



## ***Bay Area Workforce Development Board***

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### STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board **Meeting Summary** **February 15, 2007**

**Present:** Joe Hilke, Larry Harkness, Heidi Schaible, Patty Nagle, Brian Ognacevic, Mike Troyer, Brian Pelon  
**Others:** Betty Gregory-Paasch, Karen Flood, Ann Franz, Jim Golembeski, Carol Conway-Gerhardt, Ken Stubbe

Mr. Hilke called the meeting to order at 11 AM at the NWTC Center for Business and Industry. The Minutes of the previous meeting (1/18/2007) were adopted as submitted on a motion by Mr. Harkness, second by Mr. Pelon.

**Updates.** Staff reported on the on-going job center regionalization efforts. There had been no additional response from Florence County since staff had responded to their written inquiry following the discussion at the last meeting. Plans are moving ahead with a joint Marinette/Florence Management Team. Similarly, the Management Team for Brown/Kewaunee/Oconto/Door Counties is meeting to work on a common plan.

The regional Business Services Team will meet regularly and has identified an important role for itself in coordinating services throughout the Bay Area. WIA training funds are available this program year yet for the in-demand (i.e., 35%) occupations, but funds for non-demand occupations are obligated. Staff recognizes the need to provide some additional training to contractors about promoting in-demand occupations to prospective WIA participants.

The Manitowoc Chamber recently awarded our welding training partnership, along with the Manitowoc Company, an award for public/private cooperation. WIA continues to provide special nursing training to about a dozen individuals in the northern counties. In addition, WIA funds are also funding a nursing "bridge training" that assists LPNs to earn an Associate Degree in Nursing. The Manitowoc and Sheboygan Job Centers are working with the Fox Valley WDB to provide services to the workers displaced at the Tecumseh facility in New Holstein.

The first Community Circle that will assist individuals returning to Brown County from state prisons will be started soon. A group of volunteers is almost finished with their training, after which the group will begin. Several individuals who are to be released soon have volunteered to work with the Circle. We hope that several Circles will get started once the first one is up and running.

Ms. Flood reported that we are taking a second look at the job center website project that three workforce areas received state funding to develop. Initially their project appeared to be set up more as a case management tool than as the customer-friendly

format that we wanted. Recently the state project has moved more in the direction that we wish to go and we want to look at it again. There would be a real value in working with a format that was common throughout the state provided that we have enough control over the content for our area.

**Shawano County.** Members discussed the Shawano County Job Center. Mr. Golembeski explained that Shawano was one of our earliest job centers and the first to incorporate as a legal entity. When the W-2 program replaced AFDC in 1997, the Shawano County Job Center, Inc. (SCJCI) became the program administrator with the cooperation of Shawano County Human Services. In the early days of W-2, the economy absorbed many lower-skilled workers, and W-2 was set up to provide a profit margin for successful programs. That gave SCJCI some financial security for a time which has been invested in a building adjacent to the present job center site. SCJCI still holds the contract for W-2, but recently transferred almost all program responsibility back to the county. The current job center facility has significant structural problems and must be vacated soon. SCJCI would like the partners to move into their building next door, and the county W-2 staff is already committed to do so.

Two partners, Job Service and our WIA programs, are looking at significant staff reduction in Shawano this year due to funding decreases. As a result, there have been some on-going discussions about what the Shawano County Job Center will look like in the near future and whether it can maintain its status as a “comprehensive job center.” Funding reduction will indeed require changes in Shawano. Our move toward higher quality online services will be useful. The growth of the College of the Menominee Nation and their active interest in partnerships is also a factor we need to consider in Shawano as we redesign service delivery there.

Mr. Golembeski suggested that a regional vision is needed based on the fact that almost half of Shawano’s workforce commutes to another county each day for work. The workers travel in all directions, to Green Bay, Wausau, Waupaca/Clintonville, Appleton, and Keshena. It would take significant effort, but that discussion probably should be started. We need to be able to connect workers in Shawano County with employers throughout this broader region, and prepare them with the skills these employers require. In addition, agriculture remains an important industry sector in this part of the state, but our workforce development system has not done much to connect with it. There is increasing awareness of the potential in the modern agribusiness sector, but we are only beginning to understand it. Partners will continue to meet about the future of service delivery in Shawano.

**Other Business.** Ms. Schaible asked if anyone had information about the agreement between Wisconsin and Michigan to share unemployment data. This data is the basis for following up on WIA and Wagner Peyser program participants, and it would be very disruptive if the agreement ended. Apparently the prior agreement had expired, but she was not sure that it had been renewed. Staff will check further. Also in the Marinette area, there is a business services committee that is surveying companies in both Michigan and Wisconsin to identify training needs and strategies.

Mr. Hilke described the “Space Port Sheboygan” project that could put Sheboygan on the map for actually being a launching site for space vehicles in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.