



Introducing Ken Ferguson: The New AWIB Director

KEN Ferguson has been appointed by Governor Mike Beebe to serve as the Executive Director for the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. Director Ferguson joins the Governor's Cabinet after serving for over 25 years as Director of Human Resources for the City of Pine Bluff, Arkansas. As Human Resources Director, he was responsible for all areas of employee relations, including recruitment, compensation, benefits, employee training, risk management and safety, labor relations, and affirmative action. Ferguson is considered by many to be the guru of Human Resources Management.

A native of Pine Bluff, Director Ferguson has enjoyed a diverse professional history ranging from broadcast journalism to city government; one fact unknown to some is that he worked as a news announcer and later became program director for KCAT Radio in Pine Bluff.

Director Ferguson is passionate about giving back to the community and volunteers his time to many noteworthy civic services. He is a proud alumnus of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

DOL Announces Rescissions and Reductions!

CONGRESS has enacted rescissions in the FY 2007 and the FY 2008 appropriation acts. The Department of Labor (DOL) will apply three different rescission provisions and a reduction of the upcoming PY 2008 allotments. These adjustments will apply to various existing and future WIA funds. According to the DOL, the rescissions apply as follows:

- The FY 2007 Advance 1 percent across-the-board rescission: this rescission must be applied to the state allotments of FY 2007 advance funds (appropriated in FY 2006) only, and affects the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs only.

- The FY 2008 Advance 1.747 percent across-the-board rescission: this rescission must be applied to the state allotments of FY 2008 advance funds (appropriated in

FY 2007) only, and affects the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs only.

- The \$250 million rescission to the PY 2005 and 2006 unexpended balances: the intent of the rescission of unexpended balances is to first rescind large balances of unexpended funds by state and program, and then to reduce total unexpended balances in the WIA system proportionately to all states. Congress provided that unexpended balance amounts rescinded under this provision may be taken from PY 2005 or PY 2006 funds, or upon request of the state to the Secretary of Labor, from PY 2007 funds. This rescission affects the WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

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Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate

A portable credential that confirms to employers that an individual possesses basic workplace skills in Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information – skills that all jobs require.



*Building Arkansas' Workforce.
One Worker At A Time!*

WorkKeys[®]



KeyTrain



For more information or assistance regarding the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate contact the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

1-866-757-2999 (telephone toll-free)

CRC@Arkansas.Gov (email)

www.ArkansasAtWork.Org (website)

DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE



The vision of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board is clear. We, as an agency, must be about the business of training our workforce to meet the needs of high-growth industries. The AWIB must ensure a workforce system which leverages employment-training resources by collaborating with education, business and industry, labor, and state agencies. These components, working together, guarantee a collective response to the economic needs of local and regional communities.

Since coming to this agency, I've attempted to reach out to many of the Local Workforce Investment Boards. I have visited with administrators, discussing the challenges we face and the goals that should be accomplished. I will continue to reach out, listen, and collaborate with our partners in the effort to educate and train the citizens of Arkansas for the economic opportunities now and those that will be created in the future.

This agency is working hard to evaluate all components of our program by looking at our strengths and challenges in order to develop the workforce in concert with and in support of Arkansas's existing and emerging industries. The Governor's initiatives, along with the Workforce Investment Act programs, will be the cornerstone of our foundation for success.

Two strategic projects that are at the forefront of development is the creation of a guidance policy instrument and establishing quarterly meetings for the state with local administrators. The guidance policy instrument will help us to maintain continuity of fundamental workforce service obligations set out in federal and state statutes. These projects, along with others, are being developed in order to enhance performance and strengthen communication between local areas and the state.

To enhance Arkansas's competitiveness, linkages between education, workforce, infrastructure, and diverse engines of economic development must become seamless. We solicit your input for continuous improvement and ideas on how we can advance to newly articulated regional workforce objectives and strategies to fully enable our vision.

Sincerely,

Our mission is to ensure an innovative and demand-driven workforce investment system, in collaboration with education, business, industry, labor and state agencies that effectively leverages employment and training resources and collectively responds to the needs of local and regional economies.

AWIB MEMBERS

- | | |
|---|--|
| Beebe, Mike
<i>Governor</i> | Haynie, Randy |
| Baker, Terrie
<i>Chair</i> | Hudson, James |
| Hilburn, Diane
<i>Vice Chair</i> | Hughes, Alan |
| Agee, Sarah | Jackson, Donny |
| Anderson, Tom | Kerr, Sandra |
| Baker, Gilbert
<i>State Senator</i> | Knight, Jim |
| Bakke, Dr. Dan | Leavell, Hugh |
| Bearden, Lawrence | McGuire, Sammy |
| Floyd, Dr. Steve | Mays, Dwayne |
| Belk, Ricky | Milbrodt, Ken |
| Blair, Judith | Miller, Eddie |
| Blount, Bobby | Northcutt, Charles
<i>Mayor, Malvern</i> |
| Broadway, Herbert | Norton, Mike |
| Burnley, David | Rebick, Michael |
| Creekmore, Dawn | Selig, John |
| Delaney, Linda | Steele, Tracy
<i>State Senator</i> |
| Deweese, Richard
<i>Mayor, Green Forest</i> | Sullivan, Hays |
| Featherstone, Larry | Trevino, Robert |
| Gilbert, Willie | Warren, Bill |
| Gray, Linda | Walker, Jr., William |
| Haley, Maria | Williams, Artee |
| | Wise, Franklin |
| | Young, Cindy |

AWIB STAFF

- Executive Director**Kenneth Ferguson
Deputy DirectorStaci Croom-Raley
Admin. Assistant/Exec.Jessica Davis
Regional AdvisorCarmen Edwards
Accounting SupervisorNorma Gillerson
Training CoordinatorDeJuana Lindsey
Regional AdvisorRob Marek
Admin. Assistant/DeputyNancy Morris
Quality AssuranceMitchell Simpson
Admin. Assistant/StaffG.Tina Smith
Special ProjectsRebecca Trammell
Youth CoordinatorCharles Waddell



FERGUSON BECOMES OFFICIAL!



Director Ferguson shares his vision for Workforce with the attendees.



Director Ferguson is sworn in by Judge Waymond Brown.



Attendees support Director Ferguson.



Director Ferguson discusses strategy with Senator Tracy Steele.



l to r. Director Ferguson, former AWIB Director Colette Honorable (Public Service Commission), and Lamar Davis (Governor's Office)



FERGUSON HITS THE GROUND *RUNNING!*



Director Ferguson leads AWIB meeting.



AWIB members settle into new meeting location, Pulaski Technical College.



Director Ferguson joins as the LRWIB celebrates the new location of its Workforce Center.



l to r. Willie Jones (LRWIB), Director Ferguson, and Tameka Edwards (Senator Lincoln's Office)



Ron Fleming (PSI) and Director Ferguson



l to r. Mike South (LRWIB), Director Ferguson, and W.J. Monagle (LRWIB)



Contributors

A YEAR OF OPPORTUNITIES! FROM THE DESK OF STACI CROOM-RALEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Year 2007 was certainly an eventful year for the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, and 2008 is shaping up to be as eventful, if not more so. There is an air of revitalized commitment by workforce investment practitioners who are ready to provide more of the best in employment and training opportunities across the state.

The state board and its partners are preparing to endure the effects of the most drastic funding rescissions ever experienced at one time in workforce development and employment and training history. Our local partners are reassessing all available resources and getting creative about how to serve the citizens of this great state with reduced funding for previous and future program years.

In past weeks, our local partners have shown an unparalleled commitment to the people they serve and the work that they have been called to do for our state. Anticipating how to operate WIA at the same level or better with fewer funds has not been easy. To all of our local workforce area boards, administrators, providers and staff, we appreciate your tenacity in serving our state's citizens.

The opportunities will continue to present themselves, so knowledge, visionary insight, and action are imperative to the future success of WIA in Arkansas. The state workforce board encourages local areas to embrace all opportunities to bring more positive change to your communities through grants, training forums, and other collaborative partnerships.

Only collectively can we get through this time of change and uncertainty. In 2008, we have our diligence to rely on in order to reach successful outcomes. Undoubtedly, it will be another memorable year!

Sincerely,



Staci Croom-Raley, a member of the AWIB staff for 2 years, is the Deputy Director for the agency. She oversees fiscal and programmatic operations for the Board.



Rebecca Trammell, Special Projects Evaluator for the AWIB, has worked with statewide workforce investment programs for over 20 years. She coordinates the Mature Worker Initiative.



Rob Marek, a member of the AWIB staff for over 5 years, serves as one of the state's Regional Advisors. He currently represents the AWIB on the Increasing Capabilities Access Network Advisory Council and the Career Readiness Certificate planning team.



Carmen Edwards has served as one of the state's Regional Advisors for over 2 years. She represents the AWIB on Limited English Proficiency and Emergency Management projects.



DeJuana Lindsey, the statewide Training Coordinator, has been with the AWIB for 6 months. She oversees training and development and is the coordinator for the 2008 statewide conference.



Mitchell Simpson, a member of AWIB for over a year, serves as the Quality Assurance Coordinator. He reviews policy and serves as editor for the AWIB newsletter.



NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION: *ENGAGING SENIORS*

IN May 2007, Governor Beebe received notification from the National Governors Association that Arkansas was one of eight states selected to participate in a policy academy titled Civic Engagement: Engaging Seniors in Volunteering and Employment. The year-long project, sponsored by Atlantic Philanthropies, focuses on helping states to develop strategies for improving the health and lives of its older adults by substantially increasing the proportion of seniors who engage in employment and meaningful volunteer activities. An eight-member core team was selected by the Governor to analyze and evaluate the state's resources for supporting and enhancing future work life balance.

The team of experts meets regularly, and in July 2007 they joined with the seven other states at Annapolis, Maryland to share their current status of services to mature adults, discuss the systems they already had in place, and learn from other states' experiences in recognizing and addressing the challenges for future actions. The Arkansas team leaders and decision makers participated in support work groups to create goals, strategies, and action plans toward a model that can be replicated by other states. Awareness of issues relative to the "graying" of America from volunteerism to work place retention is being explored for greater utilization of one of the state's most valued assets, mature adults.

Immediate goals include an environmental scan for determining the profile of the mature adult in Arkansas, an outreach effort to expand interest in education and lifelong learning opportunities, and finally to produce a system of coordination and communication for universal access to the abundance of resources, activities, and services available for the age 50+ citizens. **-REBECCA TRAMMEL**



Rebecca Trammell (AWIB) explains innovative ways to hire and engage mature workers



l to r. Rebecca Trammell (AWIB) and Kim Friedman (DWS) staff various job fairs to explain the benefits of hiring mature workers to employers. The pair also spends time educating mature workers about "encore" career opportunities.

AWIB PARTICIPATES ON ICAN ADVISORY COUNCIL

ARKANSAS receives a federal grant to establish and maintain a statewide Assistive Technology (AT) Project under the Assistive Technology Act. Arkansas's Governor designated Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) as the lead agency to implement the "Increasing Capabilities Access Network" (ICAN) project. Through ARS, ICAN provides a wide range of AT-related services across life areas -education, employment, community living, and informational technology - to eligible Arkansans with disabilities.

ICAN's AT-related services include free information and referral services, publications, training and hands-on demonstration opportunities, technical assistance, a device loan library, website resources, a pre-owned technology exchange program, and device recycling efforts. ICAN

is housed in Little Rock, but services will be accessible statewide.

Collaborative partners include the Arkansas Department of Education, Department of Human Services, Division of Aging and Adult Services, Developmental Disabilities Services, Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, Arkansas Development and Finance Authority, universities throughout the state, independent living centers, private disability service providers and consumer groups.

For more information, dial 1-800-828-2799 (voice/TDD) or visit the ICAN website at www.arkansas-ican.org.

-ROB MAREK

NAVIGATE YOUR WAY TO THE 2008 STATEWIDE WORKFORCE CONFERENCE!

THE Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will host the 2008 Arkansas Workforce Conference set for October 29-31 in Little Rock. An estimated 300 workforce professionals will convene at the Doubletree Hotel and Robinson Center for three days of training, motivation, and networking. The goal of the 2008 Workforce Conference is to equip front-line workforce staff across the state with the tools they need to continue creative workforce solutions that support global competition.

The conference will feature national and local facilitators and moderators who will present strategies designed to help local workforce boards, one stop

center providers and staff, and employers develop real collaboration with other stakeholders.

Conference delegates will be able to attend workshops on topics including Bringing Partners Together, Challenging our Youth, Transitioning Ex-offenders into the Workforce, and Reconnecting with Retirees. The conference will expose workforce professionals to best practices from across the nation that will work at local levels. Registration and exhibitor information will be made available in early 2008. Interested volunteers are encouraged to contact DeJuana Lindsey at 501-683-5347 or DeJuana.Lindsey@Arkansas.Gov. -DEJUANA LINDSEY

SAVE THE DATES

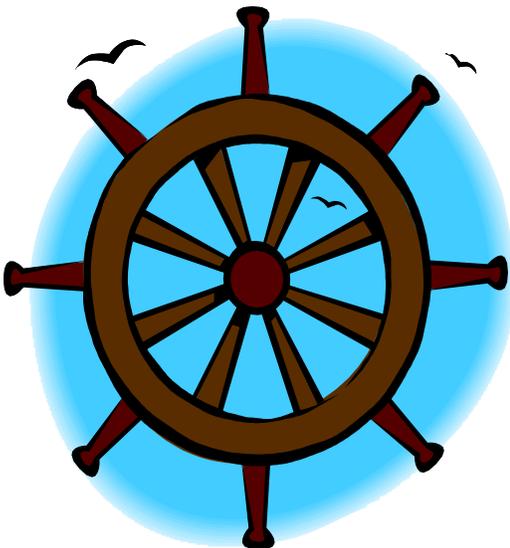
2008 Arkansas Workforce Investment Board
Statewide Conference

CHARTING THE COURSE: Navigating Education, Employment, and Economic Development

October 29-31, 2008
Doubletree Hotel
Little Rock, Arkansas

You don't want to miss it!

Please mark your calendars. More details to follow.



CRC: A NEW APPROACH TO WORKSKILLS

MEMBERS of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (AWIB), Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC), Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (ADWS), Arkansas Department of Workforce Education (ADWE), Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), Arkansas Science & Technology Authority (ASTA), and the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (AATYC), have been tasked by the Governor to cooperatively and unanimously support the implementation of the Governor's Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate (CRC), with business and industry awareness and buy-in.

The CRC tool, Key Train, is the on-line software instructional system that has been approved to support ACT WorkKeys assessments. The KeyTrain curriculum aligns with the 9 ACT WorkKeys assessments and also has 200 modules for pre-employment workplace soft skills instruction. It is a comprehensive academic remediation and work skills teaching product. Other skills such as computer proficiency, resume-building, and practice interviews are often taught separately, as employability skills.

About 350 people in various statewide agency offices and colleges have been trained to use this tool since April 2007. KeyTrain administrators have been set up at over 100 locations, including all ADWS employment offices, many local One Stop Centers, various Adult Education

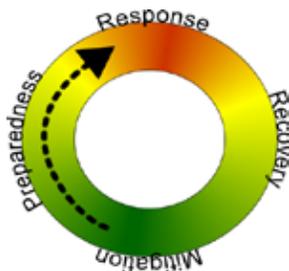
Centers, all participating Two-Year Colleges, secondary technical education centers, and other sites. KeyTrain activity will likely occur at One Stop Centers, ADWS offices, or Adult Education Centers.

A person must take an un-timed "locator-type-quiz" and score a Level 4 on three ACT WorkKeys assessments (Reading, Applied Math, and Locating Information) before they advance to take the three ACT WorkKeys assessments. Upon successfully passing the KeyTrain assessment, the person continues their training at one of the 22 Two-Year Colleges to take the ACT WorkKeys assessment in order to achieve a Bronze (Level 3), Silver (Level 4), or Gold (Level 5) CRC. Due to geographic and business service requests, additional CRC sites have been added at UAM McGehee and Crossett, ATU-Ozark, UA Fort Smith, UALR, and Adult Education Centers at Jonesboro, Conway, and Russellville.

The Governor directed that Business/ Industry Forums be held in all ten (10) Local Workforce Investment Areas to garner support for the CRC program. Each area boasted approximately 50-100+ attendees, including employers, legislators, agency representatives, and community members. For more information about the CRC program in your area, send an email to CRC@Arkansas.Gov or call 1-866-757-2999. **-CARMEN EDWARDS**

**KeyTrain
administrators have
been set up at over 100
locations.**

PLANNING FOR PANDEMICS



THE Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, along with other state agencies, is rigorously planning for pandemics, as well as other unforeseen disasters, to protect employees and to continue critical operations that provide important services and support to the citizens of Arkansas. Each state agency director is establishing an internal policy detailing whether the agency may alter business and working hours and relocate resources to accommodate these changes.

The purpose of planning and developing these policies is to provide guidelines for security and privacy issues, work from home practices, workplace sanitation practices, and to address other concerns during a pandemic flu. Established standards, guidelines, and best practices for security and privacy are considered for all policies.

Continuity Of Operations Plan (COOP) - Employees in various state agencies are being trained in understanding the strategic importance of the agency's COOP. Each agency is taking necessary steps to ensure the recovery and availability of technology resources and processes required to continue critical agency operations during and after an unforeseen event or failure in normal operations. **-CARMEN EDWARDS**



IWTP IS BIG BUSINESS!

THE Arkansas Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) is funded annually through the utilization of discretionary funds provided by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (AWIB). Applications are publicly solicited from established employers doing business for at least a year in the state. Industrial groups and other non-profits are also encouraged to apply.

All training dollars must be spent on current employees of an Arkansas company. An ad hoc committee of AWIB members, private business representatives, and economic developers conducts a review of the proposals and determines the fundable award.

In PY 06, the IWTP provided approximately \$2.3 million in training dollars, awarding 107 grants to 77 companies. The training resulted in higher wages, improved worker skills, and, in some cases, a larger share of the market for grantees.

Training formats included traditional classroom instruction, on-the-job training, distance learning opportunities, hands-on workshops, field maneuvers, seminars, computer based labs, equipment-specific instruction, and other methods.

The IWTP benefits business and industry by nurturing the skills of existing employees, increasing employee productivity, and spurring company growth. The program allows Arkansas to better prepare its workers for the advanced manufacturing arena and competition in high growth industries of the 21st century.

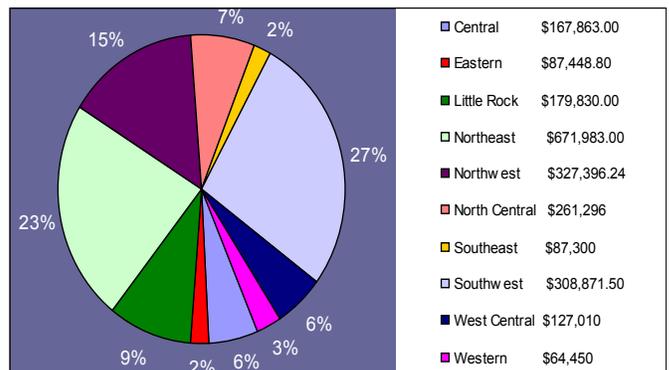
In many instances, the bottom line of participating companies has improved and resulted in increased wages for some of the trainees, leading to upward mobility and creating additional entry-level positions. A program bonus is collaboration and commitment by business and industry and government to enhance a skilled workforce.

Once the training segment is completed for the program year, participating company representatives submit a final report stating any readily apparent accomplishments. Additionally, participants complete a survey providing feedback and comments on the instructor, usefulness of the training, and their expectancies upon completion.

-ROB MAREK



During Program Year 2006, IWTP provided approximately \$2.3 million in training dollars to companies like American Railcar, Inc. to assist such companies in better preparing their existing employees and bolster local economies.



Dollar amounts and percentages of IWTP funds distributed to each Local Workforce Investment Area



IWTP funds expended by training area



LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

LITTLE ROCK WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA

December 2007 saw the largest number of single month graduates since the existence of the Arkansas Workforce Center at Little Rock. For the month of December, the center had twenty-two (22) of its customers graduate from their training programs. The graduates consisted of twenty (20) Registered Nurses, a Licensed Practical Nurse, and a graduate of Film Production School.

The Nurses graduated from the Baptist School of Nursing and the Film Production graduate completed training at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR). Twenty (20) of the graduates were Adult customers and two (2) were Dislocated Workers. Of the twenty-two (22) graduates, seventeen (17) have already gained employment with salaries ranging from \$18.00 to \$29.00 per hour. The center is extremely proud of these successful clients!

Meet JB: A Success Story

JB was enrolled in the WIA Adult Program at the Little Rock Workforce Center in June 2007. As a single parent and recipient of public assistance, she qualified for Workforce Investment Act Title IB Adult services.

JB already had a Bachelor's degree in Sociology but was unable to obtain self-sufficient employment. She decided to go to school to become a Registered Nurse (RN); nursing is a demand occupation in Little Rock and there are many opportunities. She chose the Baptist School of Nursing and Allied Health and entered their RN Program. During this time, JB worked a part-time job while attending school, but this was not enough for her to obtain her employment goal or maintain her household.

JB came into the Workforce Center for assistance with transportation, uniforms, and exam fees. Without assistance, she would have had to drop out of school. By coordinating the center's services with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) services (e.g. childcare and food stamps), JB was able to graduate from Baptist as an RN. JB completed her training and graduated with honors in December 2007. She has accepted employment with Baptist Hospital (where she had worked part-time); her anticipated starting salary is over \$18.00 an hour.

Got a success story or other workforce-related information to share?

You may submit an item for consideration by email to:

Mitchell.Simpson@Arkansas.Gov

Don't have access to email? Mail it to:

Arkansas Workforce Investment Board
c/o Mitchell Simpson
P.O. Box 2981
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203

For general information or questions, you may contact the AWIB at:

501.371.1020

or toll-free at

1.866.ARWORKS
(1.866.279.6757)

New AWIB Meeting Location: Pulaski Technical College

ALL MEETINGS HELD ON THE SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH
PULASKI TECHNICAL COLLEGE
Campus Center Building
3000 West Scenic Drive, North Little Rock
10:00 AM



JANUARY 08, 2008	FULL BOARD MEETING Grand Hall A & B
MARCH 11, 2008	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Grand Hall A
APRIL 08, 2008	FULL BOARD MEETING Grand Hall A & B
JUNE 10, 2008	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Grand Hall A
JULY 08, 2008	FULL BOARD MEETING Grand Hall A & B
SEPTEMBER 09, 2008	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Grand Hall A
OCTOBER 14, 2008	FULL BOARD MEETING Grand Hall A & B
DECEMBER 09, 2008	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Grand Hall A

