



Your Workforce Connection

Preparing Today's Workforce For Tomorrow's Jobs

Summer 2007

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board publishes this quarterly newsletter to promote awareness of its programs and activities among the regional partners of Local Workforce Area 12.

Southern Growth Policies Board Forum *RESULTS*

Volume 5, Issue 3

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Dr. Michael Wilcox, Assistant Professor at the University of Tennessee, returned in July to northwest Tennessee to share results from the 145 forums held across the South and featured in the recently released *2007 Report on the Future of the South*. The report was developed by the Southern Growth Policies Board (SGPB), a non-partisan public policy think tank formed in 1971 by Southern Governors. The SGPB is a public-private partnership of 14 states whose research encompasses major drivers for economic development including innovation, technology, workforce, and community leadership.

Thirteen states participated totaling 4,100 Southerners who provided input either by participating in one of the 145 forums, via state policy dialogues, or through on-line survey.

All the forums held across the states, including the forum held in Dyersburg, examined three possible approaches to improving workforce competitiveness. The three approaches included: focusing on educational achievement, focusing on serving industry, or focusing on workforce traits.

Key themes from the South and from Tennessee were noted. Southern themes included creating a culture of learning, getting parents more involved, strengthening soft skills, expanding knowledge of career and college options, and to facilitate collaboration among all partners. Tennesseans echoed many similar themes. However, Tennesseans overwhelmingly concluded that no single approach to building a competitive workforce would work, but rather suggested five strategies to implement:

- 1) Address barriers to educational attainment.
- 2) Connect education to economic condition and individual success.
- 3) Tie education and skills development to employer needs.
- 4) Build partnerships between education, business, and community groups.
- 5) Ensure that students, schools, and communities have the resources they need to be successful.

The Southern Growth Policies Board research also revealed Tennessee's commitment to developing a competitive workforce.

- ⇒ 80% believe our communities should focus on promoting postsecondary education for everyone, EVEN IF it means raising taxes.
- ⇒ 83% believe our communities should focus on serving industry, EVEN IF it means a difficult and time consuming overhaul of public education.

Following the review of results, the Southern Growth Policies Board recommends northwest Tennessee follow a three-part strategy of **Convene, Connect, and Commit**. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board staff initiated the first step by *convening* discussions with the stakeholders present. "Everyone is dedicated to building a competitive workforce in northwest Tennessee" said Henry Lewis, Director for Workforce Development. "The two forums have served as a tool to bring stakeholders together and open doors for communication and partnership."

The Workforce Development staff sought feedback and suggestions and are currently creating strategies to *connect* education, the employer communities, and workforce development. "We are looking forward to reaching the *commit* stage where we hope to see a more competitive workforce evolve" concluded Lewis.

Workforce Development *Fast Facts and National Trends:*

- \$1.4 billion a year is spent on remedial education for high school graduates.
- Employers say new workers lack soft skills and work ethics.
- 80% of the nation's 30 fastest growing jobs require post-secondary education.
- 36% of jobs in the next 10 years will require at least a bachelor's degree.
- More than 80% of manufacturers are having problems finding qualified employees.

Families First Transforms: *WORK-FIRST-TN*



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Humboldt, TN 38343
731.784.3552

Ripley

301-C Lake Drive
Ripley, TN 38063
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Tiptonville

217 Church Street, Suite B
Tiptonville, TN 38079
731.253.8171

Alamo

334 South Bells Street
Alamo, TN 38001
731.696.2530

Covington

724 East Lucky Plaza,
Hwy 51 North
Covington, TN 38019
901.475.2529

Union City

126 East Main Street
Union City, TN 38261
731.884.2621

Dyersburg

Comprehensive Center
439 McGaughey Street
Dyersburg, TN 38024
731.286.8300

TDD

800.848.0299
or
731.286.8383

Workforce Essentials, Inc., a Tennessee Career Center partner headquartered in Clarksville, TN, was selected from several proposals to provide updated Families First Services to customers in 34 western and middle Tennessee Counties, including the seven counties that comprise Local Workforce Investment Area 12 (LWIA 12).

"This is the largest individual program undertaking in Workforce Essentials' 15 year history. We're excited to be involved in this new chapter in the Tennessee Department of Human Services' portfolio of programs and look forward to making positive changes in the lives of our customers" stated Marla Rye, Workforce Essentials President.

Families First, Tennessee's groundbreaking welfare reform program, has been updated to place heavier emphasis on assisting individuals with finding work first, while offering necessary job skill needs. Participants receive childcare, transportation, and other services that support them in their efforts to get back into the workforce.

Families First customers will now receive services through Workforce Essentials, Inc., who has named the 34-county program WORK-FIRST-TN.

Henry Lewis, Director for LWIA 12, is delighted to partner with Workforce Essentials on delivering the updated program. "Marla is very dedicated to success and will bring effective leadership to the WORK-FIRST-TN program assisting clients in northwest Tennessee" said Lewis.

The primary goal of the updated program is to quickly move *Families First* clients into unsubsidized employment and to accomplish this prior to the 60-month lifetime limit on welfare services.

The WORK-FIRST-TN plan engages clients in a minimum of 30 hours per week in a combination of core and non-core activities. Twenty of the total 30 hours will be in core activities which consist of:

- Unsubsidized Employment
- Job Search and Job Readiness
- Work Experience
- Vocational Educational Training
- Community Service Programs
- Subsidized Public or Private Employment

Non-core activities include adult education and job skills training among others. For more information about Families First, visit www.state.tn.us/humanserv

WORK-FIRST-TN Locations and Contact Information:

⇒ Crockett and Gibson Counties

Gail Roberson, Miyoshi Brooks,
Archie Cox, & Bobby Palmer
432 East 2nd Street, Trenton

⇒ Dyer County

Anita Greer, Kinshassa Henderson, &
Felicia Smith
100 North Church Avenue, Dyersburg

⇒ Lake County

C. Gilbert Parnell
217 Church Street, Tiptonville

⇒ Lauderdale County

Aretha Hayes, Shelia Keaton,
Patricia Kelly
301 C Lake Drive, Ripley

⇒ Obion County

Neva Webster
204 South 2nd Street, Union City

⇒ Tipton County

Doyle Beckworth Jr., Faye Reed, &
Tulesia Montgomery
915 Highway 51 South, Covington

On-the-Job Training Grants Available

When you, the employer, identify the need to fill a vacant position for your company or small business, you have a choice of hiring a skilled worker or a worker who needs additional training. If you are willing to hire an individual who has no prior experience in the vacant position, an On-the-Job Training contract may be developed. Under this agreement, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board can reimburse up to 50% of the trainee's wages during the specified training period. Eligible candidates can be selected from any of the WIA programs: Dislocated Workers, Underemployed, Adults, Youth (14-18) or Older Youth (19-21).

Benefits to Employers:

- ◆ Candidates are selected from a pool of prescreened applicants.
- ◆ Your training cost is reduced by up to half of the new employees' wages.
- ◆ You receive quality workers who benefit from "hands-on" training.
- ◆ You may be eligible to receive tax credits.
- ◆ There is minimal paperwork involved.

Get Your New *Minimum Wage* Poster FREE

Employers are required by law to share information with employees on employment laws and provide other work related information. The information should be posted in a prominent place where employees have access, such as, a break room or time-clock area.

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development does not charge a fee for providing these required posters.

Employers may access these files in PDF format and may download for free: <http://www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd/poster.htm>

The following Tennessee required posters are also available with a link to required federal posters:

- ⇒ TOSHA Safety and Health
- ⇒ TN Unemployment Insurance
- ⇒ Workers Compensation Posting Notice
- ⇒ TN Child Labor
- ⇒ Discrimination in Employment
- ⇒ Discrimination in Housing

Many of the posters are available in Spanish.

Inaugural Year for Peer Tutoring Program Deemed a Success

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board launched a pilot program in March 2006 that would provide WIA eligible high school seniors excelling in academic coursework the opportunity to explore a career in teaching, earn a wage, provide a community service, and prepare for enrollment in post-secondary education in a career of their choice through the Peer Tutor Work Experience Program. Nine (9) schools in five (5) counties were awarded funds for their innovative Peer Tutoring programs.

Tutoring services were provided outside of school hours to any high school student in need of academic assistance to pass a current class, improve academic scores, or to earn credit recovery. Teachers, counselors, and coaches worked as Master Tutors/Supervisors to recruit and oversee the Peer Tutors. "Many of the schools struggled at first in matching the tutors with the students needing aid, but made tremendous strides in the second semester," said Lori Marberry, Youth Coordinator. "At mid-term, 68% of students being assisted passed the class being tutored, with 88% of students passing at the end of the second term. Overall, the Peer Tutoring program touched 553 students in its first year. With 100% of our Peer Tutors graduating on time and many receiving scholarship offers, we are very proud of the participating schools and their success."

PEER TUTORING WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM OVER-ALL FINAL REPORT

School	Number of Students Tutored	Number of Students that Passed the Class	Number of Students that Failed the Class	Percentage that Passed Class
Brighton High School	122	110	12	90.0%
Covington High School	18	14	4	77.8%
Crockett County High School	46	26	20	56.5%
Halls High School	67	58	9	86.6%
Lake County High School	100	85	15	85.0%
Munford High School	92	55	37	59.8%
Ripley High School	64	56	8	87.5%
South Fulton High School	32	30	2	93.8%
Obion County Central High School	12	11	1	91.7%
Total	553	445	108	80.0%

A second Request for Proposal was issued for the 2007-2008 School year, with eight schools participating again, and one new program being added. "I feel that the learning curve was a very quick one last year, and with the majority of the schools having experienced one year of the Peer Tutoring Work Experience Program, we should have greater success this year with students passing classes," said Derrick Quinn, Youth Case Manager. "It's rewarding to see these young people reach their academic goals and achieve success in the classroom through a project like the Peer Tutoring Work Experience Program."



Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board
Dyersburg State Community College
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Dyersburg, TN 38024

Non-Profit
PRSR-FTD
PAID
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Permit No. 213

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Simply send an email to:
newsletter@nwtworks.org

We look forward to serving you better in the future!

Preparing Today's Workforce for Tomorrow's Jobs



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John Snead, Vice Chairman
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Rod Schuh
Larry Griffin
Richard Hill
Jeff Huffman
Benny McGuire
Joe Shepard
Macie Roberson

For more information or to contact your local Workforce Investment Board Director, call Henry Lewis (731) 286-3585, ext. 16 lewis@nwtworks.org



Dyersburg State Community College is an equal opportunity employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TDD# 731-286-8383

Incentive Grant Awarded

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development qualified to receive close to \$2 million in an incentive award from the U.S. Department of Labor for exceeding all performance goals that were set for the state of Tennessee's innovative workforce development and education activities. Tennessee is one of only 10 states in the nation to qualify for the incentive grant awards, and the amount of Tennessee's award is the third highest amount in the qualifying states.

The state's performance goals measure placing program participants in employment, assisting participants in retaining their jobs, and improving their earning capacity. Following the state's qualification to receive incentive funds, the state rewards local programs that contribute to the overall success of the state.

Local Workforce Investment Area 12 (LWIA 12) had 17 total performance measures ranging from employment and retention to customer satisfaction. The measures are broken into 2 categories, Part A and Part B, in which LWIA 12 performed well.

Dyersburg State Community College serves as the Workforce Investment Act grant recipient for Local Workforce Investment Area 12 and therefore accepted the \$50,583 incentive grant for the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and the Tennessee Career Center System in northwest Tennessee. "The front-line Career Center staff contributed greatly to our success" said Henry Lewis, Director for the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board. "Their dedication and hard work has enabled us to meet our performance goals."

"I'm proud to award this grant money to this area" said Commissioner Neeley. "The counties served will benefit greatly from this incentive grant. It will help employers find the right workers and jobseekers in finding the right job."

Dyersburg State Community College President, Dr. Karen Bowyer echoed Commissioner Neeley saying "we are honored to accept this grant to help the employers and workers we serve. Our appreciation goes to Governor Bredesen and Commissioner Neeley for their recognition of the effective work of the DSCC Workforce Staff as they strive to reach the performance goals."

Incentive grant funds may be utilized for a variety of purposes, including infrastructure support, coordinated training with partner programs, and staff capacity building.