

DIRECTORS NOTES



9/26/02

Local News

- The WIB/MCEDCO event on August 29th attracted approximately 170 attendees. The four critical issues that need to be addressed, identified by the attendees, were Education, training/retraining, recruit/attract professionals and diversity. A full listing of comments will be available at the September 26th WIB meeting for information. The Planning, Policy Development and Legislation Committee and Executive Committee will review and make recommendations on how to use the community input for future full-WIB consideration.
- The WIB and Board of Supervisors held their joint meeting on August 29, 2002. During that meeting the “End-of-Year Report” was accepted by both bodies. Additionally, the “State of the Workforce” report was presented as information. Copies of both documents will be available for members at the September 26th meeting.
- The Merced Worknet One-Stop held an Open House on September 17, 2002. The event was focused on the job-seeking customer. The open house had 315 guests visit and get tours of the One-Stop center. A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate its new signage of “Worknet of Merced County Employment Resource Center”.
- On August 27, 2002, “Merced County Department of Workforce Investment” (WI) was selected, by the Board of Supervisors, as the new name of the Private Industry Training Department. The Department will be using the new Merced County logo, along with all other County Departments.
- The Department’s Business Services unit will be up and running in October. The unit will be organizing employer focus groups to solicit input on needed services. The WIB private sector members will be a critical source of information and support of these services.
- The Department is working with the City of Merced to complete development of a training partnership for law enforcement officers. This concept will be brought to the Planning, Policy and Legislation Committee for consideration and then to the full WIB. If approved, the concepts can then be expanded to other communities.
- The Department will submit a revised Rapid Response funding request to the State to include funds for the Business retention survey needs of the County.

- The One-Stop Steering Committee had a retreat to address the Certification process proposed by the WIB Standards and Certification Committee. Almost all partners attended and have committed to serious focus on this process. Through a day and a half of facilitated retreat, they completed a self-assessment of the statutory requirements, and Continuous Improvement (CI) requirements of One Stop Certification. A Leadership team was formed to actively participate in decision making that impact Worknet Employment Resource Center operations. The Leadership team is setting in place strategies to meet the certification requirements of the WIB.

State/Local News

- The performance negotiations have broken down between the State of California and the Federal Government. The State has exhausted options for 02-03 negotiations with the Feds. The State we are told, via conference call, will honor the negotiated performance measures for year 2, as the State will make all but the Older Youth Credential rates. Performance and additional negotiations at the local level will not affect that outcome. At this time, the State will leave the door open for year 3, for renegotiations with the locals. A confirmation letter was promised to the locals by the end of September. No information has been received in Merced as of 9/18/02.
- The California Workforce Association (CWA) “Meeting of the Minds” conference in Monterey was September 11-13. The theme was “ Getting Our Message Out”. The focus of the conference was on finding our collective voice and telling our stories about the value of work our system does. CWA will be using the information developed to work on the State and National level to educate legislators about our system. Locals will be using the process learned at the conference to develop local stories to illustrate the value of how our system impacts our community.

State News

- The State Workforce Investment Board met in San Jose on Thursday September 19th. On the agenda was the Approval of Certification Process for One-Stops. The agenda and packet are posted at the following web site. www.calwia.org.

State and National News

- The first of a series of congressional hearings dedicated to reauthorization of the 1998 Workforce Investment law was held September 12, 2002. According to Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon, (R-Cal.), chairman of the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on 21st Century competitiveness, one of the “largest aspects” of the reauthorization effort will be to address “the ongoing problem of funding under

WIA”. Both NACo and CWA will be asking for support from the local WIBs in addressing the system needs and issues of reauthorization during this time.

- House moderates are fighting the Administrations requested budget for FY 03 for Labor, HHS and Education. The President’s budget includes cuts of \$655 million to WIA. Adult proposed cuts are \$50 million, Dislocated Worker cuts are proposed at \$166 million and \$127 million proposed cuts in youth programs. Additionally there are proposed budget cuts to the Youth Opportunity Grants and elimination of the H-1B training grants. The Senate Appropriations Committee has marked up its version of the bill and level-funded WIA, and the Youth Opportunity Grants and H-1B funding. If you would like to contact congress on this matter, you can send email to all Merced’s representatives via www.nawb.org, click on advocacy.