



NEMO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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NEMO Workforce Development Board (WDB) Employer Engagement Committee Meeting September 13, 2021

Members Present

Jim Kolve
Annette Sweet
Erin Dennis
Steven Garner
Julie Rodgers

WDB Staff Present

Diane Simbro
Sharon Hillard
Lawonda Hart

Members Absent

Michael Purol
Chris Gamm
Darin Arnsmeyer
Lesa Barber
Mac Wilt
Dennis Gill
Jennifer Taylor

Guests Present

Dana Keller
Erica Davis
James Smith
Shari Schenewerk
Janet Hickey
Jeremiah Beamer

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Jim Kolve called the NEMO WDB Employer Engagement Committee Meeting to order at approximately 10:00 am. The meeting was conducted electronically through Zoom.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken and five Committee members were present. A total of 14 people were in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

Erin Dennis moved to approve the Agenda and the June 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Steve Garner seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Several reports were sent to the Committee prior to the meeting for their review. These included *The Demographic Drought, 2021 State of the St. Louis Workforce, Rural Apprenticeships for Young People and USDA Resource Guide for Rural Workforce Development*. Jim spoke about several issues mentioned in the reports including the following:

- The population trends in Missouri. An article written by Mark White showed that Hannibal, Kirksville and Moberly lost population from 2010 to 2020 from net domestic out migration. Lincoln and Warren Counties grew by 14% and 12% between 2010 to 2020 and the growth came from the St. Louis and St. Charles suburbs. The *Make My Move* website stated that 45 towns are offering bonuses to entice people to move to their towns.
- The importance of education and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) rate for individuals depending on the training they received. The UI rate for individuals with a Bachelor degree is 1.6% with the average earnings of \$64,000. The UI rate for individuals with some college or Associates degree is 3.3% with earnings of \$39,000. The UI rate for individuals with a High School degree is 4.9% with average earnings of \$31,000. The UI rate for individuals with less than a HS degree is 9.7% and average earnings is \$25,000.
- The benefits of Rural Apprenticeships for young people that include expanded opportunity, reduce brain drain, high-skilled and high-educated workers, and enriched communities.
- The *USDA Rural Development US Department of Agriculture Report* and the four key assistance types necessary to building a stronger rural workforce listed below:
 - workforce development planning
 - infrastructure and equipment financing, industry and employer engagement
 - entrepreneurship and local business development
 - education, training and apprenticeship.
- The economic impact of opioid use in Missouri
- The workforce participation rate in Missouri and Jim said it was much lower that it had been in a long while.
- The need to grow our own workers, cultivating workers and he reported that 69% of manufactures are looking to re-shore production to North America.

Jim said the reports state that people are the key ingredient and every potential employee is valuable. We have 10 million jobs open in America today and still have 6.5 million less people working than prior to the pandemic. Workforce development is the number one priority for companies, education and training organizations, government, business organizations and economic developers. Economic developers want a skilled worker tree. He said the State of MO is working very hard to try and address these issues. Our community colleges will receive \$154 million in 2022, State Tech will receive \$8 million in 2022 and Fast Track already receives \$5.7 million. He said the industries with the most projected job openings for 2022 are healthcare, truck drivers and manufacturing. He said there are also over 130,000 job openings for someone with only a high school degree. He thanked the MO Job Centers saying they have been hard at work trying to put as many jobseekers as possible back to work fast.

Diane said the Committee has always agreed that we need to focus on our high school aged and younger youth. However, our WIOA youth funds have been cut by 10% again this year and we are only allowed to spend 25% of our funds on In-School Youth. This prevents us from concentration where we feel we need to. She has been working on possible solutions. One solution was to see if we can partner with Central Region who received more youth funding than they believe they will need and the other was to search for outside grants and more ways to braid our services with other agencies. She also spoke about the need to find ways to grow our own workforce.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION – ALL ATTENDEES INVITED TO SHARE EVENTS, ETC.

Steve Garner said the Plumbers and Outfitters had work everywhere and were very busy. They don't have any problem keeping employees, but they pay high wages. It was mentioned that quality at the workplace and wages were very important in attracting and keeping employees. Diane said she felt that employers were going to have to make some changes.

Erin Dennis said Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is partnering with the WDB and the Job Center to host a Reverse Job Fair on October 21st at the Hannibal LaGrange University. They are working to line up job candidates for the event so they will have a good pool of individuals for the employers. If anyone on the call would like to be involved in the Job Fair or knew an employer that would like to attend, they should contact her or Diane. Erin said the candidate pool will be opened up to partners as well to see if they have any job seekers who would like to participate. She said, in her role at VR she was having issues finding job candidates for her employer partners that are begging for people. The job seekers either don't have the skills the employer requires or they are not interested in that career field. Diane suggested having a client review between the job centers and VR and Erin thought that might be helpful.

Janet Hickey said Wednesday night the Warrenton Job Center, the Warrenton High School and the Warrenton Chamber was hosting an outdoor event at the High School from 5:30 to 8:30 pm. This would be a twist on their past Manufacturing Day event. They have approximately 23 employers and a variety of unions planning to attend. They will have equipment, simulators and other things available. She said anyone can attend but the focus is on the graduating youth. Janet said the Warrenton Job Center has done three hiring events so far. She added that they will have a recruitment meeting next Tuesday morning to meet with some employers where the Department of Corrections will be presenting.

James Smith said the Kirksville Hy-Vee is a really good place to work and they are having a hard time filling their gas station attendant position with a starting wage of \$16 per hour. Burger King is also having problems at \$15 per hour. He wished there was an answer in understanding why people aren't seeking those jobs. James said the Kirksville Job Center was doing well. They have a manufacturing event coming up next month. Traffic was increasing, and they have over 350 job orders.

Shari Schenewerk said a lot of really good information was shared at the Governor's Conference. She said despite the pandemic the Best in the Midwest Initiative was working in Missouri. Even during the pandemic, Missouri exceeded all of the expectations for job growth and company investment and is currently first in the Nation for small business resiliency. Shari said approximately 97% of Missouri's businesses were considered small business (meaning 50 people or fewer) and Missouri ranks in the top five for entrepreneurship, and continues to be second in apprenticeships. We were in the top 10 for the Missouri One Start Program. Shari said the NEMO WDB had been instrumental in providing Incumbent Worker Training for some of our companies that don't qualify for the One Start Program. She felt as we start cross-educating DHEWD staff, Incumbent Worker Training would increase. She noted that skilling up workers would be very important because many of our companies were turning to automation. Shari said they are also hearing that companies who pay well and listen to their employees are successful. Many of these companies are also offering flexible schedules and this attracts a lot of applicants. She talked about disengage workers who were not on any programs but were choosing not to work because they have learned to live on less and of the need to re-engage them. She added that Jim was correct in that population decline is a huge issue for rural MO. She reported that through a labor shed and population study, she has learned that within the next five years all of those communities Jim mentioned are expected

to rebound and grow and that is a positive. Relators report that they have lists of people who want to move to our region if there is the right kind of housing, reliable internet, good education and childcare options. If we are able to offer those things, we have a chance to really turn this around. She said the Missouri Northeast Economic Group is working on childcare and housing and they hope to do a study soon. Shari added that they are hearing that healthcare, manufacturing and skilled trades continue to be in increased demand and have a decreased applicant pool. She also talked about a student and community part-time job fair held in Maryville that was organized by the college, the chamber, economic development, the WDB and the Job Center. About 40 companies, mostly retail and hospitality, participated and about 180 job seekers attended. Shari said if we can address some of our issues and continue to improve our partnerships, we have a huge ability to impact our region's businesses, workforce and economy in these coming weeks.

Jim said he heard that Missouri was top seven in the nation for advance manufacturing. Shari said they had a list of over 50 areas where Missouri was in the top 20.

Jeremiah Beamer said the Hannibal Job Center was hosting a job fair. He said veterans coming in are using their GI Bill and they are not having a problem placing them. Diane reminded everyone that when they are working with veterans, they should promote the Show Me Heroes grant that is available.

Erica Davis said the Hannibal Job Center has hiring events scheduled for next week for Douglas and ResCare. In the last 30 days, they have had 140 job orders for 163 different openings. Their Job Fair is planned for October 14 and the Reverse Job Fair with VR will be on the 21st. They are currently working on the outreach for the October 14th Job Fair. They are taking registrations, getting their signs reprinted and working on getting the Job Seeker flyer out to different agencies and events. They had about 100 job seekers attend their last job fair and they would like to have even more attend this time. Staff is also busy with their work-based outreach and she plans to have conversations with as many employers as possible about apprenticeships, OJTs and Incumbent Worker Training.

Julie Rodgers said she is working with Pike Lincoln Technical Center to host career fair events for Pike County and another one for Lincoln County early next spring. Employers will be invited to come in and meet with their students that are getting ready to graduate. They are also considering changing their model to allow their High School Seniors to go out and work with some of the employers in their field of interest. They are getting ready to do the ribbon cutting for Lincoln Tech and the tentative date is November 9th.

UPDATE ON CERTIFIED WORK READY COMMUNITIES

Diane said the presenters for this information had to get off the call so this information would be sent out to everyone.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Town Hall meeting, Work Based Learning

Diane thanked everyone who attended the Town Hall meeting. She noted that the meeting revealed that we sometimes beat ourselves up about not being able to find workers to fill positions. Some of the reasons for the lack of jobseekers may be increased entrepreneurship, disengaged workers, an increased number of people retiring, childcare issues and individuals caring for their parents. She said there isn't enough people to fill all of the jobs we feel are going to be created over the next 10 years. Diane said we are really concentrated on work-based learning our region. Through the conversations we have had over

the last year we feel that the work-based learning, including registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, are the things that are going to put people to work and provide them with the ability to learn while they earn. She felt we need to concentrate on work-based learning especially for our youth because work ethics needs to be learned on the job and it is not something that can be taught from a book. She said, if we have the right employers that are mentors and patient, then the youth can learn a lot. Therefore, our concentration is going to be on incumbent worker training, registered apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, OJT, work experiences and the continued use of ITA's for training.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The next Employer Engagement Committee meeting was scheduled for December 13, 2021 at 10:00 am.

ADJOURN

Julie Rodgers moved that the meeting be adjourned. Steve Garner seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:20 am.