

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board * Annual Report 2013-2014

Moving Forward: Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Creates New Opportunities & Challenges

Typically, in the Annual Report to the Community, the Northwest TN Workforce Board highlights the past year's accomplishments. However, the passage of new legislation that reauthorizes workforce development funding and is designed to improve federal workforce development laws is BIG news, NOW.

For over a decade, legislators have worked to ensure training programs are job-driven. The new Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) emphasizes the creation of career pathway programs, improved integration and coordination of education & training services, development of sector based strategies, and streamlined service delivery to individuals, especially for underprepared youth and adults. "Last year the federal government spent more than \$145 million in Tennessee through a maze of programs trying to help Tennesseans find jobs," said Senator Lamar Alexander, a key sponsor of the bill. "This legislation simplifies that maze, gives governors and states more flexibility, and makes it easier for Tennessee's 13 local workforce investment boards to match Tennesseans who want a job with the skills employers are looking for."

Each year several Northwest TN Workforce Board Members travel to the National Association of Workforce Boards Forum in

Washington, D.C. to learn best practices and any new developments in the workforce arena. During the trips, board members schedule meetings "on the hill" with our TN Legislators to share our successes and concerns. "We appreciate Senator Alexander and his staff for listening to the local perspective on legislation," commented Dr. Karen Bowyer, President of DSCC, the Fiscal Agent and Administrative Entity for LWIA 12 workforce programs. "Senator Alexander, Senator Corker and Congressman Fincher are always open to our suggestions."

WIOA is scheduled to take effect July 1, 2015. According to Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development, the bill contains both enhancements and some challenges. "We are already reading the legislation and making comments to the State and United States Department of Labor on local interpretation. We are hopeful our concerns will be addressed during the writing of the regulations." She continued, "We are fortunate to have a wonderful staff and network of partners who are committed to workforce development, and have the desire and flexibility to meet any challenge. WIOA is in good hands in northwest TN!"



NWTN Workforce Board members met with Senator Lamar Alexander during the 2014 NAWB Conference. From L to R: Brad Hurley, Private Business-Carroll County; Alvin Smothers, Private Business-Benton County; Dr. Karen Bowyer - President of Dyersburg State Community College/Administrative Entity; Margaret Prater, VP of Workforce Development/DSCC; Ruthene Ezell, Private Business-Dyer County; Sandra Woods, Labor Representative-Gibson County

Unemployment Rates Drop with New & Expanding Industry

For the first time since the recession began, rural northwest TN has seen unemployment rates drop to below 10%. Although there are a few counties still with double digit rates, overall the area has seen substantial improvement. Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development sees first-hand the efforts being made to improve the economy in the 11 county workforce area. "Our economic and community development partners have worked tirelessly to bring business expansions and new industry to the area, assisting with both infrastructure and training needs. The NWTN Workforce Board partners to provide real-time labor market information and workforce data analysis using EMSI and On the Map technology. We can compare the skills of current unemployed workers with those skills needed for new jobs. Much of the time we find our workforce has a 90% or higher compatibility skills rating between jobs. Couple that with the new advanced manufacturing programs established in our area training institutions, we feel we are prepared to meet the needs of industry."

In 2011, Governor Bill Haslam announced his Job4TN Plan that prioritized target sectors, established regional job base camps, promised an investment in innovation and technology, and pledged to reduce business regulation. His goal to be the #1 State in the Southeast for jobs is becoming a reality. According to the TN Department of Economic & Community Development, Tennessee has received numerous recognitions for economic development progress. Recently, in *Business Facilities* magazine's 10th annual Metro, State and Global Rankings Report Tennessee ranked 1st in Education as Race to the Top Leaders; 2nd in Automotive Manufacturing Strength; 2nd Best Infrastructure; and 4th Best Business Climate.

LWIA 12 is fortunate to partner with an eco-

nomie development team led by Blake Swagart, Northwest TN Regional Director, and Gwyn Fisher, Greater Memphis Regional Director. "The Directors and their staff not only work with the local chambers and industrial boards for prospects and expansions, but they make sure that workforce development is in the loop," said Ginger Powell, Director of Business Services. "We work as a team to make sure the employers needs are met."

The TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development works closely with TNECD to assure that Tennessee has a high quality workforce. TDLWD Commissioner Burns Phillips oversees the federal Workforce Investment Act, employment and unemployment services programs. "I greatly appreciate the cross-department partnerships LWIA 12 and other areas have developed. The commitment to excellence in serving our employers and job seekers has resulted in continued economic growth."

Through these team efforts, over 1,800 new jobs have been announced in the workforce area. Recent announcements and expansions:

Gibson	MacLean Power Systems	250
Dyer	NSK Steering	300
Dyer	DOT Foods	157
Dyer	Full Throttle S'loon-shine Distillery	50
Obion	Greenfield Products	100
Obion	9 to 5 Seating dba MIA Seating	500
Crockett	Alamo Pride MFG	50
Tipton	Unilever	428
Tipton	CSC Sugar	50

Partners in TN Career Centers Align to Better Serve Employer and Job Seeker Customers

Companies expanding or locating in northwest TN will be pleased to find a network of TN Career Centers throughout the LWIA. Each of the 11 counties has an American Job Center to assist employers with locating and screening qualified applicants, including testing for the National Career Read-



iness Certificate, a work-ready credential. Employers are encouraged to work directly with the Career Center to host job fairs, post job orders, interview job candidates, and to arrange services for closures and layoffs.

Additionally, companies can use the virtual one-stop www.Jobs4TN.gov. This powerful on-line tool provides employers easy access to resumes of qualified workers that can be reviewed for consideration. The Jobs4TN website also offers job seekers step by step instructions to create a resume, post it on-line and apply for jobs. If an individual does not have computer access or needs guidance, he/she may come into any of the physical career center locations for assistance. "The TN Career Centers offer computerized labor market information, internet access, workshops, an on-line talent bank, job placement, recruitment and training referral to assist job seekers," commented Mark Chandler, TDLWD West TN Regional Director and one of the Lead Consortium Partners. "Our Consortium includes many partners, and we are functionally

aligned to work as a team."

If it is determined that additional skills are needed for job seekers to qualify for high demand jobs, WIA staff are on hand in the TN Career Center to provide scholarships for school or contract with an employer for on-the-job training. Other partners, including Vocational Rehabilitation

and Veterans Services are available to assist customers with special needs either on-site or through referral. Ronda Baker, Manager of the TN Vocational Rehabilitation Center in Dyersburg houses a staff member in the Career Center. "When an individual with a disability comes to the Career Center they can request special accommodations, and we have a staff member there to assure an individual's needs are met." The Career Center also provides priority service to Veterans and eligible family members.

In the unfortunate circumstance where a company must lay off employees or close their doors, the Rapid Response Unit is available to work with companies and affected employees. Pam Merritt, Director of Training Services, assisted 13 companies affecting over 800 workers this year. Merritt comments, "We have a comprehensive workforce development system with all partners working together to meet the needs of our employers and job seekers. The TN Career Centers are where people and jobs connect."

LEADERSHIP

Four Elected Officials to Leave Office Sept. 1

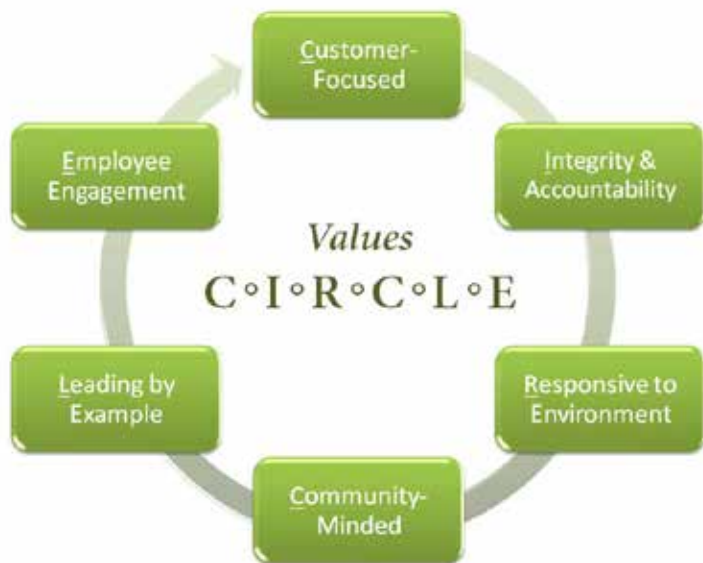


Chief Elected Official Richard Hill, Mayor of Dyer County, will be turning over leadership for workforce development to his successor, Chris Young in September. In addition to Mayor Hill, Rod Schuh of Lauderdale County, Macie Roberson of Lake County and Houston Patrick of Weakley County have chosen to pursue other interests, including retirement. The incoming mayors include Maurice Gaines of Lauderdale County, Denny Johnson of Lake County and Jake Bynum of Weakley County.

County mayors are responsible for the management of Federal Workforce Investment Act grant funding, including, selection of an administrative entity/fiscal agent and appointment of workforce board members. These decisions are vital to the economic development of their counties and the region.

In saying farewell and thank you for the mayors' service, Dr. Karen Bowyer, President of DSCC comments, "We appreciate the confidence these mayors have had in Dyersburg State Community College to serve as administrative entity/fiscal agent for WIA funds. Their support of our institution, the workforce board, and staff has allowed northwest TN to move forward in workforce and economic development. We wish them the best!"

LWIA 12 Continues Journey Towards Excellence



A passion for excellence in workforce development is communicated down the organizational pipeline from the Governor to the State Workforce Board to the CEO Consortium, NWTN Workforce Board and DSCC President as Administrative Entity to the Vice President of Workforce Development, Directors, and Career Center staff. This is shown through the adoption of Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. "The workforce program in NWTN has operated under Baldrige principles since earning a Commitment Level from the TN Center for Performance Excellence, in 2009," says Dr. Karen Bowyer, President of DSCC, the administrative entity of WIA. "I believe this has greatly contributed to our long-term success."



With guidance from Workforce Board staff that have participated as TN Center for Performance Excellence exam-

iners, staff worked to develop a list of core values that are important to the organization in achieving the Mission & Vision. During small group sessions, staff determined there were six widely held beliefs senior leaders personified and that guided employees in the American Job Centers. The key words in the Values CIRCLE illustrate the organizational culture: Customer-Focused, Integrity & Accountability, Responsive to Environment, Community-Minded, Leading by Example and Employee Engagement. "We appreciate the leadership and support of our Elected Officials, Workforce Board and Administrative Entity," comments Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development. "With their guidance, staff are able to provide customer-focused, community-minded services."



Chairman & Local Board Members Tapped for State Workforce Board



The Northwest TN Workforce Board has once again been recognized for its leadership with three of its members appointed the State Workforce Board. According to the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Governor Haslam has selected Mary Jones, Executive Director of Children and Family Services, Sandra Woods with Trenton Tower Apartments, and Chairman Jimmy Williamson, Owner/Operator of Aztec Pest Control to serve at the State Level. "Already having experience on a local workforce board is beneficial in understanding aspects of the overall workforce system", said Chairman Williamson. Both Williamson and Sandra Woods are returning members of the State Board.

IN MEMORY OF TONY POOLE 1956-2014



The Board and Staff honor Tony Poole, who died suddenly in February of this year. Since 2004, Tony served on both the West Tennessee Workforce Investment Board and the NWTN Workforce Board representing Local 8915, where he served as President, President of Jackson Central Labor Council, and Executive VP of Tennessee AFL CIO.

Tony was an active and faithful Board member, and we are extremely grateful for the support he so willingly gave to the workforce system and its customers for all these years.

He is survived by his wife, Jackie Sutton Poole and two sons, Ryan Poole of Columbia, TN and Chris Poole of Trenton, TN.

He is greatly missed.

Local Workforce Investment Board Membership 2013-2014

CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Barry Barnett
Benton County
- Kenny McBride
Carroll County
- Gary Reasons
Crockett County
- Richard Hill
Dyer County
- Tom Witherspoon
Gibson County
- Brent Greer
Henry County
- Macie Roberson
Lake County
- Rod Schuh
Lauderdale County
- Benny McGuire
Obion County
- Jeff Huffman
Tipton County
- Houston Patrick
Weakley County

WORKFORCE BOARD

- Rita Alexander*
- Jerry Bailey
- Ronda Baker*
- LaMar Bartlett
- Quincy Barlow
- Alonzo Beard
- Bobby Blaylock
- Dr. Karen Bowyer*
- John Bucy
- Karla Carpenter
- Yvette Dixon
- Ruthene Ezell*
- Sherry Fowler*
- Melinda Goode
- Jere Hadley
- Brad Hurley
- Mary Jones**
- John Killen
- Barry Ladd
- Ed Ledden
- Kristy Mercer
- Charlie Moore
- Carolyn Morrison
- Ted Piazza
- Ronnie Price
- John Penn Ridgeway
- Alvin Smothers
- John Snead*
- Jennifer Starks
- Charlotte Tucker
- Gayanne Williams
- Steve Williams
- Jimmy Williamson**
- Sandra Woods**

YOUTH COUNCIL

- Tammie Cole
 - Octavia Crawford
 - Ronnie Gunnels
 - Lisa Hankins
 - Dianne Homra
 - Rocky Miller
 - Donna Smith
 - Paul Stewart
 - Patricia Taylor
 - Crystal Watson
 - Mike Whitson
- * Indicates Youth Council Member
** Indicates State Workforce Board Member

LEAD CAREER CENTER CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

- Mark Chandler
- Wagner Peyser
- Margaret Prater
- Workforce Investment Act
- Ronda Baker
- Vocational Rehabilitation Act

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Tennessee College of Applied Technology-Newbern Selected Outstanding Training Provider of the Year

The TN College of Applied Technology Newbern was honored with the 2013 Outstanding Training Provider of the Year at the Annual Meeting of the NWTN Workforce Board. "TCAT-Newbern has not only provided excellent training opportunities for a large number of WIA students, but has also been a valuable partner in the workforce system," commented Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development.

TCAT-Newbern offers a variety of technical programs at three campuses - Newbern, Union City and Bells. One of its newest programs, Robotics/Injection Molding, was established on the Bells campus. "This program, along with CNC and PLC training, will allow our institution to meet the training needs of many of the employers in the area," stated Donna Hastings, Director of TCAT-Newbern.



At the Union City campus, citizens in that area have access to a number of employer-based training programs. "Having a Tennessee College of Applied Technology in the northwestern part of our LWIA is a blessing to students," commented Marcia Fields, Career Advisor. "It saves them a lot of travel time and money." The Union City campus once housed only a Licensed Practical Nursing Program, but after the closure of Goodyear Tire and Rubber and the expansion of programs offered through a National Emergency Grant, Welding and Industrial Maintenance classes were added. Although the training for Goodyear Dislocated Workers is complete, TCAT-Newbern is maintaining a full time presence in Obion County. "Having a technical center in Obion County is a part of our economic development strategy, and we appreciate the partnership with TCAT-Newbern," said Lindsay Frilling, Director of the Obion County Joint Economic Development Council, the owner of the Union City campus building.



Of the 72 WIA students trained in PY 2013, several were students in the Licensed Practical Nursing Program, a high-demand, high-wage occupation that ties to

the NWTN Workforce Board and Governor's Sectors Strategies. Other high demand classes include electronics and welding.



In addition to being an excellent training provider, TCAT-Newbern also partners to provide facilities, computers and proctors for the National Career Readiness Testing on its Newbern Campus. This industry-recognized credential is a major component in the hiring process for many local employers.

Moreover, the administration has been very responsive to workforce reporting needs. According to Pam Merritt, WIA Director of Training Services, the school developed a process to track completions and placement in employment that helps WIA with meeting performance reporting requirements. "We didn't have to look far to find our Outstanding Training Provider this year. Director Donna Hastings and the employees of TCAT-Newbern are great assets to the workforce development system," said Merritt.

Plans Underway for West TN Regional Alliance

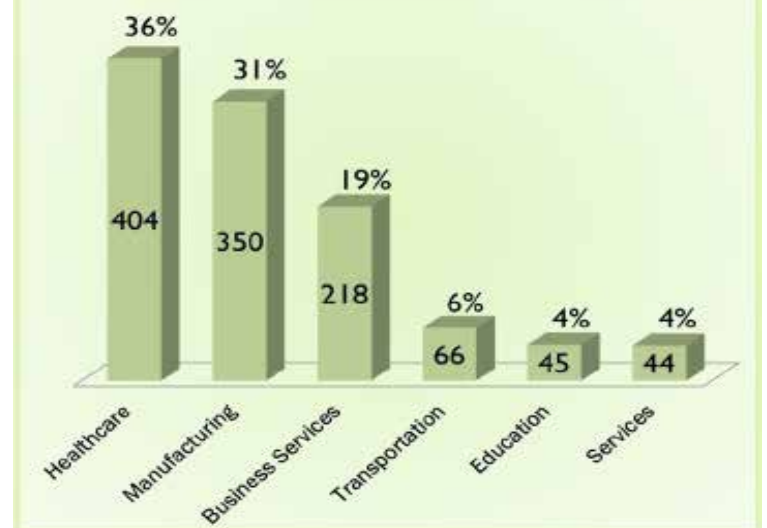
Economic and workforce development is no longer a county-only effort, nor has it been for quite some time. With technology and a mobile workforce, business and industry must look to a larger labor force area for both employees and suppliers. In order to assure West Tennessee is developing a workforce that meets the needs of the employer community, LWIA 12 is joining with Workforce Areas 11 and 13 to form a 21 county regional alliance. The West Tennessee Regional Alliance will bring together employers and educators from all of West Tennessee to establish Skills Panels for industry sectors common to all three - healthcare, advanced manufacturing and logistics.

Borrowing a model from middle Tennessee, leadership teams within the sectors will establish career pathways and develop strategies to meet future employment needs. "In middle TN, the effort is supported from the top down, including Governor Haslam and Chancellor Morgan of the TN Board of Regents," says Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development. "We are excited to bring this model to West Tennessee."

WIA Participants Served by Career Center

County	Adults	Dislocated Worker	Youth	TOTAL Served	NCRC	All Other Services
Benton	53	22	24	99	31	68
Carroll	187	31	35	253	152	101
Crockett	43	8	11	62	24	38
Dyer	542	142	49	733	340	393
Gibson	283	52	62	397	181	216
Henry	128	16	10	154	59	95
Lake	34	15	16	65	25	40
Lauderdale	146	25	42	213	121	92
Obion	235	81	24	340	178	162
Obion GY	0	274	0	274	0	274
Tipton	149	31	57	237	97	140
Weakley	56	29	22	107	38	69
TOTALS	1856	726	352	2934	1246	1688

2013 Sector-Based Training



Tennessee and Mississippi Team Up to Share Best Practices

"Stealing is not illegal when it comes to Best Practices...at least not in the workforce development business!" This is the premise that Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development and James Williams with Itawamba Community College (ICC) near Tupelo, MS work from. Since WIA is a federal program, it is often easier to replicate a successful program than to start from scratch. LWIA 12 took a team of staff, board members and

training providers to ICC to review offerings in advanced manufacturing and youth programs. "We were really impressed with the set-up at ICC. They do a lot of training for Toyota and are really focused on encouraging youth to consider careers in manufacturing," commented LaMar Bartlett, Board Member and HR Manager for Lauderdale County Schools. The Itawamba group also visited LWIA 12 to review youth programs and career center services.

Dyersburg State Community College Responds to Industry Needs

When the Northwest TN Workforce Board commissioned a 19 county Advanced Manufacturing Sector Analysis in 2011, the information didn't sit on a shelf and gather dust. Several institutions worked with the Workforce Board to initiate new programs, including Dyersburg State Community College. Dr. Karen Bowyer, President of Dyersburg State Community College, commented, "The college did a lot of industrial training in the 80s. This study indicated we needed to bring industrial training back, but at a more advanced level. We pulled together about 15 employers from the area and spent a full day designing a curriculum. The result was an Associate of Applied Science of Integrated Industrial Technology with embedded and stackable certificates."



The foundation of the degree is the Certified Production Technician Certificate which can be taken for credit or non-credit. The courses require examination through the a Manufacturing Skills Standards Council. In addition to offering training for unemployed and incumbent workers, DSCC has recently deployed the CPT program in local high schools and developed internships. "Offering CPT to high school juniors and seniors allows them to gain a marketable skill, earn 12 hours of college credit and have an opportunity to intern with great companies like Unilever," stated Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development. "These kinds of opportunities will grow the pipeline of industrial workers for the future."

BUSINESS SERVICES

ACT® Accepts all 11 Counties in LWIA 12 into Work Ready Communities Academy

Since 2008, the Northwest TN Workforce Board, in association with the TN Career Centers and other partners, has coordinated ACT® National Career Readiness Certificate™ (NCRC) testing and Job Profiling with great success. As a rural region that covers 5,500+ square miles and 11 counties, efforts to engage employers, educators and workforce development are focused on increasing employability skills of the workforce. This effort involves many partners: over 20 employers have taken advantage of Job Profiling and/or preferring the NCRC as part of their hiring process; high schools are beginning to request testing for seniors as they prepare to enter the workforce; and Chambers and economic developers use NCRC attainment as proof that our rural area has a quality, trainable workforce despite higher unemployment rates and educational levels below State and National averages.

To continue to build on the regional community-based workforce development efforts, the Chief Elected Officials of the 11 counties in LWIA 12 applied to the ACT® Work Ready Communities Academy. Acceptance into the Academy and participation in the program will bring national recognition to each county as each achieves the goals set forth in the applications. Being recognized as a Certified Work Ready Community (CWRC) empowers participating areas with data, processes and tools to drive economic growth. Participants leverage the NCRC to measure and close the skills gap, which builds common frameworks that link, align and match their workforce



development efforts. Tom Witherspoon, Gibson County Mayor, states, "The goals to become a CWRC are specific to each county and will challenge us as a region to aggressively recruit our citizens to attain a NCRC as an industry-recognized credential over the next 2 years. We feel the ultimate recognition as a CWRC will greatly enhance our economic development efforts as a county and as a region."

Acceptance into the CWRC Academy has already brought notice to the area. In a recent economic development visit to establish a rail spur for the \$20 million Port of Cates Landing located in Lake County, consultants showed interest in the credential project. "The consultant was very knowledgeable about the NCRC and Work Ready Communities and encouraged the group to continue efforts to expand our programs," stated Marsha Mills, Director of the Reelfoot Area Chamber of Commerce. "We are actively recruiting industry and are pleased to have third party validation of our quality workforce."

Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development and Lead for the effort, is excited about the acceptance to the Academy. "The LWIA staff has been the driving force in deploying these efforts with amazing results.

However, in order to earn national recognition for our efforts, we need a 'community effort' to reach our 2-year goals for emerging, transitioning, the current workforce and employer engagement. The Academy will provide support to move our program to the next level."

The CWRC initiative provides an independent endorsement on the quality of the workforce and the community's ability to meet business growth demands. By participating in the CWRC initiative, foundational workplace skills such as math, reading for information and locating skills required for a majority of today's jobs can be measured, gaps identified and remediated, and the skill level of the workforce quantified. This will help educators build career pathways aligned to the needs of business and industry.

Going forward, a leadership team in each county will work to promote various services to assist in the expansion of existing business and industry and to attract new jobs to the area. The team will also work with the emerging, transitioning and current workforce to ensure awareness of the benefits of attaining the NCRC. The teams consist of current NWTN Workforce Board members, local TN Career Center staff, economic developers and employers. In addition to WIA funds, the NWTN Workforce Board is seeking grant funds from United States Department of Agriculture & Delta Regional Authority to assist each county in meeting the 2-year goals to be recognized as a Certified Workforce Ready Community.

Job Seekers Earn Close to 11,000 NCRCs Since 2008

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) certifies workers as having key work-ready skills and is a tool for businesses in northwest TN to hire the best while saving money and boosting productivity. Since 2008, with a pass rate of over 90%, job seekers have attained 10,964 NCRCs!

Employers are grateful for the opportunity to screen job candidates, as Scott Gilliam, Director of Office Services for the Union City Electric System testifies. "As an employer in northwest Tennessee, we often have difficulty finding qualified applicants. We utilized the NCRC, which measures the basic employability skills of workers, to provide us a pool of qualified applicants. The TN Career Center did an outstanding job in identifying and testing these applicants to assist in our hiring process."

For this program year, the NCRC project was funded through a Delta Regional Authority (DRA) grant, WIA funds and partner in-kind contributions, such as use of space, computers, proctors, etc.

For more information on how your company can receive a FREE Job Profile, contact your local Career Center and speak to a Business Services Coordinator.

Job Profiling "Win-Win-Win" For Employers, Job Seekers & NWTN Workforce Board



In conjunction with the ACT® Work Ready Communities initiative, the NWTN Workforce Board has incorporated free Job Profiling for employers to strengthen partnerships and increase training opportunities with businesses that are hiring. Job profiling provides a two-part program that benefits both business/industry and job seekers. Initially, job profilers analyze the specific tasks and duties required for certain jobs and create a comprehensive report for the employers. This report provides an accurate profile of the workplace skills and skill levels needed to perform the jobs profiled. Subsequently, employers can compare a job profile with an individual's skill assessment to decide whether that person meets the qualifications for the skills required for a particular job opening.

Five LWIA 12 staff members have become authorized WorkKeys™ Job Profilers and are available to create profiles for local companies on a wide range of job titles. Once a company has had a specific position profiled, they can then require job applicants to earn the recommended level on the NCRC exam. This is a "win-win-win" situation that creates a best-fit for both the employer and job seeker and allows the NWTN Workforce Board to partner with economic developers in promoting a skilled workforce. "At the beginning of the program, many of our customers chose to profile only entry-level or high turn-over jobs," states Ginger Powell, Director of Business Services. "Now after seeing the benefit of decreased hiring costs and lower turnover, companies are choosing to use the job profiles for promotion and training purposes."

"The Job Profilers have worked with various industries - from food packaging to automotive steering systems to heating and air conditioning unit manufacturing to healthcare. The program is growing and more employers are seeking applicants that have earned the NCRC as a work-based credential. We are very excited about being able to offer this value-added service to our customers!" adds Lisa Bradford, Business Services Coordinator. Gibson Electric Membership Corporation representative Kerry Watson con-

curs, "Hiring really comes down to expertly matching the right person to a particular position. With job profiling and using the NCRC, we are able to make a quality hire more quickly. This has been an invaluable service to Gibson Electric."

To date companies having jobs profiled include:

Advantage Manufacturing
Carlisle Tire
Ceco Door
Colonial DPP
ConAgra Foods
Conopco (Unilever)
Delfield
Forked Deer Electric
Four Seasons Sales and Service
Gibson Electric Membership Corporation
Green Plains Renewable Energy
Heckethorn Manufacturing
Lennox Hearth Products
MacLean Power Systems
Marvin Windows & Doors
Nordyne
NSK Steering Systems
NWTN Workforce Board
SRG Global
Sun Products
Tecumseh
Union City Electric System
Union City Nursing & Rehabilitation Center
Workforce Essentials

NCRC attainment for
July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014



BUSINESS SERVICES

Dyersburg Regional Medical Center Awarded 2014 Employer of the Year



During the Annual Meeting for the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board, held on August 26, 2014, Dyersburg Regional Medical Center was honored as the Employer of the Year in recognition of their commitment to the employment and training of healthcare employees in and around Dyer County.

Dyersburg Regional Medical Center (DRMC) has been involved in the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program since 2011. During that time over 50 participants have started to work at DRMC in various positions including: Clinic Receptionist, Monitor Tech, RN, LPN, Unit Secretary, Food Services, Environmental Services, Surgical Tech, ER Monitor Tech, OP Coding Specialist, Health Information Management Tech, and Patient Access Facilitator. Currently there are six active participants working in various positions. The retention rate for employees hired by DRMC is 86%.

Amy Maxey, Business Services Coordinator, comments, "I have had the pleasure of working with Beverly Ray, Human Resources Director, and Tammy Castleman, Human Resources Assistant for quite some time. Beverly has told me many times how much she appreciates the OJT program. DRMC has enjoyed a working

relationship with WIA since 2009, when they hired several young people during the SummerWorks program, an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act initiative aimed at providing youth work experience. In fact, their are still employees working at DRMC that were hired after the summer program ended!"

Beverly Ray, HR Director, adds, "The On-the-Job Training funds have helped in hiring and retaining employees, saving us over \$110,000 since 2011! The medical field is always growing, and DRMC regularly posts jobs to www.jobs4tn.gov. Besides the tremendous savings, we also appreciate how the Workforce Board has recently simplified the OJT process, saving me and my staff valuable time during the hiring process. We are planning on continuing to hire through the TN Career Centers for our new positions."

Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development for the Workforce Board, comments, "DRMC also prefers that candidates for various positions earn a National Career Readiness Certificate and has participated in past Healthcare Sector studies and focus groups. This type of employer involvement and collaboration with workforce development is invaluable to the economic development efforts in our region."

Ben Youree, DRMC CEO comments, "We are committed to serving the healthcare needs of the citizens in Dyersburg and the surrounding communities. We appreciate the Workforce Board recognizing our commitment to hiring and training the best employees, so that we can continue to be a place of healing, caring and connection for patients and families in the community we call home."

Dyersburg Regional Medical Center is a 225-bed acute care facility accredited by the Joint Commission, offering a range of medical, diagnostic and surgical services including 24-hour emergency care, an intensive care unit and a newly-renovated obstetrics unit.

On-the-Job Training grants help employers save thousands in hiring costs

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is a program designed to promote, educate and expand an employer's workforce. OJT contracts focus on training new hires who do not have adequate experience in company work processes and procedures. Ginger Powell, Director of Business Services comments, "On-the-Job Training (OJT) continues to remain a top strategy for employer engagement for LWIA 12. Our team of Business Services Coordinators are working to expand our customer base for OJT and were instrumental in simplifying the paperwork and process for employers. This allows us to maintain a high level of service to individuals seeking training."

OJT Investments for 2013-14

County	Business
Carroll	501K Recycling
Carroll	City of McKenzie
Crockett	Alamo Pride
Crockett	Wisper II, LLC
Dyer	Caterpillar
Dyer	Dyersburg Regional Medical Center
Dyer	Eaton Global
Dyer	NSK Steering Systems of America
Gibson	City of Trenton
Henry	Nobel Automotive Inc.
Henry	PML, Inc.
Lake	Northwest TN Regional Port Authority
Lauderdale	Allied Reprocessing
Obion	Center Point Business Solutions
Obion	Lennox Hearth Products
Obion	MIA Seating
Tipton	Unilever/Conopco
Weakley	Legens Hot Rod
Weakley	Twin Oaks Technology
Total \$\$	\$319,796.53
Total Placed	170

Five Businesses Receive IWT Grants Totaling Over \$97,000

Five companies in LWIA 12 were awarded Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grants during 2013-14 to improve work processes and avoid layoffs of employees.

Ceco Door in Humboldt trained 17 employees in Leadership & Development courses. Training and coaching equipped team leads to more effectively manage, motivate, coach, communicate with and hold their team accountable for results. By strengthening the leadership skills of the production team, employees will stay motivated and productive, thus enabling Ceco Door to maintain a marketplace advantage.



EyeCare Group, PLLC provided "Alumni Advantage" training to 48 employees. The training and follow-through program better positions the practice for dramatic improvement in revenue, profit and productivity, resulting in the ability to maintain and add employees.

Heckethorn Manufacturing in Dyersburg provided training to 12 employees to successfully implement a program called "Leadership Edge for Supervisors". This program helped employees

to develop the skills necessary to be strong, accountable leaders with the ability to motivate & coach employees for improved performance. By adding strength to the "people" side of employees' skill sets, the training is positioning Heckethorn to remain competitive in the future and substantially reduce the risk of layoffs.

Hillshire Brands in Newbern requested funding to train 80 employees in Lean Manufacturing and Health & Safety Courses. The training courses enhanced associates' knowledge in elimination of wastes and improving efficiencies, thus helping the company produce better quality product at a value customers are willing to pay for. Being the low cost producer with a high quality product helps to retain current customers and attract new ones, which positively affects employee stability.



Rose Fabricating & Industrial Solutions LLC in Covington trained 7 employees in Hydraulic Crane Operator & Welding Educator/Inspector courses. The training was necessary due to the enactment of a new law requiring all crane operators be certified. The IWT grant aided in upgrading the skills of current employees.

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YOUTH SERVICES

Youth at Work: Addressing the Youth Employment Challenge

As part of the Governor's Drive to 55 Campaign, the TN Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development granted each Local Workforce Area a small Youth Work Experience grant to support alignment of education, workforce and economic development, supporting the Governor's goal of moving Tennessee to be the #1 State in the Southeast for quality jobs. The pilot Work Experience program began in Spring 2014 and allowed local areas the flexibility to design programs targeting youth having difficulty finding employment in their field of interests, at their level of educational attainment and work readiness skills.

LWIA 12 chose to work with current WIA Out-of-School Youth who were attending educational programs in high demand occupations aligned with the Governor's Sector Strategies (Automotive, Advanced Manufacturing, Business Services, Healthcare, Energy Technologies, Chemical Products and Plastics, Transportation, Logistics and Distribution Services, and Entertainment).

A year round work experience program is important to the menu of services offered to all of the youth in our area. Connie Stewart, Director of Youth Services, states, "We placed 14 youth across our 11 counties. We look to expand the program to mentor youth who are not attending post secondary school or who have other barriers to employment (youth aging out of foster care, youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system and pregnant or parenting youth)."

There were several success stories from the program, and Chelsea Southerland is an example of how an untrained student can earn a job with the right opportunity.

Chelsea is an Obion County resident attending University of Tennessee Martin where she will receive her Bachelor's degree in Chemistry in Spring 2016 after receiving 2 years of funding from WIA. She has a long-term goal of becoming a dentist. Chelsea reported, "It is very difficult to get a job in a dentist's office due to low turnover. Being able to gain hands-on experience while in college was a great opportunity!" Chelsea worked with Sullivan Dentistry in Obion County where she gained experience with new technology, improved her medical vocabulary, learned networking skills and found a mentor. The staff at Sullivan Dentistry praised her performance, hiring her part-time after she completed her work experience. Chelsea will continue to receive WIA tuition and travel assistance until finishing school.



Libby Wickersham, Youth Services Coordinator, exclaims, "We consider our work experience program a great success. LWIA 12 was recently recognized by the TN Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development for innovative ideas and positive relationships with our employers. Additionally, the Youth Services staff were asked to co-present with staff from LWIA 10 at the Regional Youth Forum in Atlanta on our best practices for the work experience program."

Employers participating in the pilot program include:

DSCC- Gibson and Covington
The Color Shop- Martin
Dyer County Circuit Court
Mobile PC Guys- Martin
Rollin' Thunder- Dyer
Ripley Career Center
Union City Career Center
Lauderdale Community Hospital
Alamo Medical Clinic
NWTN Workforce Board - Dyersburg
Bruceton Nursing Home
City of McKenzie
Sullivan Dentistry- Union City

Peer Tutor Work Experience Continues Partnerships with Schools to Improve Overall Educational Attainment

Since 2006, LWIA 12 has subcontracted with multiple school systems to provide in-school youth with work experience as tutors. The program enables youth to gain confidence working in a school environment, to explore teaching as a career, and provides mentoring experiences for both the students working as tutors, and the young people being tutored. Shawn Kimble, Director of Schools for Lauderdale County, praises the program, saying, "The WIA Peer Tutoring Program has provided Lauderdale County students invaluable work experience.

Participating students have benefited in many ways including a noticed boost in confidence and self-esteem. The peer tutor program has been a part of our overall improvement strategy for increasing student achievement and providing career exploration opportunities for our students."

In total, 646 Peer Tutors have been hired by school systems, 12,552 students have been tutored in 19,381 subjects, with a 93.6% improvement of grades or maintaining scores within the grade level.

Peer Tutor Work Experience Results for 2012-2013	No. of Peer Tutors	No. of Students Tutored	No. of Subjects Tutored	Number of Subjects Improved or Maintained (Includes Credit Recovery)	Percentage of Subjects Improved
Bradford High School	8	123	207	190	91.8%
Brighton High School	6	100	101	90	89.1%
Camden Central High School	7	54	55	47	85.5%
Covington High School	9	209	253	250	98.8%
Crockett Co High School	9	77	80	79	98.8%
Dresden High School	8	121	135	126	93.3%
Dyersburg High School	7	485	730	720	98.6%
Gibson County High School	9	199	213	202	94.8%
Halls High School	11	75	79	73	92.4%
Lake County High School	8	140	152	135	88.8%
McKenzie High School	8	15	15	13	86.7%
Peabody High School	9	137	173	172	99.4%
Ripley High School	6	69	88	81	92.0%
South Fulton High School	7	165	265	257	97.0%
South Gibson High School	7	251	382	381	99.7%
Total	112	2,220	2,928	2,816	96.2%

Manufacturing Month Gains Steam in 2013

As part of the Governor's Sector Strategies, the NWTN Workforce Board commissioned an Advanced Manufacturing Sector Study in 2011 to determine the in-demand jobs and workforce needs of manufacturing employers in 19 counties in West Tennessee. As a result of this study, LWIA 12 declared October to be "Manufacturing Month", celebrated in conjunction with National Manufacturing Day-a nation-wide event endorsed by major employers and manufacturing associations.

Local support comes from LWIA 12 partners in industry and education, where volunteers highlight the importance of manufacturing to the local economy by visiting middle and high schools to talk about the jobs available, career pathways, and the education needed to be successful in these jobs. In the last 2 years, 29 employers and 7 post-secondary institutions met with over 2,600 students.

"We are thrilled to combine the Business Services team efforts and Youth programs by collaborating with employers, school systems and economic developers," exclaimed Kristy Mercer, HR Manager at Ceco Door Products and NWTN Workforce Board member. "In 2013, Gibson County manufacturers offered plant tours to se-

niors interested in technical careers. We hosted 40 seniors from 4 high schools, and they were very excited about the opportunity to see how they could be a part of a manufacturing team in the future."

Lori Kelley, Director of Public Information & Planning, stated, "The benefits of Manufacturing Month are wide-reaching. In the past 2 years, we have increased student exposure from 960 students to 1,650; added 11 new employers, which resulted in more OJT opportunities; and the additional marketing of manufacturing opportunities allowed post-secondary institutions to add manufacturing-specific training programs to the Eligible Training Provider List. We are definitely excited about the possibilities for this year!"



Dual Enrollment Grants Aid in Earning College Credit

Workforce Development Scholarships were awarded to 136 WIA eligible students in LWIA 12 who took coursework in high school that also earns college credit. Dual Enrollment grants help economically disadvantaged juniors and seniors meet any unmet financial need for up to \$1,600/year.

County	Students	County	Students
Benton	6	Lake	10
Carroll	11	Lauderdale	12
Crockett	3	Obion	1
Dyer	21	Tipton	32
Gibson	30	Weakley	10
Henry	0		Total = 136

FISCAL & PERFORMANCE

Career Centers Increase Services & Reduce Costs

When extreme State budget issues forced the TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development to close 6 Career Center buildings in northwest TN in June 2013, the initial plan was to serve all job seekers and employers of the over 5,500 square mile rural area from the two comprehensive centers in Dyersburg and Huntingdon. This plan, which could have resulted in job seekers traveling up to 50 miles for services, was short lived. "The region had the highest unemployment in the State," commented Jimmy Williamson, Chairman of the NWTN Workforce Board. "Our goal was to continue to offer services in every county." Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development, took on the goal with a vengeance and in less than 60 days reopened 6 new career centers. "It was a huge undertaking to find locations, furniture, equipment, etc. and get everyone relocated," said Prater, "but we had lots of help."

Each of the affected counties offered unique challenges that turned into great partnerships. For instance in Henry County, a suitable space was not available within the budget allowed, so Mayor Brent Greer agreed to renovate the old Central School that houses other community service agencies and offered space rent-free. "The county worked day and night on renovations to make the space work and get it open," says Rex Smith, Career Advisor for Henry County.

Other collaborations included partnering with the Obion County Joint Economic Development Council/TN College of Applied Technology-Newbern for rent-free space in Union City; Workforce Essentials shared costs in Humboldt & Covington; and negotiating for lower rent in Dresden & Ripley.

According to Cynthia Webb, Director of Finance and Administrative Services, the relocations actually resulted in a cost savings. "With a lot of work and great partners, we are actually saving around \$29,000 annually in our new facilities. These savings are put back in the program to provide additional services," stated Webb.

LWIA 12 Career Centers have also expanded services, offering additional workshops and services to assist job seekers with obtaining work. "Through functional alignment with our partners we have been able to offer a variety of career services without increasing staff," commented Jennifer Bane, Director of Career Development Services. "It's like the old saying...it takes a village. Our on-site and referral partners work very hard to meet the needs of both the job seeker and employers."

According to LeAnn Lundberg, Director of Facilities and Computer Services, "With the reconfigurations and added technology, the 11 Career Centers will provide over 5,400 services to approximately 4,600 job seekers in a typical month."

Gas Cards Save Money & Improve Customer Service

For years, the Workforce Board has provided transportation stipends to support students attending classroom training. "Many of our students drive 30 or more miles to training," stated Jennifer Bane, Director of Career Development Services. "With the price of gas, the transportation stipend can make the difference in whether students can attend training."

Although the system had been finetuned to include only 2 payments a term, with the number processed each month, the payments were sometimes delayed. In an effort to improve customer service, the staff borrowed a best practice from Workforce Essentials, a Families First partner, and transitioned to a gas card system with MAPCO/Fleet Advantage.

"The company is absolutely wonderful to work with," commented Cynthia Webb, Director of Fiscal Services. The company offered several gas station options in each county and does not charge a fee to the Workforce Board or students. "During the first year of implementation we paid nearly \$250,000 on 11 invoices, versus processing 1,529 individual payments," continued Webb. "With each invoice taking approximately 15 minutes to process, the estimated savings in staff salary and benefits was \$11,762, or 51 working days!"

Theresa Ethridge, Account Supervisor set up a tracking system and reported an unexpected savings. "Due to students either not spending their limit each month, or not verifying their attendance, we were able to de-obligate over \$41,000 to put back into the program." Overall the first year savings totaled nearly \$53,000.



Goodyear NEG Performance Exceeds Expectations

In July 2011, Goodyear Tire and Rubber in Union City, TN locked its doors, leaving nearly 2,000 workers from 22 counties in northwest Tennessee and Kentucky without a job. Dyersburg State Community College, administrative entity for federal Workforce Investment Act funds for the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board, submitted a National Emergency Grant request to provide wrap around services in conjunction with Trade Adjustment Assistance Act Training funds.

Because of the magnitude of the lay-off and the negative "trickle down" effect on other companies in the area, a separate one-stop Career Center was established for the workers and their family members to access services and training.

There was also a large numbers of laid-off workers requesting training, so several "buy-out" classes were developed and funded through Trade Adjustment Assistance grants. These classes included Practical Nursing, Industrial Maintenance, Welding, Registered Nursing, Green Technology, Truck Driver Training, and EMT/Paramedic.

The Tennessee Goodyear Dual Enrollment Grant, effective July 1, 2011 ended March 31, 2014 after a nine month extension to allow several hundred participants to complete training and job search. At closeout, seventy-four participants continued training under WIA Dislocated Worker Formula funds.

The original goal of the National Emergency Grant was to serve 850 participants, which was exceeded by serving 981. Of those, 689 attended occupational skills training, in addition to all receiving wrap around services such as assessment, counseling, interviewing and resume workshops, job search assistance, transportation stipends, etc.

At closeout, 697 have entered employment. The percentage of those entering employment is 83% of the total served (981) less transfers (74) and exclusions due to death, retirement, etc. (67). Without exclusions and transfers the percentage entering employment to date is 71%.

Connie Stewart, former Goodyear Director, states "By updating and enhancing their skills, these workers will be better prepared for good jobs in Tennessee's growing industries."


FISCAL REPORT FOR 2103-2014	AVAILABLE	CURRENT YEAR	PERCENT	DEOBLIGATED	AVAILABLE
	JULY 1, 2013>	EXPENDITURES	EXPENDED	FUNDS	BALANCE
ADMINISTRATION	\$583,104.82	\$377,125.51	65%	\$-	\$205,979.31
ADULT FORMULA	\$1,092,925.64	\$592,128.78	54%	\$-	\$500,796.86
DISLOCATED WORKER FORMULA	\$1,802,582.52	\$1,091,486.39	61%	\$-	\$711,096.13
DSL WRK/RAPID RESP (AO & OTHER DW)	\$426,317.95	\$426,317.95	100%	\$-	\$0.00
GOODYEAR NEG	\$509,458.70	\$509,458.70	100%	\$-	\$0.00
TN WORKS ACT (OJT)	\$70,038.87	\$70,038.87	100%	\$-	\$0.00
YOUTH FORMULA	\$2,018,511.17	\$848,687.88	42%	\$-	\$1,169,823.29
INCUMBENT WORKER	\$149,629.00	\$73,177.95	51%	\$6,940.80	\$69,510.25
FT OJT	\$225,824.00	\$17,414.40	8%	\$-	\$208,409.60
INCENTIVE	\$120,447.72	\$104,774.72	87%	\$-	\$15,673.00
TOTAL WIA GRANTS	\$6,998,840.39	\$4,110,611.15	59%	\$6,940.80	\$2,881,288.44

4th Quarter Performance Report for PY 2013

Program Group	Standards	PY13 Targets	PY13 Actual	Percent of Goal
Adult	Entered Employment	83.00%	95.05%	114.52%
	Retention in Employment	82.00%	91.83%	111.99%
	6 Month Average Earnings	\$13,000	\$14,692.85	113.02%
Dislocated Worker	Entered Employment	90.00%	95.12%	105.69%
	Retention in Employment	88.00%	93.95%	106.76%
	6 Month Average Earnings	\$13,200	\$14,289.58	108.25%
Youth	Placement	76.70%	91.10%	118.77%
	Credential Attainment	70.00%	94.46%	134.94%
	Literacy/Numeracy Gains	48.00%	50.00%	104.17%

"LWIA 12 is pleased to report all federal performance measures were exceeded," states Laura Speer, Director of Performance and Compliance. "We constantly review our data to assure we accurately report the good work of staff. I am particularly pleased to see a significant increase in our 6 month average wage. I believe our increase in on-the-job training has had a positive impact on the measure."

LWIA 12 TN Career Center Locations

<p>TN Career Center at Alamo Crockett County 331 South Bells Street Alamo, TN 38001 (731) 696-2530</p> <p>Maria Waiters, Career Advisor Charlie Williams, Career Advisor Assistant</p>	<p>TN Career Center at Dresden Weakley County 135 South Poplar Street, Ste B Dresden, TN 38225 (731) 364-0100</p> <p>Jennifer Bane, Director of Career Development Services Lindsey Heglar, Youth Services Coordinator Doris Willett, Career Advisor</p>	<p>TN Career Center at Humboldt Gibson County 1593 Coleman Drive Humboldt, TN 38343 (731) 784-5221</p> <p>Ginger Powell, Director of Business Services Libby Wickersham, Youth Services Coordinator Jeannie Mathis, Career Advisor</p>	<p>TN Career Center at Ripley Lauderdale County 301-C Lake Drive Ripley, TN 38063 (731) 221-1012</p> <p>Pam Merritt, Director of Training Services Derrick Quinn, Youth Services Coordinator Koriann Riley, Career Advisor</p>	<p>Northwest TN Workforce Board Administrative Office 313 West Cedar Street Dyersburg, TN 38024 (731)-286-3585</p> <p>Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development</p> <p>LeAnn Lundberg, Director of Facilities & Computer Services Michael Beavers, Computer Technician</p>
<p>TN Career Center at Camden Benton County 60 North Church Avenue Camden, TN 38320 (731) 584-1711</p> <p>Connie Wright, Career Advisor</p>	<p>TN Career Center at Dyersburg Dyer County 439 McGaughey Street Dyersburg, TN 38024 (731) 286-8300</p> <p>Gwen Leonard, Career Center Manager Amy Maxey, Business Services Coordinator Mike Whitson, Youth Services Coordinator Melissa Bane, Career Advisor Wilma Capps, Career Advisor</p>	<p>TN Career Center at Huntingdon Carroll County 470 Mustang Drive Huntingdon, TN 38344 (731) 986-8217</p> <p>Bobby Blaylock, Career Center Manager Lisa Bradford, Business Services Coordinator Judy Vestal, Career Advisor</p>	<p>TN Career Center at Tiptonville Lake County 217 Church Street Tiptonville, TN 38079 (731) 253-8171</p> <p>Maria Waiters, Career Advisor Regina Bargery, Career Advisor Assistant</p>	<p>Cynthia Webb, Director of Finance & Administrative Services Theresa Ethridge, Account Clerk III Terry Williams, Account Clerk II</p> <p>Laura Speer, Director of Performance & Compliance Sheila Little, Monitor Ann Pennell, Monitor</p> <p>Lori Kelley, Director of Public Information & Planning</p> <p>Connie Stewart, Director of Youth Services</p>
<p>TN Career Center at Covington Tipton County 877-C Hwy 51 N. Covington, TN 38019 (901) 476-5570</p> <p>Gina Eaton, Business Services Coordinator/Career Advisor Delores Hayes, Business Services Coordinator Teresa Johnson, Career Advisor Stephanie Foster, Career Advisor Assistant</p>	<p>Follow us on Twitter: @TNCCDyersburg Like us on Facebook: Tennessee Career Centers of Northwest Tennessee - LWIA 12</p>	<p>TN Career Center at Paris Henry County 55 Jones Bend Road, Ext. Paris, TN 38242 (731) 641-1020</p> <p>Rex Smith, Career Advisor</p>	<p>TN Career Center at Union City Obion County 204 South 2nd Street Union City, TN 38261 (731) 884-3868</p> <p>Cace Rice, Business Services Coordinator Marcia Fields, Career Advisor</p>	<p></p>

Northwest TN Workforce Board Named OCJEDC 2013 Business Partner of the Year



Workforce Board Staff accepting the 2013 Business Partner of the Year award from Obion County Joint Economic Development Corporation representatives.

At the Annual Meeting of the Obion County Joint Economic Development Corporation the NWTN Workforce Board was recognized as the 2013 Business Partner of the Year. The award recognized the accomplishment of the staff and partners in response to the closing of Goodyear Tire and Rubber. Lindsay Frilling, Director of the OCJEDC, presented the award stating, "We are so pleased to have economic development partners in our community like the NWTN Workforce Board. When Goodyear closed, they received a \$3.5 million grant to open a Comprehensive Career Center specifically for the 2,000 people affected by the closure. The local presence and easy access to employment and training services were much appreciated by those devastated by the sudden life changes. Additionally, the information they provide when industrial prospects are visiting is invaluable to our recruitment efforts. We look forward to many more years of close collaboration and partnership!"

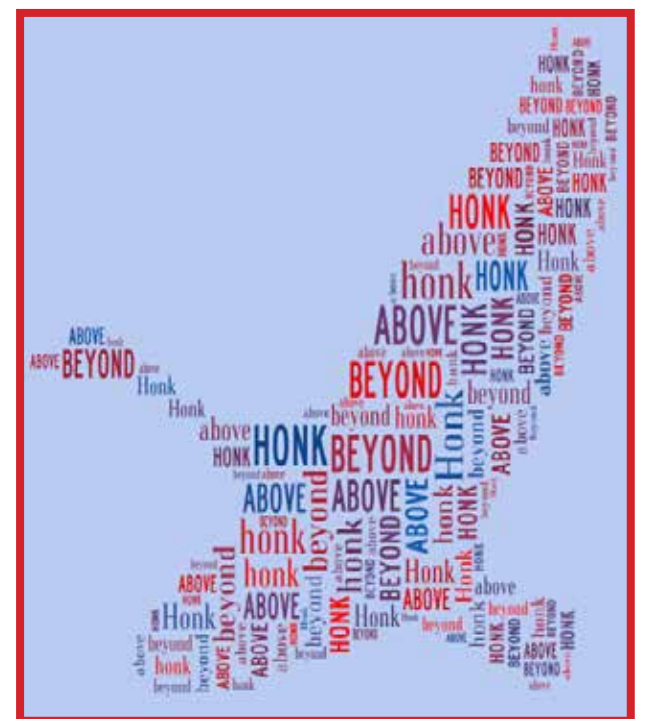
Presenting the TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development Employee of the year award for West Tennessee are (from L - R): Commissioner Burns Phillips, Bob Ravener, State Workforce Development Board Chair, Connie Stewart, Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development for LWIA 12 and John Greeter, State Workforce Development Board



Prater Initiates "Honk Honk" Employee Engagement Program

Dealing with unemployed workers who are often discouraged can at times be a challenge for staff. In order to provide excellence in customer service, staff need to stay motivated and feel appreciated. Margaret Prater, Vice President of Workforce Development is constantly looking for ways to show appreciation to staff and engage them in encouraging their peers. In a training session called "Seven Teamwork Lessons from Geese", the staff learned that geese "honk" to encourage their fellow geese to keep flying. To emphasize this principle, Prater initiated the "Honk! Honk!" program. When a team member sees a co-worker going above and beyond the call of duty, they send out a "Honk Honk!" email to all team members telling what occurred. The "honoree" is then presented with a candy bar with a sticker that says "You did something worth honking about!"

The program has been incorporated into the entire career center system in LWIA 12 with all partners participating. "The response has been wonderful," says Prater. "Not only is it great for the honoree to get that pat on the back, it is great for myself and supervisors to hear how everyone is working together as a team to provide excellent customer service."



Connie Stewart Named West TN Employee of the Year for TDLWD

Each year the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development and the State Workforce Board recognizes a staff member from West, Middle and East TN for their exemplary service. For 2013, Connie Stewart, the current Director of Youth Services, was selected for the honor for her tireless work with northwest Tennessee WIA participants.

Margaret Prater, Vice President for Workforce Development, felt the award was well-deserved. "Being selected from among her peers across West Tennessee,

see, Connie sets an example for outstanding service and leadership. Connie moved within our organization from a front-line career advisor to monitor and then to Director of the Goodyear National Emergency Grant Project. She shows a genuine love for helping people, but also has impeccable organizational skills and is very detail-oriented. She is truly a people and paperwork person...a rare find!" Connie received her award at the State Workforce Board Meeting in Nashville in June.