

Workforce Readiness in Arkansas

New Challenges – New tasks – New roles

In her book The New Workforce – Harriet Hankin claims - *Overcoming the lack of skilled workers will increasingly become the responsibility of companies themselves.*

We as Human Resource professionals already understand what she is saying. We realize the workforce readiness issue is broad and complex. We recognize that ensuring a ready workforce is not just education’s task, the government’ role, the parent’s duty, or the applicant’s responsibility. It is also a task, role, duty and responsibility of HR professionals to ensure their employer’s are recognizing and participating in the resolution of issues that may prevent us, and in some parts of our state and in some fields are already preventing us, from having a world class workforce.

New challenges – New tasks – New roles. HR professionals must play a part but they do not have to work alone. There are many others who are working on, or who need to be working on this issue. HR professionals can lead the way and get others involved as well.

Get involved with your professional peers. Tap the resources and research at the national, state and local level of SHRM. Join a local chapter of SHRM. Share ideas. Encourage your local chapters and state affiliates to include workforce readiness in their programming and in their initiatives.

Get your employer involved. Make sure they are assessing their skill needs for today and for the short and long term future. Make sure they understand how community and workforce issues will impact their productivity, their growth and their workplace.

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Get involved with the schools attended by your children or the children of your employees Volunteer with workforce initiatives. Speak with the principals and curriculum specialists about your need as a parent, the employer of parents and as the future employer of their students.

Get involved with an employee advocate group. A Veterans Hospital or other agencies working to train or place disabled workers. Learn how little you really have to do to accommodate the needs of otherwise qualified disabled workers.

Get involved with your regional workforce board. Join a committee. Find out how to access the monies they have for incumbent worker training.

Get involved with your community college, state college or any of the many private colleges or other post secondary institutions that offer courses or degrees in your area. Meet the people in the relevant degree programs as well as their continuing education departments. Let them know the kinds of classes you need them to offer and the type of schedule needed to accommodate your employees.

Get involved in your community. Educate yourself, form an opinion and vocalize it with your letters and votes in regards to issues of affordable housing, transportation, immigration, and education.

Kathryn W. Davanzo, SPHR
HR Florida - Workforce Readiness - Esource Article

Workforce Readiness Activities across the State



NEASHRM NEWS...

NEASHRM just finished a job fair on April 30, 2009. They had a table and they provided resume and interviewing tips. They tried to draw High School students, but they didn't have much luck with that. Does anyone have any ideas that work?

---Dewayne Douglas, Workforce Readiness Chair

Highway Projects Ready, Await Stimulus Money

By The Associated Press

2/25/2009

LITTLE ROCK (AP) - A list of 27 "shovel-ready" highway infrastructure projects with costs totaling just over \$24 million was approved for start of construction once federal stimulus money is made available, officials said Wednesday.

Arkansas has been allocated \$351.5 million for state infrastructure projects, and the funds will be made available no later than March 10 by the Federal Highway Administration. State Highway and Transportation Department officials said they are ready to break ground as soon as the money is released.

<http://www.arkansasbusiness.com/article.aspx?aID=112701.54928.124842&fs=2>

CAHRA NEWS...



CAHRA began conducting workforce readiness sessions in January 2009 for Our House, a shelter in Little Rock for the working homeless. Two sessions are offered per month. The sessions cover setting career goals, identifying job openings, preparing an effective resume/application, interviewing with success, and keeping your job. The sessions last approximately two hours and have averaged about 10 individuals per session.

In addition, CAHRA has conducted a shorter version of this content for Cradle Care programs at Conway, Mayflower and Vilonia High Schools since January 2009. Cradle Care is a program that assists high school students who are pregnant or have recently had a baby.

CAHRA is in the process of setting up workforce readiness courses for the United Way participating organizations in Conway. Courses are expected to begin in April of 2009. ---Tim McKenna, Workforce Readiness Chair

Additional unemployment insurance benefits available under Extended Benefit Program

April 22, 2009

<http://recovery.arkansas.gov/news.html#9>



NOARK NEWS...

Over 100 Job Seekers attend NOARK's "Resume CPR" Workshop

The NOARK Workforce Readiness Committee recently conducted a "Resume CPR" workshop in conjunction with the 2009 Northwest Arkansas Spring Job Fair held on Monday, May 4th at the John Q. Hammons Center.

The workshop was a culmination of months of hard work by the fourteen person committee. The vision of the committee was to conduct on-site resume critiques for job seekers before the large regional Job Fair. The workshop had drop-in hours of 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., giving job seekers ample time to participate before the Fair opened at noon.

To better serve the job seekers, the committee arranged for 12 computer banks in the workshop area so suggested changes and improvements could be made on the spot. After changes were made, job seekers were given several printed copies of their new & improved resume to take to the job fair with them. Job seekers were encouraged to bring their resume with them on a hard drive, so that changes could be saved for future use. For attendees who needed assistance writing a resume from the start, a generous donation by Microsoft allowed for those attendees to take their new resume home on a new flash drive.

The workshop was a tremendous success, with 126 job seekers participating in the event. Thirty-five volunteers from NOARK and the recently formed Northwest Arkansas Recruiting Staffing Professionals (NWARSP) worked at the event which ran very smoothly. Most participating job seekers only had to wait 5-10 minutes before visiting with an HR professional.

Prior to the event, the committee hosted a volunteer training conducted by Stephanie Meehan, a professional resume writer. The training ensured that the volunteers were giving a consistent message to the attendees.

The event could not have happened without the strong partnership that NOARK has with the Rogers Lowell Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce hosts the bi-annual event and pays for the workshop space. The Chamber also heavily promoted the event in all of their Job Fair print, radio and television advertising. The Computer Hut donated the 12 computers and a printer was supplied by Staples. ---Gretchen Laffoon, Workforce Readiness Chair

Mark your calendar for the 2009 Workforce Readiness Core Leadership area Conference Calls and Webcast.

5/27 – Conference Call

9/30 – Conference Call

11/12 – Webcast

12/9 – Conference Call

Please go to:

<http://moss07.shrm.org/Communities/VolunteerResources/WebcastArchivesforVolunteerLeaders/Pages/default.aspx>

Report: Cap-and-Trade Legislation Could Result in Huge Job Loss

Greenhouse gas cap-and-trade legislation such as that proposed by the Obama administration and under discussion in the House could result **in the loss of more than 3 million jobs by 2030**, according to a recently released report.

<http://www.workforce.com/section/00/article/26/39/11.php>

Job 'Angels' Look After Victims Of Downturn

The grass-roots movement, which is growing quickly on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, promises to give a boost not only to out-of-work individuals but also companies eager to do more with less.

<http://www.workforce.com/section/00/article/26/41/05.php>

ARKANSAS RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

"Thank you for visiting the Web site of Arkansas's Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This Act is a great opportunity for Arkansas, and its implementation will be carried out with transparency, oversight, and accountability. Keeping Arkansans at work and advancing projects and initiatives that will lay the groundwork for the future growth of Arkansas will be our guiding principles in this process." [Read the full message](#)



WAHRA NEWS...

WAHRA had the first session of “Bookbags to Briefcases” for Southside High School on April 14th, 2009. We presented to approximately 500 juniors. A handout of interviewing skills was given out to them as well. Margy Kincy with Southside gave us some excellent feedback stating that the students as well as the teachers were very pleased that we were able to help them clear up some information regarding working.

On May 19th we are going to present to Northside the same presentation. There are about 600 students at Northside.

Also WAHRA has been asked to help judge the District 1 FBLA Conference that was held on May 6th, 2009. We are judging Mr. FBL, Ms. FBL, Job Interview, and Public Speaking.

If you would like a copy of the handout that WAHRA gave out please contact Cathleen choffman@daisy.com and she will be happy to send you one. ---*Katherine Williams, Workforce Readiness Chair*

Estimated Allocation of Arkansas Recovery Funds: \$2.9 billion

Medicaid/Human Services	---\$954.4M
Education and Higher Ed	---\$475.5M
Housing and Labor	---\$454.3M
Fiscal Stabilization	---\$443.9M
Transportation	---\$379.5M
Energy and Weatherization	---\$87.9M
Water and Environment	---\$50.3M
Safety and Community	---\$34.4M

<http://recovery.arkansas.gov/>

Arkansas' Jobless Rate Increases to 6.5 Percent

For Immediate Release: April 17, 2009

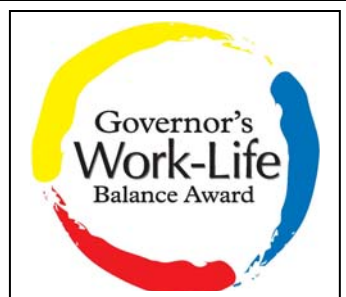
Contact Person: Kimberly Friedman, (501) 682-3125

The United States' unemployment rate increased four-tenths of a percentage point to 8.5 percent.

<http://www.discoverarkansas.net/>

From the Editor...

Please join me in congratulating all the winners of the Governor's Work-Life Balance Award.



The Governor's Work-Life Balance Award is presented to companies exhibiting leadership in implementation of family friendly practices. Winners in the following categories, based on number of employees, were awarded in May of 2009. Read more...

<http://www.arkansasbusiness.com/family/winners.asp>

Thank you...

Cathleen

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April Jobs Report Brings Hopeful Signs of Recovery

Key Facts

- Employment declined 539,000 in April, the smallest decline in 6 months.
- Unemployment jumped to 8.9%.
- Average hourly wages remain 3.2% ahead of last year.

--Kelly Services Marketing information