

# Workforce LINK

FALL 2009

Peninsula Council for Workforce Development

## From the Chair's Perspective



By Sybil Wheatley  
Chair, PCFWD, GPWIB

## The proof is in the pudding

The past six months have been a busy time for workforce development.

To illustrate this, this edition of Workforce Link highlights the Council's initiatives to coordinate programs that assist not only the area's youth and adults, but also business and industry.

Over the past 12 months, the Council has provided workforce services to more than 22,000 Peninsula citizens through the One-Stop Career Centers, Peninsula Worklink and Youth Career Cafés. The proof is in the pudding, as they say. All of our successful endeavors are the result of our continuous public/private partnerships. Your unrelenting support of PCFWD programs is more important now than ever in these troubling economic times.

Many thanks to all the partners who understand the importance of what we do. I wish a happy holiday season to all.

## Summer Youth Employment Program benefits hundreds of area youngsters

The Summer Youth Employment Program, funded by stimulus monies from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, was a huge success. Throughout the Virginia Peninsula, 257 summer jobs were created which provided a combined total of more than 42,650 hours of valuable work experience training to targeted at-risk youth.

These jobs were strategically distributed across the region through the subgrantees of Newport News Public Schools, city of Hampton, York County/Poquoson, Williamsburg Human Services Department, Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools and Gloucester County Public Schools. The summer program benefited in-school and out-of-school youth ages 14-24 who met certain eligibility requirements.

"To emphasize the size and scope of the summer program, imagine how many additional local employers it would have taken to match the 257 job opportunities created under this program," says Gary L. Butler, vice president of PCFWD.

"These were not just your 'garden variety' summer jobs," he continues. "These opportunities included a host of other job-enrichment activities, training and services." For example, several groups visited the Youth Career Cafés and the Peninsula Worklink One-Stop Career Center. Some participants also toured local community colleges and credit unions to learn about their offerings.

"All participants were closely supervised, extensively evaluated on a biweekly basis and received a formal assessment to measure their work-readiness growth and development," Butler says. More than 90 percent of the participating youth achieved a positive outcome as measured by these formal assessments.

According to the participants, who received a stipend of \$7.25 or \$8 an hour during the six- to eight-week program, many said they were proud to earn



Tameka Smith is all smiles after meeting Everett A. Hicks Sr., chair of the Newport News school board.



York/Poquoson SYEP participants and supervisors gather for a group shot during the program's recognition ceremony.

## PCFWD's president and CEO wins race for House seat

Matthew James, president and CEO of the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development, won the recent political race to represent the 80th House of Delegates District. A longtime economic and workforce development official, James will soon fill the seat held by the former Del. Kenneth Melvin. It was his first run for political office.

James' political platform centered on promises to create new jobs and business through workforce training and new technologies, keep teachers' salaries competitive and lower student dropout rates, work for solutions to the region's transportation problems and ensure local governments have adequate funding for public safety.



(See YOUTH PROGRAM on page 2)

## Hats off to SYEP top work sites

Newport News Public Schools  
 City of Hampton  
 Poquoson Public Schools and Public Works  
 York County Government  
 Mt. Gilead Christian Academy  
 Williamsburg/JCC Community Action Agency  
 Williamsburg Public Works  
 T.J. Maxx  
 Mars Machine Shop  
 WJCC Public Schools  
 Gloucester Chamber of Commerce

## Youth program

(Continued from page 1)

their own money and help their parents and families with bills. They relished the job exposure and work experience. They developed a work ethic, learned new skills and gained a new perspective of their communities. Overall, they noted, "It made me feel important."

To continue building upon the success of the summer program, the state and federal departments of labor have authorized an extension of the program for older, out-of-school youth ages 18-24 through March 2010. The Peninsula Council will utilize the remainder of its WIA youth stimulus dollars to fund an additional 45 or more slots during what has been dubbed Phase 2 of the program. 



(From left) President and CEO Matthew James and Bill Mann, PCFWD executive vice president, flank Herbert R. Green, former Poquoson city councilman, while he displays a new plaque commemorating his many years of service. Robert A. Braxton, chair of the Greater Peninsula Workforce Development Consortium, joins the group at the presentation during PCFWD's annual meeting.

## PCFWD and the Department of Rehabilitative Services honor 'champion' employers at annual meeting

The Peninsula Council for Workforce Development's annual meeting had a twofold purpose this year: to present a year in review to Council constituents and to help commemorate October Disability Employment Awareness Month in the Commonwealth.

PCFWD teamed up with the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services, in partnership with SunTrust Bank, to host a 2009 Champions Awards luncheon/annual meeting at the Peninsula Workforce Development Center. The Oct. 9 event, part of a series of activities held statewide, honored area em-

ployers for their outstanding commitment to hiring and supporting people with disabilities in the workplace.

"We are always excited about the opportunity to raise the awareness of our membership in the activities of our partner organizations, such as DRS. It is the Council's partnerships that continue to strengthen the Peninsula workforce development system," says Matthew James, PCFWD president and CEO.

The Disability Employment Champions Awards recognizes individuals and organizations from public, private and nonprofit sectors who have

'championed' the employment and advancement of people with disabilities and have gone above and beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act to support workers with disabilities. This year's Disability Employment Champions Award recipients include AAFES, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Christopher Newport University, Suttle Motors Corp., Riverside Regional Medical Center and Patricia Lacy of Teledyne.

"We hope that by honoring these 'champion' employers, we increase awareness of the positive contributions that employees with disabilities bring to the bottom line of business and emphasize the value in recruiting from this skilled and talented labor source," says DRS Commissioner Jim Rothrock.

PCFWD's annual meeting was well attended and provided an opportunity for the board and staff to celebrate the many accomplishments over the past year. Sybil Wheatley, chair of the Council, provided a presentation on the year in review. In addition, the Council presented a plaque to Buddy Green, former Poquoson city councilman, for his many years of service to the organization. 



## Blast off! Annual auction rockets to reach \$11,000

*In August, the Peninsula chapter of the Associated General Contractors, in cooperation with PCFWD, hosted its third annual Live and Silent Auction at the Virginia Air and Space Center in Hampton. The event, made possible by an extensive list of industry sponsors and the tireless efforts of AGC and PCFWD staff, raised \$11,000 for workforce development in the construction industry. A special thanks goes to Bill Walsh of Walsh Electric and Amy Dever of Oyster Point Construction Co. for coordinating the event and obtaining many of the auction items.*



## Council wears many hats

A two-day program designed to inform high-school counselors about the education and career opportunities available for students in the construction industry was held July 22-23. Dubbed the Hard Hat Camp, the well-attended event was hosted by the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development along with partners Thomas Nelson Community College, New Horizons Regional Education Centers and the Associated General Contractors.

Teachers, counselors and career coaches learned about the many opportunities and careers that exist for the emerging workers of tomorrow in the construction industry, careers that go beyond general labor jobs and often require advanced training. They were in-



As part of the Hard Hat Camp held in July, school counselors visit a construction site.

formed that young people entering the construction industry today have the opportunity to pursue lifelong careers in a variety of specialized fields, such as plumbing, electricity and project management.

Individuals who best fit these careers are those who favor a diverse work environment with opportunities to learn a specific trade, work with their hands and work outside.

Construction industry representatives shared ideas through open discussions and team-building activities. Local industry experts and area educators also talked about current programs

available to students and the wide array of high-tech jobs associated with construction today.

The camp featured an onsite tour of a new construction project. Campers also viewed the internal operations of Henderson Inc., a local general contracting firm.

Plans are under way to hold another Hard Hat Camp next year. ➤

## School counselors tour technology-related industries in Hampton and Newport News

The Peninsula Council for Workforce Development, in partnership with SEVA-PORT and Hampton and Newport News public schools, hosted 36 counselors from the two cities' middle and high schools on tours to select area industries. The four full-day tours let participants get a firsthand look at the workings at Dilon Technologies Inc., Wal-Mart Distribution Center, Liebherr, Jefferson Labs, ECPI College of Technology and the National Institute of Aeronautics.

"The tours were designed to show counselors the economic impact and current development of the technology-related industries of Modeling and Simulation, and Transportation, Warehousing and Distribution," says Shawn Avery, PCFWD vice president. "They also demonstrated to the educators how the industrial base in Hampton Roads impacts K-12 education in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics."

Informal assessments showed the counselors had a high level of enthusiasm and interest in industry sectors where they had little or no previous experience or knowledge. They also said they would encourage students into the career pathways in these industries because of what they learned on the tours.

Additional tours are being scheduled for the spring for the other Peninsula school divisions. To learn more about the Peninsula's SEVA-PORT activities, contact Shawn

Avery at (757) 826-3327. ➤

8 - OCT. 2009  
 visits to the  
 Career Cafe - 4,713  
 One-Stop  
 Registrations - 17,479  
 snapshot

## Customer service:

### It really matters

The Hospitality Cluster of the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development — along with its partners the Hampton Convention & Visitor Bureau, Newport News Tourism Development Office and Newport News Hospitality Association — held its fall customer service training seminar Oct. 27 at the Hampton History Museum.

More than 60 people attended the seminar from more than 12 properties which included hotels, tourist attractions, public-service agencies and health-service facilities.

Jodi Weygand, with Business Cheerleader in Newport News, was the presenter. Her entertaining, thought-provoking, informative session, titled "The 'WOW' Factor," focused on why customer service really matters and how those in the industry could build rapport instantly using various techniques. She also shared useful advice on a five-minute stress buster.

For more information concerning future hospitality seminars, contact Shawn Avery at (757) 826-3327. ➤

Bruce Newton with the Hampton Convention & Visitor Bureau watches while seminar participants arrange words to make sentences that best describe customer service.



**Youth Career  
Expo 2010  
Feb. 10**

**Call Mary Dunnigan  
for details at  
(757) 826-3327**

*PCFWD: Conducting the  
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Workforce Investment Board*

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## Financial Services Academy enters its fifth year this fall

For the fifth year, business students from Heritage High School attended the Financial Services Academy, a six-week program developed by the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development to help high-school students hone their skills to make them more marketable. In addition to PCFWD, sponsors and classroom speakers for the program included Old Point National Bank, 1st Advantage Federal Credit Union, Langley Federal Credit Union, Virginia Educators Credit Union, BB&T and BayPort Credit Union.

These bank, credit union and Council personnel spent more than 20 hours in the classroom teaching participants about such topics as money and banking, customer service, written/oral communications, financial service sales, financial service interview skills and ethics and laws.

At the end of the program, the partner financial institutions' human resource departments conduct interviews with the students.

"That's the fun part," says Krista Moses, assistant vice president of human resources with Langley Federal Credit Union and



*(From left) Krista Moses and Nancy Vandevender of Langley Federal Credit Union present at the Financial Services Academy.*

a member of the Financial Services Cluster, "because that's where we get to share real-life feedback with the students. We're coaching them with real questions that will ultimately help them in actual interviews in the business world." 

### We're going online

**In an effort to be prudent with our limited funds, Workforce Link will be distributed electronically beginning with the next issue. Please visit [www.pcfwd.org](http://www.pcfwd.org) to sign up to continue receiving the e-Workforce Link.**

**Thank you.  
Matthew James, PCFWD  
President and CEO**