

VIRGINIA



WORKFORCE CONNECTION

Virginia Workforce Council Winter 2011

From the Chairman's Perspective

Credentials are key to successful careers

By Huey J. Battle
Chairman, Virginia Workforce Council

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your new chairman of the Virginia Workforce Council. I want to thank Gov. Robert McDonnell for this call to service and his vision for job creation in the Commonwealth. We have



Battle

been extremely fortunate to have been guided by the steady hand of former chair, Dr. Bob Leber, who continues in the role as the governor's senior adviser for workforce development. On behalf of all Council members, I want to personally bestow my heartfelt thanks to Bob as a business leader and enthusiastic evangelist of career pathways strategies, particularly registered apprenticeships.

No one can argue that we are all facing very challenging economic times. Our nation and this Commonwealth are slowly climbing out of a recession and yet employment is still the lagging indicator of improvement.

I recently represented the Council at the National Governors Association's State Workforce Board chairs' winter meeting and National Association of Workforce Boards' forum in Washington, DC. Workforce practitioners, educators, industry leaders and public officials focused on the importance of earning credentials as a key to a successful career path. The conferences also reinforced the need to connect

(See CHAIRMAN on page 2)

Dr. Robert Leber (above right) passes the gavel to his successor, Huey Battle, as he accepts the post of chairman of the Virginia Workforce Council.



Recipients of the Expanding Opportunities Award pose for a photo with VCCS Vice Chancellor Peter Blake (far left). Pictured here (left to right) are Beth Duffield, Dr. Joe Ashley, Randy Betz and Shawn Avery. Dr. Robert Leber is not shown.

HIRE Education Conference goes global

Every year Virginia's community colleges unite workforce development professionals, economic developers, business leaders and public officials from across the state to collaborate, share best practices and identify new ways to better serve individuals and businesses in the Commonwealth. This year, the conference focused on "A Global Workforce," exploring and identifying trends, strategies and programs that assist individuals and businesses in upgrading their workforce skills to remain competitive and innovative in a global market.

This year's conference was the largest to date with more than 400 participants, including representatives from 23 community colleges, 15 workforce investment areas, 35 business and industry partners and four state agencies. Council members Robin Sullenberger and Dr. Robert Leber also attended the event. They participated in a panel discussion

on "Reforms through Gubernatorial Change: A Look at the Findings of Governor McDonnell's Commissions," along with Laura Fornash, deputy secretary of education, and Dr. Carlyle Ramsey, president of Danville Community College (DCC).

The conference agenda boasted more than 50 breakout sessions based on three learning objectives:

- **Youth, 24 and under:** programs, initiatives and strategies that build better foundations and skills and provide career pathways.
- **Adult:** programs, initiatives and strategies that provide employment, certification and diploma assistance.
- **Businesses served:** programs, initiatives and strategies to engage firms in workforce development.

On the second night of the conference, during the Golden Globes Award Show, workforce professionals who significantly contributed to the workforce development system in Virginia over the last year were recognized. Awards were given to the overall winners for the Chancellor's Instructor/Trainer Award: Jennifer Bodnar (Dabney S. Lancaster Community College), Gerald Sexton (DCC), Daryl Burkholder (DSLCC) and Beth Duffield (Virginia Highlands Community College).

Retirees were recognized: Willie Blanton (Virginia Community College System), Bonnie Moyers (Blue Ridge Community College), Carla Leap (Arlington/Alexandria WIB), Patricia Sawyer (Capital Region WIB), Jim Bishop (Capital Region WIB) and Ann Stone

(See HIRE on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

those credentials with skills and competencies consistent with labor market demand occupations.

In this issue of *Virginia Workforce Connection*, you will see how our state is implementing these same promising practices, with tools like the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC), General Educational Development Certificate (GED®) and Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills (VCATS) certifications.

In my role as your chairman, I will bring a business perspective to our deliberations. I am hopeful that my 30-plus years of employment in the energy industry in Northern Virginia will allow a perspective that supports Gov. McDonnell's goals for economic development, job creation and business and industry growth in the Commonwealth.

I have chaired the Council's Performance & Accountability Committee and co-chaired a special work group to guide our transition from the 17 U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act (WIA) performance measures to eight common measures as well as new business measures. I am committed to transparency with our outcomes and will keep you informed as we make progress in these areas. In that vein, please be sure to peruse the Council's 2009-2010 annual report for more detail.

Lastly, I also am proud to bring a local perspective from my tenure on Local Workforce Investment Area 11. The great work done by the Local Workforce Investment Boards and their One-Stops are truly what makes the system work successfully. We should never lose sight of a focus in that area and in the folks who work so hard daily to deliver the programs that benefit both employers and jobseekers.

I welcome your ideas and feedback and trust you will join us in helping to support our business community by increasing the possibilities for our incumbent and future workforce. Thank you for your partnership and commitment. 🌐

HIRE

(continued from page 1)

(Capital Region WIB).

The evening's top honors—the Expanding Opportunities Awards—were bestowed to five individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the workforce system and who have “expanded workforce opportunities” over the last year. Those recipients, nominated by colleagues and selected by the planning committee, were:

- Dr. Robert Leber, special assistant to the governor for workforce development;
- Randy Betz, vice president of workforce, Paul D. Camp Community College;
- Dr. Joe Ashley, assistant commissioner of the Department of Rehabilitative Services;
- Shawn Avery, vice president of the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development/Greater Peninsula Workforce Investment Board; and
- Beth Duffield, workforce development coordinator at Virginia Highlands Community College.

The 2011 HIRE Education Conference is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 6-9. 🌐

Young mother gets fresh start with help from Improvement Association

Annette Anderson, a resident of Sussex County, came to The Improvement Association because she was interested in enrolling her son in the Head Start Program. The program's framework for services included assisting the entire family in overcoming barriers related to becoming self-sufficient.

Anderson had dropped out of high school at the age of 15. A single parent, she had not worked before and was seeking as many tools and resources she could take advantage of to make a better future for herself and her children.

She enrolled in the association's Workforce Investment Act program, funded through the Crater Regional Workforce Investment Board. Anderson participated in The Total Service Center Workshop, attaining the Commonwealth of Virginia Career Readiness Silver Certificate. This past summer she also successfully participated in the summer employment element with work experience training.

In conjunction with work experience, Anderson enrolled in GED® classes offered at Southside Virginia Education Center. In October 2010, she took the test and exceeded the battery passing score in each of the five subjects.

Today, Anderson is proud to say she has earned a Commonwealth of Virginia General Educational Development Certificate. To further her education, she will enroll in the upcoming spring semester at the nearby community college to pursue an occupation in the field of nursing. 🌐



Annette Anderson proudly displays a Commonwealth of Virginia General Educational Development Certificate.

SkillSource staff meets with its counterparts from China

In January 2011, staff of the SkillSource Group Inc., the nonprofit arm of the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board, briefed a visiting 15-person delegation from Henan Province, China, on local workforce best practices, economic development and regional labor market issues. The Chinese delegation, comprising Henan Province and local workforce officials, were in Northern Virginia as part of a 21-stop visit in the United States.

Henan Province is the second largest province in China, with a population exceeding 94 million citizens within an area of nearly 65,000 square miles. This region is primarily known for agriculture, retail, tourism and heavy industry. Its service and information technology industries are underdeveloped and focused in several cities within the province.

In contrast, Northern Virginia supported the Greater Washington Region (as one of the 15 largest job markets in the United States) and added more than 56,000 new jobs from September 2009 to September 2010. 🌐



David Hunn (right), executive director of the Northern Virginia Workforce Area #11, meets with Jia Junfang, deputy director general of the Department of Human Resources and Social Security of Henan Province, China.

VMA, ECPI gearing up to prepare workers for manufacturing industry

As the baby boomer population moves toward retirement, some industries such as manufacturing, with large numbers of employees between the ages of 55 and 64, will soon have thousands of vacated positions with a small pool of qualified workers to fill them.

In response to this quandary, the Virginia Manufacturers Association (VMA) has partnered with ECPI College of Technology to establish up to six VMA-Certified Assessment Centers throughout the state in the regions of Hampton Roads, Central, Southwest and Northern Virginia.

The program's goal is to increase the number of industry-certified workers in Virginia by helping them attain advanced technology credentials established by the Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills (VCATS), VMA's workforce development division. In particular, the program aims to groom workers for manufacturing jobs that require technical skills and to build a ready pipeline of talent to fill those roles.

Three-hour assessments will help identify the skills such as math, spatial reasoning and problem solving students may need to work in technical areas.

Initially, the VMA-Certified Assessment Centers will test workers' skills and provide certification for VCATS Level 1 Manufacturing Technician, VCATS Manufacturing Specialist and Industrial Energy Auditor certifications. The number of certifications will expand as the program grows. Virginia Beach ECPI campus president, Kevin Pavegio, sees this process "as fuel to attract new employers to the Commonwealth."

While the manufacturing industry may have suffered a loss of employment reduction, there is still an overwhelming need for people to fill the technical roles to operate and repair the equipment. The assessment will help ensure the right workers have the proper training to fill more than 40,000 jobs that can open over the next four to five years in the manufacturing industry.

According to a recent impact study by Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the manufacturing industry annually contributes \$172 billion to Virginia's economy and \$6.3 billion in state and local tax revenue.

For more information on the VMA-Certified Assessment Centers, go to www.vcats.org.

The program aims to groom workers for manufacturing jobs that require technical skills and to build a ready pipeline of talent to fill those roles.



(From left) Brett Vassey with VMA, Sheryl Bryant with VCATS, and ECPI's Kevin Pavegio and Mark Dreyfus are on hand to launch the VMA-Certified Assessment Center in Virginia Beach last October.

Peninsula Council honored at 2010 Economic Summit

At the Virginia 2010 Economic Summit on Dec. 2, the Virginia Chamber of Commerce honored Virginia's leading economic development organizations – which included the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development – with a Virginia Torchbearer Award. The event at the Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg was attended by more than 450 people.

To highlight the crucial role Virginia's economic development organizations play in our state's prosperity and unparalleled attractiveness as a business location, the chamber sought nominations for the prestigious awards. The purpose was to identify the economic development organizations, local governments and educational institutions that have made a creative and significant contribution to Virginia's economy. These contributions include attracting, retaining and expanding business, as well creating new jobs, attracting foreign investment and initiating revitalization projects.

Following a statewide nomination process, resulting in a strong field of contenders, a blue-ribbon panel of judges selected 12 winners consisting of 10 congressional districts, one statewide program and a Project of the Year.

Representing the Second Congressional District, PCFWD was a winner for its education and employer-led programs, such as the industry cluster groups and the Youth Career Expo.

In all, the Greater Peninsula region received three awards. Besides the council, the Newport News Economic Development Authority received an award for the Canon Virginia Expansion Project, as did Hampton University for the Hampton University Proton Therapy Institute.

"We are very excited and proud to present the Torchbearer Awards because they showcase the accomplishments and outstanding contributions that best exemplified the excellence that has made the Commonwealth a top state in the nation for business," says Barry DuVal, president and CEO of the Virginia chamber.



(From left) Barry DuVal, president and CEO of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, joins Matthew James, PCFWD's president and CEO, and William H. Mann Jr., PCFWD's president and COO, as they accept the prestigious Torchbearer Award in December.

A twist on an old adage: First comes a GED®, then a good job and then marriage

Like so many residents in Southside, Va., Sean Preston of Chatham was personally affected by the recession. A single parent of three boys, he had lost his job and had trouble finding employment. With his family's well-being at risk, Preston took advice from the Department of Social Services to seek help from experts at the Virginia Workforce Center in Chatham. Within nine months, he earned his GED®, secured a good job and married his sweetheart.

Veteran case manager Threllis Hall counseled Preston to take job-readiness classes to help him prepare a resume and cover letters, improve his interview skills, and learn how to tell his story on paper and online job applications.

"We also encouraged him to complete his GED®, so he would be able to gain stable employment to support his family," she says.

By April, Preston completed his job-readiness classes and started working on his GED®. During this time, Hall said Preston was approved to enter into the center's adult internship program.

This program is funded by the West Piedmont Workforce Investment Board and administered by Pittsylvania County Community Action to help



After he earned his GED® and secured a good job at Yorktown Cabinetry in Danville, Sean Preston was able to marry his sweetheart, Holly Yates, in December.

individuals gain work experience while on the job. The WPWIB funds and monitors the region's five workforce centers in Danville and Martinsville and the counties of Henry, Patrick and Pittsylvania.

"This investment subsidizes an employer's on-the-job training expenses, while helping our clients get their foot in the door," Hall says.

Preston was placed as an intern at Yorktown Cabinetry in April and completed the internship in June. While he wasn't hired immediately, he continued

to work at Yorktown for four more months through a staffing agency, Hall says. "During this time, we continued our counseling. By September, he earned his GED®," she says. On Oct. 25, Yorktown hired Preston full-time.

Preston said this positive experience prompted him to refer his girlfriend, Holly Yates, to the center. Yates also had lost her job. She explored her options and decided on a different path.

"Holly took the career-readiness certificate and secured a gold level certification, which means she scored very high on three assessments in applied math, locating information and reading for information," Hall says.

"From employers' perspectives, this certificate validates she has certain essential skills to do the job," she adds.

With this certificate, Yates got a full-time job with Technique Solutions in Stafford with a very short commute – she works from home. She also is currently enrolled at Central Virginia Community College where she's pursuing an administration of justice degree.

With the future looking brighter, Preston and Yates married Dec. 19.

Virginia Workforce Centers offer numerous employment services and training programs for jobseekers, employers and youth ages 14 to 21. For more information, contact Hall at (434) 432-4001 or visit www.wpwbin.org.

Northern Virginia conducts study on workforce service's economic impact

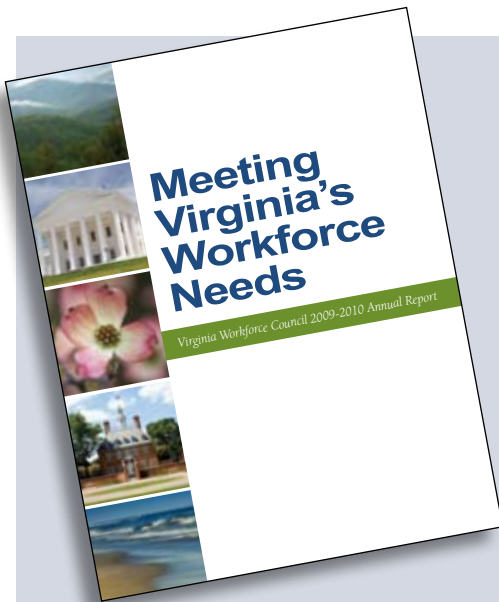
The Northern Virginia Workforce Area (#11) recently conducted an independent Regional Economic Impact Study. The study assessed the regional economic and fiscal impact of the workforce skills training and job placement services provided by the Northern Virginia Workforce System in FY 2010.

This study was prepared by Mangum Economic Consulting LLC, an economic forecasting firm in Richmond. Its author, Dr. Fletcher Mangum, input local workforce outcome and related employment data from FY 2010 into economic development software called IMPLAN. He examined the impact of increased consumption expenditures gained through successfully transitioning unemployed adult jobseekers into employed workers at varying average salary levels.

In Area #11, 1,840 individuals enrolled in intensive services for the system's workforce programs in FY 2010. Adult jobseekers placed into employment through the Northern Virginia SkillSource Centers produced an estimated \$11.8 million in direct economic impact, with an additional indirect economic impact of \$4.9 million.

With a total economic impact of \$16.7 million, these new employed workers generated \$1.5 million in new federal tax revenue and \$1.2 million in state and local tax revenue. Overall benefits were 4.5 times the costs of these public workforce programs. When core services are included, the benefit/cost ratio increased to approximately 9.3.

The Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board study can be reviewed online at www.myskillsource.org/home/index.shtml.



Hot off the Web!

VWC's 2009-2010 annual report is now available to read online. Please check it out to see how the Council helped Virginia's workforce this past year through education, training and partnerships.