

**MERCED COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD  
PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WORKFORCE ACTION TEAM  
GREYSTONE BUILDING CONFERENCE ROOM-  
360 E. Yosemite Avenue  
3:00 P.M. – 4:30 P.M August 21, 2003**

**Members Present:** Gisela Malone, Mike Sullivan, Anne Newins, Tom Tsubota, Andrea Baker

**WI Staff:** Dave Davis, Joanne Presnell

As a result of the last Workforce Action team meeting and the discussion about the need for training job seekers on soft skills, a pilot soft skills academy has been initiated and will begin in October. It is titled, “Surviving and Thriving in the Workplace”. This is a collaborative effort between Merced College and the Department of Workforce Investment. The target population will be job seekers who are visiting the Worknet Employment Resource Center, but will be open to Out of School Youth and other job seekers. Gisela would like to have a certificate provided to those who complete the course. Tom Tsubota stated that this should be a requirement for high school students. ROP does cover soft skills and staff will research to determine how that is being done.

The Team feels that the development of the Soft Skills Academy is a huge accomplishment and will be invaluable in improving the workforce in Merced County.

Industry clusters have been identified by the Economic Development Action Team and are in rank order: 1.) Agriculture/Food Processing, 2.) Wood/Metal Fabrication, 3.) Construction /Materials and Ancillary Services, 4.) Warehouse Distribution, 5.) Healthcare and Education, 6.) Business Services, 7.) Tourism, Visitor Services, and Hospitality, and 8.) Child Care (crosses over many industries and is being addressed in the ABC Initiative).

There was discussion about the Workforce Academies and Roundtables, Industry Forums, Manufacturing Summit, business retention/expansion efforts, the Merced County Economic Develop Strategic Plan (MCEDSP), the WIB goals and how it all fits together. A Business Competitiveness team has been established as a result of the MCEDSP and they will be addressing how to coordinate all of these efforts. It was suggested that some of the members of this action team join the Business Competitiveness team and that the work of the Workforce Team has been completed. Staff will report back to the group by email after the next meeting of the Business Competitiveness Team so that members would have information that will help them decide whether to participate or not.