



# Your Workforce Connection

Preparing Today's Workforce For Tomorrow's Jobs

Summer / Fall 2010

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and Tennessee Career Centers publish this quarterly newsletter to promote awareness of Department of Labor programs and activities in northwest Tennessee.

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## New Director, New Direction A Renewed Commitment to Business Services

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is undergoing changes in management as Henry Lewis, Vice President of Workforce Development retires following 27 years of service. Lewis has accepted a new challenge with the Workforce Investment Network (WIN) in Memphis, Tenn. He is currently serving in the role of Deputy Director and continues to provide services through the Workforce Investment Act.

Margaret Prater, who served as Assistant Director of Administrative Services for Workforce Development, has been promoted to Executive Director of Workforce Development by Dyersburg State Community College President, Dr. Karen Bowyer.

"Margaret has prepared for this new position over the past 27 years," said Bowyer. "She is highly respected in the state and in the southern region for her expertise in managing the finances and other administrative tasks of the Workforce program. I am confident that she and the other highly productive WIA staff members will take the program to an even higher level of effectiveness."

Along with the new director, comes a new direction. Following her promotion in July, Prater was able to hit the ground running due to years of experience in the program.

"Henry did an excellent job managing the program and I plan to build on the strong foundation he has laid" said Prater. "Over the last 27 years, I have learned a lot about best practices, benchmarking, and being innovative and thinking outside the box. That's what I want to reintroduce to the staff and Board of Directors. We have so much potential and I am anxious to see it develop!"

Prater is placing a renewed emphasis on Business Services. Two staff members are now fully dedicated to providing businesses with the best service possible. Amy Maxey and Ann Pennell are dividing the



Henry Lewis (left), Vice President for Workforce Development 1983-2010, and Don Williams, Director of Workforce Development 1983-1985, flank newly appointed Executive Director for Workforce Development, Margaret Prater.

seven county service area and calling on business and industry.

Maxey previously administered the Lauderdale County Job Recovery program and has 15 years in sales and service experience. She is excited to join the Business Services unit. Maxey is serving Crockett, Dyer, Lauderdale, and Tipton Counties.



Amy Maxey

Ann Pennell is extending her tenure with the Workforce Board. She has most recently served as Disability Program Navigator and is transitioning to full-time Business Services Coordinator serving Gibson, Lake, and Obion Counties.



Ann Pennell

The Workforce Board distributes grant funds to the business community each year in the form of Incumbent Worker Training Grants and On-the-Job Training Grants. The Business Services Unit also coordinates the Career Readiness Certificate program.

## National Career Readiness Certificate Gains Momentum Over 3,000 Issued in Northwest Tennessee



NATIONAL  
CAREER READINESS  
CERTIFICATE

The Career Readiness Certificate is the answer for employers who want a trainable workforce. When applicants carry the Career Readiness Certificate, they demonstrate skills in math, reading and information processing. Employers can use these scores to make the best decision when hiring or training workers.

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is a portable skills credential that verifies to employers anywhere in the United States that an individual has essential core employability skills.

The NCRC initiative is designed to benefit three distinct populations—career seekers, employers, and economic developers. The NCRC assessment is a product of American College Testing (ACT). The assessment is a combination of three WorkKeys® assessments including Reading for Information, Locating Information, and Applied Mathematics.

The NCRC substantiates to employers that an individual possesses the basic workplace skills required for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs. Career seekers view the CRC as a tool in their toolbox. It compliments a GED, high school diploma, technical certificate, and/or a college degree. Coupled with a solid work history, good references, and interview skills, it pushes job candidates applications to the top of the stack.

Employers equally benefit by having valid proof of an applicant's job skills. Employers have a more qualified applicant pool saving on training time, training dollars, and the high cost of turnover. The clearly defined certificate levels, including Bronze, Silver, and Gold, forecast applicant potential and success.

Finally, economic developers are better able to recruit new business and industry to west Tennessee due to the newly identified Career Ready workforce.

The availability of skilled labor is a major factor that helps business executives and economic development consultants identify the best locations for expansion and relocation. Information generated by the NCRC represents a unique source of objective data describing workforce skills. This makes it a powerful component in strategic planning and marketing activities at the state, regional, and local level.

The Tennessee Career Centers in northwest Tennessee have issued over 3,000 National Career Readiness Certificates and completed Job Profiles for numerous employers.

Dyersburg State and the Tennessee Technology Centers recognize the benefits of the National Career Readiness Certificate and the advantage to career seekers who have earned a NCRC. All DSCC Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree students earn a NCRC before graduation along with all Technology Center graduates. As grads begin their job search, they have a solid educational foundation and a portable skills credential in their toolbox.

For more information, (731) 286-3585.

### Career Readiness Certificate Employer Handbook Available



[Download Now >](#)

The National Career Readiness Certificate Employer Handbook is designed to help employers maximize the benefits of the program by assisting the people who will be responsible for implementing the program. It offers guidance to enhance employers knowledge of the credential and describes processes that will accelerate program implementation. The handbook is arranged in four sections to facilitate a fast and effective launch including a Quick Start Guide, Resources, Details, and Frequently Asked Questions. It is available for download at [NATIONALCAREERREADINESS.ORG](http://NATIONALCAREERREADINESS.ORG).

### Incumbent Worker Grants *going, going, gone!*

The Incumbent Worker Training program provides grant funding for customized training for existing businesses. Through this customer-driven program, Tennessee is able to effectively retrain and keep local businesses competitive through upgrading the skills of its existing full-time employees.

Funds are limited and awarded on a first come, first serve basis. Applications are accepted July 1 of each year. Due to the high demand and increasing popularity of the grant, employers are encouraged to apply July 1. For more information visit: [http://www.tn.gov/labor-wfd/et\\_services\\_employers.html](http://www.tn.gov/labor-wfd/et_services_employers.html).

## Advanced Manufacturing Sector Analysis Commissioned Younger Associates Launches Research

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is continuing to gather the best available information regarding in-demand occupations and high-growth industry sectors.

The Workforce Board began our journey with the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Study in 2004, followed by the Healthcare Sector Career Ladder in 2006, and now, with the Advanced Manufacturing Sector Pathway Model.

Younger Associates, a market research and strategic communications firm, will be the lead research team. Younger will begin by sending out a short survey to manufacturing employers.

The survey is designed to identify industries who employ advanced manufacturing. Prior research has indicated many advanced manufacturers are not aware they are actually involved in advanced manufacturing practices.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is encouraging all area manufacturers to complete the survey. This is a critical step in the process of developing the career pathways that will follow.

The end result will identify high-growth advanced manufacturing occupations, the skill and knowledge requirements, education and training available, apprenticeship options, and clearly defined pathways.

Pathways will be designed with entry points from high school / GED to advanced manufacturing occupations and also from a skilled trade position to advanced manufacturing careers.

Results will be available in Spring 2011.

To participate in a focus group, please contact Ginger Powell, Director of Business Services (731) 286-3585, ext. 13 or email [powell@nwtworks.org](mailto:powell@nwtworks.org).

## Ways to Earn Income Tax Credits for Your Company *The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Solution*

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is intended to preserve and create jobs, promote the nation's economic recovery and assist those most affected by the recession.

It is the intent of Congress that Recovery Act funds for employment and training be used to greatly increase the capacity of the workforce system to serve workers in need.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit reduces an employer's cost of doing business and requires little paperwork. The success and growth of this income tax credit for private-sector businesses depends on a strong public- and private-sector partnership. Helping those in need find and retain jobs and gain on-the-job experience benefits all employers and increases America's economic growth and productivity.

There are only 3 simple steps to apply. Employers apply for and receive a certification from their State Workforce Agency (SWA) that the new hire is a member of a target group before they can claim the Work Opportu-

nity Tax Credit. To apply: (1) Complete IRS Form 8850, *Prescreening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit*, by the date of the job offer; (2) Complete one of the following U.S. Department of Labor forms: ETA Form 9061, *Individual Characteristics Form*, if the new hire has not been given an ETA Form 9062, or ETA Form 9062, *Conditional Certification Form*, if provided to the jobseeker by a Participating Agency, a SWA, or a Vocational Rehabilitation Agency; (3) Mail the signed and dated IRS and ETA forms to the respective State Workforce Agency no later than 28 calendar days after the new hire begins work.

The bottom line—

- ➔ Employers make the hiring decisions.
- ➔ There is no limit to the number of new hires who can qualify the employer for the tax savings.
- ➔ There is minimal paperwork needed to claim the WOTC

For details visit: <http://www.doleta.gov/business/Incentives/opptax>.



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Humboldt, TN 38343  
731.784.3552

### Ripley

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Ripley, TN 38063  
731.635.3479

### Tiptonville

217 Church Street, Suite B  
Tiptonville, TN 38079  
731.253.8171

### Alamo

334 South Bells Street  
Alamo, TN 38001  
731.696.2530

### Covington

973 Hwy 51 N, Suite 16  
Covington, TN 38019  
901.475.2529

### Union City

126 East Main Street  
Union City, TN 38261  
731.884.2621

### Dyersburg

Comprehensive Center  
439 McGaughy Street  
Dyersburg, TN 38024  
731.286.8300

TDD

800.848.0299  
or  
731.286.8383

NORTHWEST TENNESSEE

**WORKFORCE  
BOARD**



Dyersburg State Community College—Fiscal Agent & Administrative Entity

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Tennessee Career Centers  
313 West Cedar Street  
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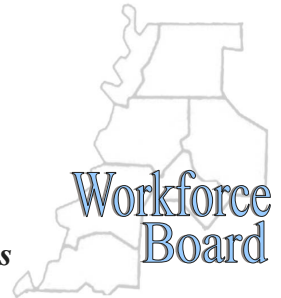
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We look forward to serving you better in the future!



*Preparing Today's Workforce for Tomorrow's Jobs*

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Jeff Huffman

For more information or to contact your local Workforce Investment Board Business Services Unit, call Ginger Powell (866) 286-3585, ext. 13 [powell@nwtworks.org](mailto:powell@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



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**On the  
Job  
Training**  
*grants available*