

Workforce LINK

WINTER 2008

Peninsula Council for Workforce Development

From the
Chairman's Perspective

Tackling new tasks in 2008

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



With the year-end celebrations a distant memory and the new year well under way, we should clearly focus on the tasks we must now accomplish in 2008. Those tasks include consolidating the offices and staffs of the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development and the Greater Peninsula Workforce Development Consortium.

This act will send a clear message to Richmond and Washington that we are serious about reducing grant management costs associated with Workforce Investment Act funds. Also, establishing a 501c3 will provide access to additional non-WIA-related funds. Both of these actions should offset reductions in federal funding.

We also must find ways to involve more regional partners. In addition to benefiting our region, new and expanded partnerships will increase the likelihood of obtaining additional state and federal funds. Regional cooperation is a major objective these levels of government have chosen to promote.

Finally, I ask your support and cooperation as we pass the chairman's gavel later this year. I have enjoyed serving as your chairman for the past four years because you — through your actions and commitment — have made them very successful years. The Greater Peninsula Workforce Investment Board and PCFWD are known throughout the Commonwealth and our East Coast region as one of the most forward-thinking Workforce Investment Boards and organizations in the nation.

Programs such as the Youth Career Café, SEVAMP and SEVA-PORT are shining examples of what we can do when we commit to "do the right things." This issue of the newsletter describes where we are with those endeavors plus several new initiatives that will develop into equally impressive successes.

When my term as chairman comes to an end, you will not be rid of me. I will continue to be committed to our cause by serving on the Virginia Workforce Council and working with the National Association of Workforce Boards and serving in my new position as a member of the American Society for Training & Development's Public Policy Council.

For manufacturing companies

SEVAMP can give your workforce a leg up

Did you know area manufacturing companies can use the resources of SEVAMP — the Southeast Virginia Advanced Manufacturing Pipeline — to help recruit, hire and train both new and existing employees? Thanks to a recent extension, manufacturing companies in greater Hampton Roads will be able to tap into this resource through April 2009 and save up to 50 percent of the cost associated with these areas.

Awarded to the Greater Peninsula Workforce Development Consortium in April 2005 and administered by Thomas Nelson Community College through Paul D. Camp, Tidewater and Eastern Shore community colleges, the \$2 million federal grant from the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration helps locate, train and place people in manufacturing jobs.

In almost three years, the demand-driven placement/training system has helped to successfully place more than 3,200 candidates with nearly 60 employers using a national assessment system called WorkKeys. WorkKeys identifies quality workers who have a greater chance of success, a higher potential of retention and the essential skills required to thrive in today's advanced manufacturing industry.

"The addition of WorkKeys to our hiring process has had a positive impact on hiring results and employee retention," says Mike Lindsey, human resources manager at Continental Automotive AG in Newport News.

In addition to Continental, WorkKeys has been adopted by companies large and small, including Northrop Grumman, Catalina Cylinders, Liebherr Mining, Honda, Wellman Inc., AGFA and JW Aluminum.

SEVAMP — a collaboration of employers, professional organizations, government agencies and educational institutions — helps businesses benefit by:

- Replacing a retiring workforce with capable people,
- Reducing hiring time by 30 percent,
- Reducing hiring costs by up to 50 percent,
- Increasing retention by up to 84 percent and
- Growing a skilled workforce.

"With the help of SEVAMP and Paul D. Camp Community College, we are training our present workforce to get their skill levels in line with the requirements for the job," says Dorothy Hickman with Hercules Inc. "The end result has been qualified workers with a skill level to succeed and understand the constant technology changes in today's workplace with limited supervision and training."

For more information on how your company can benefit from SEVAMP, call Workforce Development at TNCC at (757) 865-3122.

Lights, camera, action!



More than 60 students from Newport News public schools attended a workshop led by Logan Coles, a producer with The N Network. (See story on page 3.)



Peninsula Worklink honors businesses that champion for people with disabilities

In commemoration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Peninsula Worklink teamed up with the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services to honor 10 area businesses for championing the employment of people with disabilities.

On Oct. 30 at the Peninsula Workforce Development Center in Hampton, the following businesses received a Peninsula Worklink Champions Award: Northrop Grumman, Avid Medical, Golden Corral, Food Lion, APAC Customer Services, Riverside Brick and Supply, Weststaff, Shell Gas of Williamsburg, Montgomery Enterprises and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

During the month of October, DRS hosted a series of events throughout Virginia such as the one in Hampton. The events honored individuals and organizations in public, private, and nonprofit sectors that have helped further



DRS's mission to empower individuals with disabilities. The goal is to maximize their employment, independence and full inclusion into society. ➤

DRS Commissioner James Rothrock (seated) presents Dan Dwyer, site director for APAC Customer Services, with a Peninsula Worklink Champions Award while (from left) Dr. Robert Leber, chairman of PCFWD; Harry Street, DRS placement counselor; Stan Richards, regional human resources manager for APAC Customer Services; and Lisa Wornom-Zahrvalddin, DRS regional business development manager, show their support.

Who serves who?

Training focuses on internal customer service

The Peninsula Council for Workforce Development – in conjunction with the Hampton Convention & Visitor Bureau, the Newport News Hospitality Association and the Newport News Tourism Development Office – held two customer service training sessions Oct. 29 at the Ferguson Center for the Arts.

More than 100 people attended the training programs, which featured Ron Chapman, CPLP, president of 5-Star Performance Solutions. Chapman, who also serves as president of the Southeast Virginia Chapter of the American Society for Training and Development, is among the first in the nation to receive ASTD's Certified Professional for Learning and Performance designation.

The sessions focused on recognizing and serving internal customers, as well as how those in the business should work together to serve the external customer. ➤

Youth-produced video emphasizes need for technical education

Thanks to a \$5,000 grant from the Virginia Career Education Foundation, constituents of the Youth Career Café have created a five-minute public awareness video aimed at changing the perceptions about careers in highly technical fields. The video emphasizes how schools can provide students with skills necessary to work in an ever-evolving global society.

To supply the necessary footage, students interviewed and video recorded career and technical education teachers about proficiency and skill requirements necessary to succeed in a world of ever-changing technology.

They also recorded sessions with high school students currently enrolled in career and technical classes about their perceptions of career opportunities. The youth queried their peers whether they thought their coursework related to real-world employment.

The Youth Advisory Board worked with the cities of Hampton and Newport News public schools television stations and a videographer from Heritage High School, who met with the students and began filming at both locations of the Youth Career Café.

From September through December, student board members have worked with media professionals to document, edit and produce the final version of the five-minute video.

Students are currently working on producing a marketing packet to distribute the 50 copies of the video to youth and parents through schools, community groups and faith-based organizations. ➤



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Dunnigan appointed workforce development specialist

Mary M. Dunnigan has recently joined PCFWD as a workforce development specialist. Prior to joining the PCFWD staff, she worked as a secondary high school English teacher in the Newport News public school system. She was listed in *Who's Who Among America's Teachers* in 2006 and 2007.



Dunnigan

Dunnigan received a bachelor's degree in English from Christopher Newport University and a bachelor's degree in administration of justice legal studies from Virginia Commonwealth University. She is currently pursuing a master's degree from the College of William and Mary.

Before teaching, Dunnigan was a small business owner and volunteered as an interpreter for the deaf. The Newport News resident is a member of the Star Achievers' Academy board of directors and a member of the Virginia Economic Developers Association. ➤

Youth Career Café workshops explore IT, entertainment



\$5 million grant is WIRED and on track to create a pipeline for new high-wage jobs

Nearly 50 regional partners of the Southeastern Virginia Partnership for Regional Transformation (SEVA-PORT) grant met for an initial strategic planning meeting last September to discuss how the \$5 million Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor will help reposition the economy of southeastern Virginia.

Attendees included representatives from regional organizations, business and industry, community colleges and four-year universities, K-12 schools, government, economic development and workforce development. The purpose of the WIRED grant is to help prepare workers for new, high-wage, high-growth jobs in the modeling and simulation industry and the port-related industry of transportation, warehousing and distribution.

SEVA-PORT, which comprises 24 cities and counties extending from Hampton Roads to the Petersburg area, is led by the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development, Opportunity Inc. and the Crater Regional Workforce Investment Board.

In November, the WIRED Executive Committee was formed with representatives in industry, workforce development, business and education: Tidewater Community College, Thomas Nelson Community College, Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance, PCFWD, Opp Inc., Crater Regional Planning District Commission and WIB, Northrop Grumman Newport News, Wal-Mart Distribution Center, Hampton Roads Partnership, city of Virginia Beach, Cost Plus and Old Dominion University's Virginia Modeling, Analysis and Simulation Center.

In December, an Implementation Plan was drafted and presented to the WIRED Executive Committee for review and comments. At press time, the drafted plan was being revised for a January submission to the Department of Labor. 

The Youth Career Café sponsored two workshops for area youth last November, one focusing on careers in information technology and the other on entertainment opportunities.

Girls get IT ... when it comes to engineering

On Nov. 8, 42 girls from Lindsay Middle School, Phoebus High School and York River Academy in Hampton converged on the ECPI College of Technology campus in Newport

News to delve into the world of information technology via a workshop co-hosted by Youth Career Café and ECPI.

Guest speaker Jennifer Orr with the Cisco Systems Networking Academy addressed career opportunities for women in engineering, where the workforce is predominantly male. The girls also watched a video titled "I am an Engineer" and later toured the campus.

The hands-on portion of the workshop involved breaking into smaller groups, with each group led by a volunteer from the community representing various IT positions in fields from law enforcement to health care. The girls had to address how IT could help solve

As a result of the Youth Career Café and ECPI workshop in November, many middle school participants said they would like to explore career options in the IT field.

potential problems or hinder possible solutions for two real-world situations — surgery without hospitals and winter Olympics communications.

Another IT workshop will be held this spring for girls in the Newport News public school system. The location and date will be announced later.

Lights, camera, action!

Teens encouraged to broaden experiences

The second workshop, held Nov. 27 at the Youth Career Café location at Patrick Henry Mall, featured Logan Coles, producer/brand creative with The N Network, a New York City-based television channel aimed at teenagers and young adults.

More than 60 students from Newport News public schools, largely from the magnet programs at Woodside High School and Huntington Middle School, attended the half-day session geared for the arts, A/V technology and communication career cluster. Coles — who writes, directs, acts, edits and produces — talked about the importance of having a broad knowledge in the field of entertainment. He encouraged the teens to get as much hands-on experience as they could before they graduated from high school.

As part of the workshop, students broke into groups where they wrote short scripts and then presented the production to the other attendees.

The next workshop at the Patrick Henry location is scheduled for February and will focus on manufacturing. For more information, call Sharnya Smith at (757) 826-3327. 

A key appointment

Dr. Robert P. Leber, director of education and workforce development at Northrop Grumman Newport News and chairman of PCFWD and GPWIB, was recently appointed by Gov. Tim Kaine to chair the Virginia Workforce Council. The VWC, a business-led board that acts as the principal adviser to the governor, provides strategic leadership to the state regarding workforce development and its efforts to create a strong workforce aligned with employer needs. As the state Workforce Investment Board, it sets policies and standards for local WIBs. Seen here, Leber (left) and Kaine discuss strategies during a recent Virginia Economic Developers Association annual conference.



Join us!
Call today to
find out how
your organization
can become a
PCFWD member.
(757) 826-3327

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

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Auction nets thousands for PCFWD

With such items as 2008 Hokie football tickets, custom golf clubs, weekend getaways, power tools, rounds of golf and even a “quick catered lunch for 20” from a local barbecue, the local chapter of the Associated General Contractors of Virginia’s live and silent auction benefit in August was a huge success.

The event, called “A Night at The Mariners’ Museum,” raised more than \$8,300 to further the work of the PCFWD and to establish a scholarship at New Horizons to support the areas of construction, manufacturing and engineering. A portion of the proceeds was also donated to The Mariners’ Museum.

A special thanks is extended to the auction supporters: The Mariners’ Museum, W.M. Jordan Co., Oyster Point Construction, Harris Power & Equipment, Newport News Tourism Office, Towne Insurance/Brooks Agency, New Horizons, Hamilton Electric, Signs by Tomorrow, Wal-Mart, Champions for Champions, Warwick Plumbing & Heating, Schlesinger’s Steakhouse, Clancy & Theys, Walsh Electric, Femmes & Fidos, Ferguson Enterprises, Bay Electric, Clark Morgan and Associates, Electrical Equipment Corp., Ford’s Colony, Golden Horseshoe, Graybar Electric, Hampton Roads Crane and Rigging, HMP Properties, Home Depot, Kiskiack Golf Club, Marriott at City Center, Omni, Pierce’s PITT Bar-B-Que, Rexel, Sweet Madeleine’s, Team Logic IT and Williamsburg Marriott.

According to Bill Walsh of Walsh Electric, a member of the local chapter of the AGC and the PCFWD construction cluster, “The auction is one way the construction industry rallies together to give back to the community and workforce development.” 



**More than 150 people
attended the AGC silent
and live auction in August
to benefit PCFWD.**