

5.3 Partnering to Promote Skilled Workforce Opportunities

Background:

- During the 2014 National Association of Counties Annual Conference, a workshop was held on Innovations in Workforce Development. This workshop focused specifically on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan's efforts to promote job opportunities in the community for high-demand, high-wage careers in the construction and industrial trades.
 - The mission of the Upper Peninsula Construction and Industrial Trades Regional Skills Alliance (UP Construction RSA) is to recruit the best and brightest into the construction industry by raising awareness among parents, students, job seekers and educators.
 - *Industrial Trades Career Day* was created in 2005 due to an estimated 40% of the industries' workforce set to retire by 2010 and awareness of the high-demand, high-wage career opportunities in the construction and industrial trades industries.
 - The event was nominated for the National Association of Workforce Boards W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award in 2014 (Attachment #1).
 - A planning committee includes: UP Construction RSA, Michigan Works!, The Job Force Board, local educators and union representatives.
 - Over 400 high school juniors and seniors from three counties typically participate in the Industrial Trades Career Day to experience hands-on activities and gain first-hand knowledge of career opportunities within the trades. The career day also focuses on the role math plays in the everyday life of a construction worker while on-the-job. Attachment #2 contains several news articles regarding the day.

Current Issues:

- Middle-skill jobs require education beyond high school, but not a four-year degree, and make-up the largest part of America's labor market.
 - Account for 55% of Florida's labor market, but only 46% of the state's workers are trained to the middle-skill level (National Skills Coalition).
- The National Skills Coalition estimates that, from 2013-2021, 51% of Florida's job openings will be middle-skill jobs (Attachment #3).
- A USA Today article on "Where the Jobs Are" estimates that more than 2.5 million good paying middle-skill jobs will be created in the next few years, and poses the question, "Will workers know how to get them?" (Attachment #4).
- Florida CHOICES (www.flchoices.org) is the state's career information delivery system where high school students can prepare for work or postsecondary education.
 - Includes assessments for interests, skills, and values as well as information on careers and postsecondary education.
 - Website users can explore career clusters, search for careers matching education and needs, see hot careers in Florida, explore job banks, create resume, prepare for interview, explore schools choices, as well as college planning timelines.
- Local institutions providing career day opportunities:
 - Lively Technical Center, Tallahassee Community College and Florida State University all currently hold career fairs geared toward adults.
 - Leon County Schools partners with Tallahassee Community College to host a College and Career Fair.

Near-Term Issues:

- Evaluate and identify specific middle-skill job opportunities anticipated locally.
- Consider collaboration with community and regional partners to host a new “*Leon Works*” exposition to educate high school students (15-18 years old) on middle-skill career and job possibilities, anticipated locally, that do not necessarily require a traditional four-year college degree.
 - Possible partners include: CareerSource Capital Region, Leon County Schools, Tallahassee Community College Lively Technical Center, Keiser University, Florida Choices, and the Economic Development Council.
 - If pursued, anticipate the “*Leon Works*” exposition would provide students in our region with hands-on exposure to the diverse and exciting middle-skill careers while raising awareness among parents, students, job seekers, and educators regarding a wide range of career opportunities anticipated locally.
 - This exposition could include interactive exhibits, trade industry displays and demonstration projects that may require student involvement.

Long-Term Issues:

- Goal to make this event self-sufficient through the engagement of community and regional partners.

Current Strategic Priorities:

- Economy – To be an effective leader and a reliable partner in our continuous efforts to make Leon County a place which attracts talent, to grow and diversify our local economy, and to realize our full economic competitiveness in a global economy.
 - (EC2) – Support business expansion and job creation, including: the implementation of the Leon County 2012-2013 Job Creation Action Plan, to include evaluating the small business credit program. (2012)
 - (EC6) – Ensure the provision of the most basic services to our citizens most in need so that we have a “ready workforce.” (2012)

Current Strategic Initiatives:

- None currently

Potential New FY 2015 Strategic Initiative, for Board Consideration:

- Evaluate and identify the projected unmet local market for middle-skill job opportunities. (EC2, EC6)
- Based upon the projected unmet local market for middle-skill jobs, and with Board approval, collaborate with community and regional partners to host a new “*Leon Works*” exposition to educate high school students (15-18 years old) on the diverse and exciting middle-skill career and jobs anticipated locally, while raising awareness regarding a wide range of career opportunities. (EC2, EC6)

Attachments:

1. National Association of Workforce Boards W.O. Lawton Business Leadership 2014 Award Application
2. News articles regarding the *Industrial Trades Career Day*
3. National Skills Coalition State of Florida Statistics on Middle-Skill Jobs
4. USA Today Article on “Where are the Jobs?”