



NEMO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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**NEMO Workforce Development Board (WDB)
Employer Engagement Committee Meeting
October 3, 2017**

Members Present

Annette Sweet
Jim Kolve
Pat Poepping
Clinton Flowers

Members Absent

Lesa Barber
Diane Noah
Darin Arnsmeier
Mac Wilt
Corey Mehaffey
Dennis Gill
Stephen Garner

WIB Staff

Diane Simbro
Sharon Hillard

Guests

Shari Schenewerk
Rita Brown
Mark Forster
Carolyn Chrisman

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairperson Jim Kolve called the October 3, 2017 Employer Engagement Committee Meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m. at the Missouri Job Center-Kirksville in Kirksville, MO.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken and a signature sheet was signed by those attending. Four committee members were present, and a quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Pat Poepping moved to approve the agenda. Annette Sweet seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Pat Poepping moved to approve the August 29, 2017 meeting minutes with a correction noted on page two. Annette Sweet seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.

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**NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE
CERTIFIED WORK READY COMMUNITIES – COUNTY INFORMATION
What Do We Need To Do To Move Forward**

A handout regarding the Northeast Region's Certified Work Ready Community Initiative status was provided by Shari Schenewerk. Shari said Marion and Ralls Counties had applied for school funding to test almost all of their seniors and their numbers would increase. They were working with Dave Davison to engage the northern counties of Clark, Scotland and Schuyler but their leadership was changing. The same thing was happening in Shelby County. However, she was confident that the entire region would soon be engaged.

Shari said one of the biggest challenges was the transitioning numbers. The goals were set when the unemployment rate was 9 to 11% across the region and if they weren't adjusted, some of the counties wouldn't be able to meet those goals. She said counties that had been persistent enough had been able to get their goals readjusted. She talked about the activities in the counties and who they were working with in them to meet all the goals. She discussed the issue of individuals being listed under the wrong categories because they had entered their information incorrectly. She thought it was best if staff did the testing and assisted individuals when they answered the questions.

It was asked who they worked with in the counties. Carolyn said they really need to find someone who will be a champion for the Work Ready initiative in that county. This could be economic development personnel, chambers, a local school district, etc. She said economic development was very interested because they need the Certified Work Ready Community Certification to attract companies to their area. The huge process of finding a local group or individual who would be a champion for the Certified Work Ready Initiative and educating them on its importance was discussed. Carolyn said counties that didn't have established economic development were at a disadvantage. She and Corey were willing to assist them once they had their own counties established because their labor shed comes from those areas but they could only do so much.

Maintaining the goals was discussed. Shari said to be successful there needs to be a community wide constant education process as new people rotate into the job market. Testing is an ongoing process, and it is important to have the schools on board. People have to believe in the value of the credential or they won't test or endorse the testing.

Rita Brown said Marion and Ralls County schools finally signed on. She and Shari are going to provide a presentation at the Palmyra school district in October, and she has contacted the Ralls County superintendent. General Mills has also signed on. They are marketing the program daily and their numbers will increase. Staff at the Hannibal and Kirksville Job Centers are promoting the testing as well. At Hannibal this week, they had a high school/college career night and the Job Center set up a booth to present its services and to try to get people to sign up for the NCRC there.

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The process of testing (length, difficulty, etc.) was discussed. Individuals must register and take a practice test to see if they can pass. If they cannot, they can do remediation. The test is three hours in length or can be broken up to meet the client's needs and must be proctored.

Carolyn said knowing it has been endorsed by businesses and that they will have a better opportunity acquiring a job with the credential it is an encouragement for individuals to take the test. Shari said the credential also helps with retention. She mentioned a business in Springfield where an employer was experiencing a high rate of turnover. Individuals jumped through the hoops to get hired but didn't stay. Therefore, they decided to make the hiring process more involved. Job seekers now have to take the NCRC. Then job center staff do a pre-orientation for the company. Next an assessment is done and individuals are told what to expect. Now the company is seeing fewer people make it through their hiring process. However, those they hire stay which saves them dollars. This may work in the Northeast Region as well and she has spoken to Kraft about it.

Pat asked who pays for the testing. Shari said Wagner Peyser (State) pays for the testing of individuals who are over 18 and they don't have to meet any income guidelines. They don't set them up to fail and remediation is good because they want them skilled up for employers. She said additional funding for high school students was just approved. The chair has to submit an application for each county with how many, who they are testing, and when they plan to test (spring, fall, etc.). The test must be proctored by an approved ACT proctor. If the proctor is Job Center staff, it can be free. Diane said the region has a grant through the University of MO Extension to pay for the testing of individuals under the age of 18 and it will cover the cost of proctors as well. Invoices for those tests should be sent to the NEMO WDB.

Who the NCRC is being marketed to was discussed. Jim said the NCRC was promoted to all dislocated workers. Mark Forster said they discuss the NCRC with individuals when they are going through the welcome process at the Kirksville Job Center.

Individuals being scared of not doing well on the test was discussed. Older job seekers being intimidated by the test was mentioned. Shari said individuals were sometimes surprised by how well they scored, were encouraged by it, and wanted to proceed with more education. She said if individuals hadn't been in school in a while, the NCRC could also be used as a current education credential.

Carolyn said it would be good if the state would require those receiving unemployment insurance to take the NCRC. Clinton said it had been under consideration. Shari said almost all of the Trade Act individuals had to get the NCRC before they received any services.

Carolyn thought a way to move forward would be through the Extension as they had a presence in every county and had laptops they could use. Shari said we would need to have a meeting and walk them through the process. It was asked who would be in charge. Carolyn said the Extension was restructuring

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their Business Development Program. She would be attending a meeting later this month where they would be assigning their new roles. They plan to have a field specialist and a regional director in each county. We would probably want to work with the regional director. Shari said she could provide an overview of the Certified Work Ready Community Initiative, its importance and the categories.

Rita mentioned the need of getting the support of MWA and in getting their clients certified. She said some of the MWA clients had been tested at Hannibal and the credential was a confidence booster for them. They also target people coming through the Community Supervision Center at Hannibal and the credential was a confidence booster and a real game changer for this group of individuals as well. Diane said we may see an increase in those individuals because the Department of Corrections was developing a new referral procedure for incarcerated individuals who are scheduled to be released. They plan for us to be in contact with them within three days of their release and it is their expectation that they will complete the NCRC.

It was stated that employers were preferring the NCRC but not requiring it. Clinton said unless the job position was exclusively benchmarked to the NCRC test it was unlawful to require it. Carolyn said most just prefer it and then looked at the candidates that had it more closely. Rita said some employers were more interested in the applicants with the credential because they had made the three hour commitment to take the test. It was noted that the individuals score was on the back of the credential and on jobs.mo.gov for the employer to see.

Jim presented a report that showed that the NCRC credential was the number one issue site selectors were looking for. Companies were interested in locating in areas where the workforce had the necessary basic skills. He said according to the July 2017 issue of *Site Selection Magazine Workforce Multipliers*, experts in economic development say the secret sauce for attracting and retaining high-value companies has a new main ingredient: an abundant, specially trained and motivated workforce. He said three years ago the shortage of a skilled workforce was number four on the biggest issues for employers. It had now gone from number four to number one. This means it is even more important to increase the value of our region's workforce through the NCRC. He said we have 43.5 million people on food stamps and 51% of the people were earning \$31,000 a year which wasn't enough to feed three people and send a child to college.

Clinton said Arkansas did a study with ACT to see if getting the NCRC really made individuals more trainable, if they made more money, etc. and Missouri was in the process of duplicating that study. He said ACT set the parameters but the study was well done so we would have some data to support the credential. Also, other states had worked to make acquiring the credential a cultural thing. In Kentucky, they developed a very successful marketing campaign called "Education Pays". Although the NCRC was a skills credential; not an education credential, the region could develop a marketing slogan as well because the region believes that skills matter and skills pay. The region needs to have a greater ability to inform people. The region could develop a public marketing campaign and public service announcements

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so we create communities that are convinced that it is a good idea for their kids to do this. The counties that have been successful have already agreed that it is a skills matter issue. He agreed that it needed to be a cultural change and champions needed to be identified. He said the region could develop parent champions as well.

Annette talked about a campaign be conducted on Facebook and Instagram at a cost of \$250. When completed, she will let everyone know how successful it is. She said we need to decide what we are going to promote before we promote it.

Clinton referred to the Business-U material everyone was asked to read and said they needed to think about the metrics. If we say "Skills Pay", we need to have the data to back that up. He said counting the number of NCRC's was an important thing and counting them from TANF recipients was also really critical. If we are going to count them and say this is meaningful and ask our Job Centers to get these people interested and tested, then we have to do something to incentivize them and talk them into it. Jim said the NCRC shows that individuals have the basic skills to learn a job. He said we should promote the credential by showing individuals what's in it for them.

The Committee discussed apprenticeships and said they pay as well. It was said that most apprenticeships were now also requiring the NCRC as a part of that training. It was stated that some of the kids aren't aware of the available skilled trade opportunities and that we need to better educate them and get them into some of the apprenticeship programs.

**SECTOR STRATEGY
CURRENT OUTREACH TO IDENTIFIED SECTORS &
WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE BE DOING
Manufacturing, Healthcare, Transportation/Logistics, and Agriculture**

Jim said some of the trade opportunities discussed had been around for a long time. However, today's world was full of new technology which had changed our region's identified sectors dramatically. He asked if there was anything else we needed to be doing in those areas.

Annette said she would like to know the types of short term certificate programs available. Diane said she thought the community colleges understood the region's need for more fast track courses and they were working to develop those. She said MACC was starting their interview process on October 10 for their Heavy Highway Construction class again in Hannibal. They will have 15 slots. The youth will come out with several certifications. They must be WIOA eligible and will be enrolled in AEL (Adult Education and Literacy). This is the second year for the program. Diane said if we can get more programs like this going within our region that would help with short term training.

It was asked if Doyle was hiring again. Shari said they had talked with them about the NCRC and apprenticeships. They are interested but she felt the problem was that the company is family owned and they just don't have the time now. They have applied for incentives, which they didn't before because

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they were short staffed. She said their facility was incredible and expanding. She added that Riverview and Doyle were under one management team and they were going to continue to hire.

Shari said apprenticeships seem to be so successful because of the employer investment in the job seeker. Individuals were feeling that someone invested time in training them and they aren't as likely to leave that employer because they supported them and made sure they had the skills. She felt this was a valuable recruitment tool for our sector strategies.

Rita mentioned an individual that just graduated that was doing a type of apprenticeship in commercial electricity in Kansas City. Her nephew-in-law was a commercial electrician that was now able to start his own business who was giving some of these younger kids an opportunity to train with him from the ground up. They start at \$13-14 per hour right out of high school with no training. Diane said West Central was getting ready to start a Commercial Electrician apprenticeship program.

Annette said most of the individuals Ameren hires are for the call centers. The jobs pay well and are full time but not everyone wants to work indoors. She said this type of employment may work for individuals that don't want to work in the construction trades. Shari said IT apprenticeships were currently a growing trend. However, they are finding that by the time someone graduates with a 4-year degree they have to be re-trained because technology has changed.

OUTREACH/INVOLVEMENT WITH K-12, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, & 4-YEAR EDUCATION
Importance of getting youth involved early for soft skills training, technical training,
determining career pathways, credentialing, dual credit, Vo-tech classes

Annette asked if any of the region's community colleges offered any kind of an IT degree. Diane said they have IT classes but she didn't know if they could get an Associates in IT. She thought we should look into this. It was said that Trenton may offer it. Annette felt a lot of kids go to Indian Hills because they offered better job programs. Shari said they were basically a state technical college. Other colleges and what they offer were also discussed. Diane said on the ETTPS policy the region was asked to include language about using out of state training providers.

Jim spoke about an article regarding East Central MO Community College Association. He read an article that highlighted three issues of Missouri's workforce and ongoing efforts to address those issues. He also talked about identifying the skill sets needed for our identified sectors and the importance of education in addressing this because with the retirement of our workers and the lack of individuals to replace them the gap was only going to increase.

Annette said about 25% of Ameren's workforce would be retiring in the next five years. Rita said a huge amount of teachers were also retiring. They discussed individuals working longer and coming back into the workforce after retirement to work in less physical jobs and said there were challenges everywhere.

Annette felt the group should develop a strategy for encouraging some of the programs discussed and do some research and talk to the universities.

Jim agreed that the group should decide what was constructive for them to do, but they were out of time. He said they would meet monthly until a plan was developed. He asked if the group had established

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enough action points from the NCRC discussion. Shari liked the idea of the regional approach for the NCRC because they were having a hard time articulating to people about why some areas were doing really well and others were not. She said it must be a culture change, and getting a credential must be an expectation. It gives the region a better snap shot of its communities. The region can see if its people are doing really well in math but not so well in other subjects and it is all good information. Clinton said public service commercials have gone down because no one asks for them. We need to use that resource. Annette thought it was good to advertise in multiple Medias to try to reach people. Diane said she sent out several public service announcements this week targeting youth, adults, dislocated workers, veterans and people with disabilities etc. about Job Center services.

OTHER BUSINESS

Jim asked everyone to keep reading the Business-U for information that may help the Committee to develop strategies.

Shari asked if everyone had seen the webinar regarding Strategies for Retaining Youth in Rural areas. She said it was very interesting and should be sent out again to everyone.

Rita said Hannibal had a program called Young Entrepreneur which was one of the first in the state. The Chamber works with 10 kids in developing their business plan ideas. It is a competition and if they win, they can compete nationally. She said one 17 year old Palmyra youth is now starting her own organic food service.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting was scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Thursday, November 9, 2017 at the Warrenton Job Center.

ADJOURN

Pat Poepping moved that the meeting be adjourned. Annette Sweet seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:10 p.m.

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