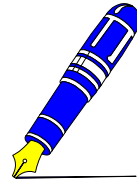


DIRECTORS NOTES

03/27/03



Local News

- Congressman Dennis Cardoza will be in making a visit to the Merced One Stop in April. It is expected the exact date, will be announced at the WIB meeting on March 27th. Plans for his visit will commence once a firm date is set.
- Evelyn Eagelton representing the Merced Youth Council went to Washington DC on March 12th to participate in a Youth Awareness event. Individual from all over the nation came together to encourage Congress to keep both In-School; and Out-of-School programs in WIA reauthorization. In the proposed legislation that was introduced on March 14th, by R. Howard “Buck” McKeon, In-School Youth programs would no longer be a part of WIA programs allocated to local Workforce Investment areas.
- The Department on behalf of the WIB, and Merced College has been awarded a \$90,000 grant over three years from the California Wellness Foundation. The grant is to implement a project designed to ensure the attraction and retention of people of color and other underrepresented groups to the nursing program at Merced College.
- The United States Penitentiary in Atwater is planning a mock job fair on April 10, 2003. Worknet will be participating in this event.
- The Merced Workforce Investment Board’s participation in the “Registered Nurse Expansion” effort was nominated for the Theodore E. Small Workforce Partnership Award. Although not an awarded, the Board was mentioned as a nominee at the National Association of Workforce Boards conference.
- Enterprise Vouchering as of March 6, 2003 statistics include 476 individual screened, 187 vouchered and \$4,399,112,64 of potential credit for those vouchered. The Department has had a recent request for 400-1,000 new screenings for a local company during their seasonal hiring.
- The Earned Income Tax Credit program has in 19 days done tax preparation for 57 individuals, with an estimated \$63,135 to be returned to County residents through this effort. With an estimated community return of \$220,972. The WorkNet Employment Resource Center in Merced will be open Tuesday through Thursday evenings and Saturdays to facilitate this project through April 15, 2003.

State/Local News

- Merced was accepted as a mentor organization to California Workforce Boards that have new Directors. A Statewide initiative funded by the Irvine Foundation created the CWA WIB Learning Network, now called the Forward Thinkers network. This program is for 18 months to develop expertise in how WIBs can provide effective community leadership on major workforce issues. The network kicked off this program in January and will continue to do work through out the spring, with a roll out event at the California WIB summit to be held in June, in Sacramento.

State and National News

- WIA funding for 2003, has been announced. Nationally, Adult programs have been cut by 5%, Dislocated Worker programs by 5%, and Youth programs by 11%. California is expected to get an overall increase in the Dislocated worker allocation, which will mitigate some of the impact to that program in the State. It is expected that State allocations will come from the Department of Labor by mid April and the sub-state allocations for locals will be out shortly there after. Senator Maria Cantwell (D. WA) has again circulated a dear colleague letter to restore funds to the "02" level, and both Senators Boxer and Feinstien have signed on.
- The Administration has announced its WIA reauthorization plan and priorities. On March 14th Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon R Ca. introduced HR 1261 which reflects the Administrations plan will be moving through the House and plans are to have a bill by May to move to the Senate. A few of the significant changes include:
 - Combining Adult, Dislocated Worker and Wagner-Peyser funding into one block grant.
 - Splitting the new combined block grant with 40% going to the states and 60% going to the local areas. Of the 60 % that goes to the local, 80% would be distributed by federal formula and the remaining 20 % at the Governor's discretion.
 - Focus on Youth funding on out-of-school youth (16-21).
 - Removing one-stop partners as mandatory members of local WIB's.
 - Eliminating the requirement for a business majority on state Boards.
 - Providing infrastructure funding from a portion of the mandatory partners. The Governor, in consultation with the state Board, would determine that proportion.
 - Establishing a new State certification process to provide the one-stop infrastructure funding.

Staff is working on an in depth analysis of the bill, and will be including the NAWB and CWA take on the bill's implications as well.

- HR 444 was introduced by Representative Jon Porter (R, NV.) in February, and puts forward part of the President's economic stimulus package. The legislation would give States \$3.6 billion over two years to promote Personal Reemployment Accounts. The funds would be provided by the local Workforce Boards through the one stop system his issue.