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George Mikitarian

As we prepare the second edition of the Brevard Workforce Development Board's *Workforce Link*, it is mind boggling to think how much has happened in three short months.

Employment opportunities are fewer then ever, while our job seeker numbers escalate daily. In September 2008, the Unemployment Rate for Brevard was 7.2 percent, and in December that number leapt to 8.4 percent. Job orders posted with Brevard Job Link are way down, the lowest we have seen. As staff responds to the increasing need, BWDB looks to find paths to fill the gaps. One plan underway is to hold a Virtual Job Fair at no-cost to local businesses. We know there are industries and businesses that are hiring, let's give them an opportunity to tap into our skilled workforce employing the services we provide to narrow their search and screen their applicants.

The Aerospace Workforce Transition (AWT) team is hard at work assisting affected aerospace employees with training options and other services to prepare them for their next employment opportunity. Soon, several AWT team members will move into office space graciously provided by NASA in the Headquarters Building, on-site at Kennedy Space Center. This will open up yet another access point for these workers as they prepare for the next phase in the Shuttle Retirement process.

We were honored to recognize two customers at the last board meeting, job seeker Russell Locke who made the transition from a downsized industry in Brevard to the ever-growing health care field with the help of the Brevard Job Link team. We also welcomed business customer Holiday Inn Cocoa Beach Oceanfront Resort represented by Human Resources Director Kim Armour. Ms Armour explained the benefits provided to the resort that came in the form of training through the Florida reBUILDS program.

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In December, BWDB received notification from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) that it was approved for a \$250,000 Regional Innovation Grant (RIG). This grant will be used to create a comprehensive regional economic development strategy that eventually moves the affected Shuttle workforce from aerospace activities toward other high-tech industries.

And, finally be sure to check the Calendar of Events page for upcoming meetings and events that will be occurring in the next few months.

We would welcome hearing back from you about the newsletter as we plan the next edition. Let us know if you have any comments and ideas for future editions.

Regards,

George Mikitarian



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As a board member, continuing your workforce education by developing a more complete understanding of Workforce Development and the principles that guide our progress as a workforce board are important to the decisions you make.

In this edition of the *Workforce Link*, we will continue the process we started in November by introducing you to Module Two, “*Funding Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Beyond.*”

This is a great opportunity for you to learn about how the workforce system and our Board of Directors function, and it is all presented in an easy to use and interesting format. Go at your own pace by selecting one or more module sections at a time. You can stop and start the program as often as you like.



Lisa Rice

To access the training module, please click on this link:

http://www.dynamicinstitute.com/LearningCenter/Courses/WIB_member/html/mod2/player.html
and select Module 2, *Funding Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Beyond.*

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BWDB President Lisa Rice completed a Masters of Business Administration in Executive Leadership having graduated on December 19, 2008. The eighteen month program was offered through the Gallup University at the University of Nebraska and included an emphasis on strength-based learning principles concluding with a two-week, on-site learning session in Beijing, China.

Ms. Rice intends on using her newly acquired knowledge to benefit the board through enhanced implementation of strategic direction, marketing, leadership, financial planning and engaging businesses with workforce education and issues.

In other board news, **BWDB Program Planning Officer James (Jim) Watson** was named Board Chair for United Way's Brevard Long Term Recovery Coalition for 2009. The mission for the coalition is to strengthen area-wide disaster coordination through the sharing of information, simplifying resident access to services, jointly resolving cases with disaster-related recovery needs and providing mitigation activities to low income residents of Brevard County.

Through Mr. Watson's role as BWDB Program Planning Officer, this leadership assignment fits neatly with his National Emergency Grant (NEG) responsibilities. Mr. Watson was instrumental in designing an efficient and time-sensitive response program to Brevard's disaster recovery efforts as related to workforce issues during past hurricane and tropical storm seasons.



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Customer Recognition

The best way to understand how Brevard Job Link impacts our community is through the success stories of those we strive to assist – one job seeker and one business at a time. Here are the stories behind our latest customer recognitions.



Russell Locke & Mee Sook Kim,
Brevard Job Link Career Coach

JOB SEEKER

Russell Lamar Locke – Job Seeker

Russell tells his story best, “I would like to say thank you to everyone at Brevard Job Link for making it possible for me to go back to school after my job was outsourced to China and Malaysia. Without their help and financial assistance for tuition at Keiser University, I would never have been able to start over again in a secure job that is in high demand. I started at a higher pay scale in the Occupational Therapy field then where I was after many years of experience in my last employment field (Fiber-optic Transmitter Production). I enjoy working in the therapy field because I am able to help so many people recover from various medical problems or conditions.”

“Seeing someone walk again after being bedridden for sometime gives me a good feeling inside. My family also thanks you all for enabling me to once again provide for them in all aspects of life. My son is currently attending Brevard Community College and is planning to become a professional in the medical field. After he saw that I could do it, he gained confidence in himself. Thank you for everything.”

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EMPLOYER

Holiday Inn Cocoa Beach Oceanfront Resort~Kim Armour

The Holiday Inn Cocoa Beach Oceanfront Resort has an extensive maintenance department that employs individuals with various construction backgrounds including electrical and HVAC. To meet employee requests for obtaining further training and certifications, Brevard Job Link provided NCCER classes, OSHA Safety training, Crew Leader training, and Resource Control & Cost Awareness classes through the Florida reBUILDS grant.

Holiday Inn Cocoa Beach Human Resources Director, Kim Armour explained why this was important, “The employees who participated in the programs have learned so much, the instructor was very knowledgeable and trained in a manner that anyone could understand. The engineers came back from training energized, telling their co-workers how informative the training was and how much they learned.”

“The employees who attended and benefited from the training are extremely grateful for the opportunity and the management team are indebted to Brevard Job Link and this program for such an exciting and beneficial opportunity,” concluded Armour.



Kim Armour and Eric Nakamura,
Business Services Director



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Brevard Job Link Stats

Brevard Job Link Statistics - December 2008	
Total Job Seeker Walk-In Traffic (Palm Bay, Cocoa, Titusville)	11,684
Total for December 2007	7,237
Difference	+4,447
Total Web Site Visits	41,271
Total for December 2007	34,270
Difference	+7,001
Brevard County Unemployment Rate	8.4%
Brevard County Unemployment Rate for December 2007	5.0%
Percent Change	+3.4%
Job Orders	
Total Number of Job Orders Brevard Job Link wrote in December	244
Total Number of Job Orders Brevard Job Link wrote in the system - YTD	1,778



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STATUS REPORT: The Aerospace Workforce Transition (AWT) Team are hard at work serving the needs of those preparing for a shift in their careers. Presented below is a status report as of December 31, 2008 on the activities of the team:

- 101 Aerospace workers completed training
- 204 additional workers are enrolled, attending or slated for training
- \$631,319.50 was obligated or used for training purposes
- \$317,680 remains to be expended on training
- The Brevard Job Link *Express* mobile unit served 792 aerospace employees by December 31, 2008

NEW OFFICE AT KSC: Through components of the Space Act Agreement with NASA, members of the AWT team will be moving into offices graciously provided by NASA and located in the Headquarters Building (M6-0399), Room 1474-F by February 2009. This presence will be in addition to the three-day a week KSC rotation made by the BJL *Express* mobile unit. This new 'home base' for the AWT team members will include an office with a door for those more private conversations that regularly take place with the Career Progression Specialist, and afford the aerospace workforce with one more access point for them to obtain employment services.

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In early December, the procurement process for selecting a Communications and Marketing firm to deliver key strategic outreach activities was completed. McBride Woodbridge Marketing LLC was selected from ten prospective vendors responding to the Request for Proposal. McBride Woodbridge Marketing LLC held several meetings with AWT team members and is currently finalizing the Communications Plan and first edition of the newsletter, entitled *“Launching New Careers.”* The newsletter is planned for release in February.



In November, FLORIDA TODAY featured the Brevard Job Link *Express* and team members Gib Boyer and Carla Hilliard in an article highlighting aerospace activities at Kennedy Space Center. Click here to access a PDF of the newspaper article. [BJL Express at KSC.](#)



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In December, Brevard Workforce Development Board, Inc. received notification from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) that it was approved for a \$250,000 Regional Innovation Grant (RIG). The grant will be used to create a comprehensive regional economic development strategy that moves the affected Shuttle workforce from aerospace activities into other high-tech industries.

The regional economic development strategy BWDB implements through the RIG award aims to eventually move the affected Shuttle workforce from current aerospace activities into high-tech industries such as aviation and alternative energy throughout the Florida High Tech Corridor. The plan will be implemented over a two to three year period.

The RIG implementation plan includes various collaborative efforts across the corridor aimed at determining a recruitment focus by various economic development organizations, methods for assessing aerospace workforce skills and matching them to available opportunities, mapping skill and employment assets, developing training curriculum that match with identified opportunities, and identifying emerging business needs and developing a communication and outreach plan used to engage businesses in the region with the aerospace workforce transition activities already underway.

RIGs are limited National Emergency Grant resources that assist State Workforce Agencies and local Workforce Investment Boards who are actively collaborating with a wide array of strategic partners, and who establish a comprehensive and integrated regional strategic plan for talent development.

According to Secretary of Labor, Elaine L. Chao, "This plan will support the recovery and growth of the regional economy and advance prosperity for the region's workers."



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Board Committee Updates

BWDB is able to address and review specific goals and identify solutions to workforce issues through four committees: Brevard Job Link Development, E³, Community Involvement and Brevard Workforce. To keep board members aware of the activities occurring in these committees, the *Board Committee Update* section will feature one objective in each upcoming *Workforce Link* edition.

Brevard Job Link Development (BJLD) Committee:

One of BJLD's objectives toward achieving the goal to "Ensure Brevard Job Link sustains successful operations for employers and job seekers" is to maintain a highly qualified and effective staff. In January, Brevard Job Link team members completed competency-based training in Universal Services as offered to customers, thus achieving the first part of this goal. By 2010, Brevard Job Link will have developed and implemented a 'Strength-based' training plan for their entire staff using the *Go Put Your Strengths to Work* book authored by Marcus Buckingham and offered through the Gallup Organization.

Community Involvement (CIC) Committee:

The CIC is charged with Goal 1 - to convene the community and conduct community awareness campaigns regarding workforce issues. To meet this objective a Brevard Job Link Communications Plan was developed and is in the implementation phase to be completed by June 30, 2009. Newsletters, brochures, posters and articles are plan components. In addition, several communications goals related to the Aerospace Workforce Transition project were launched. A firm was awarded the contract to develop and implement a Communication and Outreach Plan aimed at the affected aerospace workforce and a newsletter deliverable is in the process of development with a planned distribution in February. Also in the works is a no-cost to business Virtual Job Fair which is in the development phase and planned for late February/early March. Sponsors are being sought to defray outreach costs.

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Brevard Workforce (BWC) Committee:

The Brevard Workforce Committee is charged with identifying emerging workforce needs, working with economic development organizations to enhance EDO efforts, working with education to be responsive to emerging needs and developing career ladder information. In meeting these objectives, the committee adopted Goal #2 of BWDB's Strategic Plan - BWDB must strengthen key business clusters by working with them to identify and solve the workforce issues they face. To meet the goal, the following strategies will be implemented.

Strategies for BWC:

- Understand industry data from Business Services and other sources to use for strategic planning purposes, including identifying industry trends, needs and potential solutions to challenges
- Participate with other organizations in conducting industry roundtable discussions for strategic planning purposes (i.e. planning, analysis, action strategies and pilot programs relevant to that industry)
- Increase the awareness and use of Brevard Job Link Business Services
- Develop and implement cluster-based initiatives to relieve worker shortages in key industries

Tactics: In working to meet these goals, so far this program year BWDB staff has:

- Worked with key stakeholders to form the Aerospace Career Development Council (ACDC), the advisory group whose insight provides the next steps for meeting the needs of the aerospace workforce transitioning beyond the Shuttle program
- Business Services is planning a "no-cost to business" Virtual Job Fair taking place this spring
- Business Services and the Communications department are developing outreach materials and web pages to meet the Communication Plan goal of building awareness about service offerings. Two folder inserts are currently in development: Reduction in Force and Recruitment.



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Board of Directors Annual Meeting/Retreat

2/20/09 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. **ALL DAY**

Executive Committee Meeting

2/03/09 4:00 p.m.
5/5/09 4:00 p.m.

Board of Directors Meeting

5/15/09 8:00 a.m.

Brevard Job Link Development Committee (BJLD)

2/10/09 4:00 p.m.
5/6/09 4:00 p.m.

Retirement Account Trustees

2/03/09 3:30 p.m.
4/29/09 8:00 a.m.

Community Involvement Committee (CIC)

4/22/09 4:00 p.m.

E³ Committee

3/12/09 8:30 a.m.
6/11/09 8:30 a.m.

Brevard Workforce Committee (BWC)

4/2/09 8:30 a.m.

For more information, please visit or call (321) 394-0700.