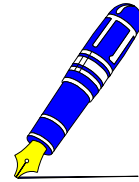


DIRECTORS NOTES

01/23/03



Local News

- The Merced Workforce Investment Board's participation in the "Registered Nurse Expansion" effort has been nominated for the Theodore E. Small Workforce Partnership Award. The Board will be notified in January if selected.
- The Department has collaborated with MCEDCO and MCBEQ to submit a LEGACI grant to The Great Valley Center to leverage regional marketing for Economic Development and Workforce Development. MCEDCO is the grant applicant.
- The Department on behalf of the WIB, and Merced College has met with The California Wellness Foundation to review our "Diversity in Health Professions Grant Proposal". It is expected that we will be notified of the success of our application in March 2003.
- The Department, as the One Stop Operator is creating a partnership to help working residents of Merced County to claim the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit. This is a partnership with the city, business and foundation communities and non-profit tax preparation individuals. The IRS will provide the training, forms and software at no cost, in addition to setting up electronic filing sites. Tax preparation will begin in February 2003 and continue through April 15, 2003. All those preparing taxes are volunteers. The WorkNet Employment Resource Center in Merced will be open Tuesday through Thursday evenings and Saturdays to facilitate this project. It is estimated an average EITC refund is \$1,400.00. It is our goal to encourage 500 new filers the first year, which can generate approximately \$700,000 return to the taxpayers. We will keep the WIB informed on the progress of this effort.

State/Local News

- The Department of Labor (DOL) and the California Workforce Association (CWA) will be hosting a WIB/Directors team statewide meeting in January 30th and 31st in Manhattan Beach. The team attending from Merced will be Nellie McGarry, and Andrea Baker. The Ford Foundation and the Department of Labor will fund the meeting. The topic will be "Business Leadership, Business Results".

- Merced has made application to be a part of a Statewide initiative funded by the Irvine Foundation to be a member of CWA WIB Learning Network. Merced was accepted as a mentor organization to California Workforce Boards that have new Directors. This program is for 18 months to develop expertise in how WIBs can provide effective community leadership on major workforce issues. The Workforce Competitive Advantage is critical to community viability. WIA is only one tactic to make sure that happens. This network will be looking at what are the characteristics of a community that has a competitive workforce advantage. The projects Goals: 1. Building and testing a map to guide WIB development. 2. Develop skills and capacities of member directors and WIBs. 3. Learn from other network members. 4. Launch local changes resulting from the learning. 5. Help bring the new models into use by other WIBs statewide. **Congratulations** on being recognized for the work you have done in Merced in establishing a model WIB. A kick off event will be held on January 29th and 30th in conjunction with the DOL/CWA meeting in Manhattan Beach. Nellie McGarry and Andrea Baker will be attending.
- The Chancellors of the Community College system has let a request for grant application for Economic Development and Industry Driven Regional Collaborations. It is due April 8th. Only Community Colleges may apply.

State and National News

- WIA funding for 2003, is still up in the air. The budget for WIA is forward funded; therefore, the action of Congress at this time will affect our planning and programs for July 1, 2003. The House has passed its version of the LABOR/HHS budget, which mirrors the President's proposal. This version proposed cuts in all areas of WIA. The Senate has yet to pass its bill. A conference committee will most likely be the vehicle for a final budget.
- The Administration plans to announce its WIA reauthorization plan and priorities in February along with the President's fiscal year 2004 budget.
- The President has announced as part of his economic stimulus package, a proposal to give States \$3.6 billion over two years to promote Personal Reemployment Accounts. The funds would be connected to One Stops, will serve unemployment insurance recipients who are "likely" to exhaust their benefits and some others who fall into a special category. The States will have flexibility in designing the account program and can determine up to \$3,000, to be used to purchase job training and key services. Participants will be able to keep the balance of the account as a cash reemployment bonus if they become reemployed within 13 weeks.
- U.I. benefits were extended by the Congress and signed by the President. They will be retroactive to December 28th.

- The National Association of Workforce Boards annual conference will be held in Washington D.C., March 2-4, 2003. The Merced Team attending will be John Headding, Nellie McGarry, Mike Boardman, Joanne Presnell and Andrea Baker.
- The National Governors Association (NGA) is pressing for program investment in Workforce Training. Gov. Paul Patton, (D-Ky), chair of NGA said it is “imperative that we don’t lose sight of the critical investment in education and workforce development.” “We have to decide to continue investing in both our current and future workforce if this Country is going to remain competitive, he added. “Economic prosperity and security is going to provide us with the resources to allow us to defend the country against internal and external threats. There is a connection between the security of this country and developing the workforce.” Governors will be asking for greater flexibility using federal dollars. This will be an issue for WIA reauthorization. The definition of “local” control will be hotly debated. Cities and Counties will need to pay attention to this issue.