

**Workforce Investment Board
Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee
1880 W. Wardrobe Ave, Merced, CA 95341
Wednesday, September 17, 2008, 3:30 – 4:30 pm
Meeting Notes**



<http://www.mercedwib.com>

- 1. Introductions:** Mr. Steve Newvine introduced himself to the group and asked the group to participate in self introductions. Participants present were: Mr. Steve Newvine of PG&E, Mr. Albert Montejano of AT&T Wireless, Mr. Bruce Logue with the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Scott Galbraith of the Merced County Economic Development Corporation, Ms. Elaine Post with the Los Banos Redevelopment Agency, Ms. Andrea Baker of the Merced County Workforce Investment Board, Ms. Loretta Schlosser with Commerce Aviation and Economic Development, and Mr. Brian Cutler with the Merced County Department of Workforce Investment. Mr. Robert Harmon (previous WIB Chair) attended later in the meeting.
- 2. Committee Background/History:** Mr. Steve Newvine informed the group this committee has been active since early 2007 and provided a brief background and the purpose of the committee. The WIB is required to coordinate with economic development. This group needs to find ways the WIB could contribute to the economic development community and also benefit from the relationship. It was reiterated that the committee's purpose was to coordinate with economic development in the County from the position of workforce development. PG&E was invited to present to the committee earlier in the year to discuss alternative energy and the effect it might have on the local job market. Mr. Newvine noted he and others attended the Annual Meeting of the Minds Conference in Monterey, sponsored by the California Workforce Association. He stated he was able to speak with other workforce community leaders that were playing an active role with economic development. Ms. Andrea Baker noted some of the services offered by the One-Stop system including job seeker assistance providing good labor market information to the community, employers, and job seekers.
- 3. Job Creation in Public Utilities/Alternative Energy:** Mr. Newvine reflected on a meeting in Modesto where he discovered that there were number of public utility employees who serve on WIBs. A subsequent meeting took place that involved Merced, Madera, Tulare, and Kings County. The purpose of the meeting was to determine the workforce needs and issues in the public utilities industry. There is a 510 hour school in Idaho for Line Persons to get certified to enter the public utilities job market. Mr. Newvine noted that alternative energy is one of the fastest growing job sectors and California is poised for the industry. Ms. Baker, who also attended the meeting, talked about our local businesses transition into green technology, and the importance of enhancing employee skill sets to keep up with changes in the industry which would help retain businesses in the County.
- 4. The Connectory:** Mr. Brian Cutler noted the Connectory is a database that ties businesses and suppliers. It is subsidized by private employers. A handout was provided to the group and members were encouraged to promote its use and make sure to spread the word of its existence. The Department of Workforce Investment Business Resources Team is available if there are any questions from the community.
- 5. Discussion :** Services offered by Workforce Investment were discussed such as: Job seeker

services, job orders for businesses, brokering ETP contracts, customized trainings and on the job trainings for businesses, services available through specialized grants, Enterprise Zone vouchering, use of the Executive Pulse (database for individual business needs), response to specialized business needs, workforce informational resources for new businesses considering coming to the region or expanding, and helping with certain tax benefits. Examples of past collaborations between Workforce Investment and other community businesses and organizations were mentioned.

Ms. Elaine Post asked that Workforce Investment provide one page handout to distribute to employers explaining our services. E-mail format would be helpful as well. Redevelopment will be working with the Chamber of Commerce to provide workshops for the City of Los Banos for outreach. She asked that Workforce Development be part of those workshops and provide information/materials. Ms. Post asked that we inform her once a month on Workforce Investment services and events.

Ms. Andrea Baker pointed out that we have provided roughly twice the rapid responses in the past two and a half months than we did for all of last program year. She also suggested that Workforce Investment might help businesses in some human resources aspects. Careers in the Valley.com was mentioned as a good source of information for businesses for such areas as upgrade or customized training. The Merced County Department of Workforce Investment is one of two manufacturing skills certification centers in the region that can provide a national skills certificate in manufacturing.

Mr. Scott Galbraith voiced his concern about the lack of accurate census information for our County and a need for customized research.

It was stressed that members of the committee coordinate with each other and supply information on a regular basis. Mr. Bruce Logue stated he would like to help the Department of Workforce Investment by publishing written articles provided by the Department. He would insert the articles into the Chamber's electronic newsletter. He asked that the Chamber receive the articles five days in advance of the newsletter, which is posted on the 15th of each month. Mr. Logue invited the Department of Workforce Investment to come to a Board meeting to talk about services offered by the Department. Information about Workforce Investment would be helpful as a chamber resource to benefit its members. Ms. Elaine Post suggested arranging the same activity with Mr. Keith Groninga at the Los Banos Chamber of Commerce.

6. Chair Comments: Mr. Steve Newvine suggested the group meet regularly as needed.
7. Next Meeting – To be determined.
8. Adjourn—Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.