

WORKFORCE DIRECTOR REPORT

August 2015

NEW ITEMS

Filling the Skills Gap with On-the-Job Training

Last year, the IowaWORKS center worked to recruit business leaders' support to effect the necessary partnership with Western Iowa Tech Community College (WITCC) for the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and licensed practical nurse (LPN) advance training programs. Last month, the first group of HVAC students graduated from their program. Two young men from small towns in neighboring states completed the program with support from Job Corps. Their next step was a two day internship arranged by IowaWORKS with an HVAC employer in Carroll. The employer was impressed with the professionalism of the students and agreed to hire them full time. The business took advantage of a WIA/WIOA on-the-Job training (OJT) arrangement that supplements a portion of their training expense. These two students decided to stay in Iowa after their training because they were given a career opportunity in the local area. In addition, the fiancée to one of the students is a graduate of Job Corps and WITCC's LPN program. She works in the region as a nurse.

Employer-Educator Summit

IowaWORKS is taking registrations for the Employer Educator Summit sponsored by Western Iowa Advantage and Employers Council of Iowa. The event will be held at the Templeton Center in Templeton on September 17 beginning at 9:00 AM. The keynote speech will be presented by Director Deborah Durham of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Director Beth Townsend of Iowa Workforce Development. The Job Corp students mentioned in the previous item gained the technical skills that local businesses needed. Their journey will be discussed and they will provide advice to schools and businesses from their perspective when it comes to training and hiring young adults. Among Iowa jobs, 50% require workers with "middle skills," but only 33% of our workforce has those skills. Persons attending the Summit will learn more about the middle skills gap and how our education system and our business community can work together to develop citizens who possess the right skills for our changing society, and jobs that exist specifically in our region.

Dunkin' Donuts Grand Opening

Nikkie Lay, Manager of the new Carroll Dunkin' Donuts store, made the connection with her new employer by attending a "Meet and Greet" at the IowaWORKS Center. Lay was a participant in a work program provided by the center while she completed her training program. At one point, Lay was experiencing some difficulties in her personal life and her case manager advised "someday you will be a success." Lay says she hung on to that statement whenever things looked bleak. On July 10, she experienced that success. As the new manager of the Carroll store, Lay was given the opportunity to award \$1,000 to a charity of her choice. Lay chose to award Carroll Family Resource Center because of the help she was given by that organization.

UPDATES

Job-Driven National Emergency Grant

You may remember from last month that Region 8 is waiting to receive funds upon federal approval of a modification to a Job Driven National Emergency Grant (JD-NEG). The goal of the grant is to create more apprenticeship opportunities in the area. The modification has been approved by the DOL Regional Office and has now moved to DC for final approval. A decision is expected in approximately four weeks.