entity and fiscally liable party for all Workforce Investment Act funds allocated to the Greater Peninsula Workforce Investment Area. 

## Youth Career Café gets new digs

With the Coliseum Mall closed, the Youth Career Café is on the move. It's in the process of relocating to a larger location directly across from Sears on the first level of the NetCenter, formerly the Newmarket Fair Mall in Hampton. It will reopen Feb. 12.

"We believe this effort is greatly appreciated by the citizens of Hampton," says Mayor Ross A. Kearney II. "We're pleased the Youth Career Café will remain in Hampton and will continue to serve our community. It's a great resource for our young people. It provides guidance, career planning and a host of opportunities for students who are both college and workforce bound."

The council, along with its partners, has plans to expand the Youth Career Café into other cities in the near future. For more information about the café, visit [www.pcfwd.org](http://www.pcfwd.org) or call (757) 826-3804. 

## PCFWD in the News

- To link students with "real world" opportunities by connecting them with "real world" professionals, the Youth Career Café recently hosted two NASA specialists, John Pandolf and David Rohas. Under their direction, students



from the Center for High Technology at Phoebus High School explored careers in science and engineering at the café.

- On Sept. 20, PCFWD and the Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance partnered on a workforce development forum in Williamsburg. The Herman Group moderated the session, which focused on critical trends and best practices.

- To better brand the Peninsula Construction Academy, PCFWD has unveiled a new logo, and two new brochures will detail the program. One brochure targets high school students and their parents, and the other employees



and employees. Both brochures will be ready for distribution by early February.

## A tasteful tour

In October, Congressman Bob- by Scott (fifth from the left), a man known for his dedication to workforce development, toured the Youth Career Café, where he was met by representatives from PCFWD, the City of Hampton Public Schools, Northrop Grumman Newport News, Ferguson Enterprises and W.M. Jordan Co. During his visit, in which he stayed twice as long as planned, he sampled many of the youth-friendly services available to help area students find suitable career paths. He summed up his experience with a single word — "Wow" — and added that he definitely supports expanding this concept into other areas. Seen here, Scott tries out a set of headphones and gathers for a photo op with his constituents at the café.



## It's a first of many

Almost 250 people attended the PCFWD and GPWIB annual meeting Sept. 20 at the Marriott Hotel City Center in Newport News. Roger Herman of The Herman Group provided a strategic overview of significant workforce trends affecting the region and nation, and copies of the 2005-2006 Annual Report were distributed. Seen here (from left) are attendees Matthew James, Turner M. Spencer, Sybil Wheatley, Billy S. Scruggs, Jay T. Harrison, William Mann and Dr. Robert Leber.

**Join us!**  
Call today to find  
out how your organi-  
zation can become a  
council member.  
**(757) 826-3327**

*PCFWD: Conducting the Work of the Greater Peninsula Workforce Investment Board*

## Preparing for changes as a result of BRAC

An extensive 38-page report was recently released that details the economic impact of military base adjustments on the Peninsula. The report will assist local government and workforce development officials understand what's going to take place regarding job loss and job creation as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) actions.

According to William Mann Jr., executive director of the Greater Peninsula Workforce Development Consortium, the report will allow the workforce development system to identify ways to retain some of the people who would be likely to move out of the region because of these actions.

The economic impact study was commissioned by GPWDC, in partnership with the GPWIB and PCFWD. The report, produced by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, outlines the economic implications of the various military base changes set to take place in the next few years. The results of the study are being used to prepare and better organize the Peninsula's workforce development infrastructure to proactively respond to the issues affecting the community.

According to the report, the construction industry will see growth in 2009 and 2010 due to building and cleanup efforts at Fort Eustis and Fort Monroe. This finding led PCFWD to apply for funds through Virginia's Military Strategic Response Fund to support the Peninsula Construction Academy. Although the proposal was not funded, the construction academy will still develop the pipeline to meet the needs that resulted from the BRAC actions. 

## Workshops focus on customer service training

As part of the hospitality cluster, PCFWD — in partnership with the Hampton Convention and Visitor Bureau, Newport News Tourism Development Office and Newport News Hospitality Association — initiated an ongoing series of customer service training workshops.

More than 230 people attended the 2006 session held Nov. 3 at the Marriot in City Center. Two more sessions are planned for 2007, one in the spring prior to the tourist season and another in the fall before the holidays.

The initial session focused on tourism and its impact, and defining and achieving exceptional customer service. Lynne C. Lochen, executive director of the Portsmouth Convention & Visitors Bureau, was the guest speaker.

PCFWD will work with its other cluster groups to determine if similar training initiatives are needed. If you're interested in having a workshop for your business or organization arranged, please call Shawn Avery at 826-3327. 

## Shawn Avery joins PCFWD staff

Shawn M. Avery has succeeded Autrice Campbell Long as manager of workforce development. Prior to joining the PCFWD staff, he was senior manager of development and community affairs for Opportunity Inc. As PCFWD manager, he'll provide support to the industry cluster groups and board.



*Avery*

A man very familiar with the needs of the economic and workforce development efforts in Hampton Roads, Avery also has served as manager of the Peninsula Workforce Development Center and grants specialist for Thomas Nelson Community College. Prior to TNCC, he was manager of development for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Peninsula.

Avery received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Christopher Newport University and a master's in business administration from Florida Tech. He's also earned a Certificate of Study in community economic development from Virginia Tech and a Certificate of Study in basic economic development from the University of North Carolina.

The Newport News resident is a member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Workforce Development Leadership Course Class of 2002, as well as the Leadership Hampton Roads' Class of 2002. In 2001, he received an *Inside Business* Top 40 under 40 Award. 