



Artee Williams
DWS Director

Department of Workforce Services

Ferguson named AWIB director



Kenneth Ferguson

Honorable accepts new position at Public Service Commission

Gov. Mike Beebe recently appointed Kenneth B. Ferguson as executive director of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. Ferguson replaces Colette Honorable, who was appointed to the Public Service Commission.

Ferguson said he plans to reach out to every area of the state and facilitate opportunities for continuous improvement of the Arkansas Workforce System by enhancing the training and education opportunities for Arkansas' citizens.

"Our role is to help ensure that Arkansas is a 'workforce ready' state that will be globally competitive and attractive to business and industry decision makers throughout the world," Ferguson said.

Ferguson joins the governor's cabinet after serving for more than 25 years as the director of human resources for the city of

Pine Bluff. He is a native of Pine Bluff and an alumnus of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science.

Prior to working for the city of Pine Bluff, Ferguson was an announcer, news director and later the program director for KCAT Radio in Pine Bluff.

He is a member of the Pine Bluff Chapter of the NAACP and South Leadership Conference. He also is a member of Haygood Masonic Lodge #407 and St. Bethel Church at Pine Bluff and has a certification in real estate.

Ferguson's swearing-in ceremony was recently held at the Arkansas Parole Board offices in Little Rock. Judge Waymond Brown, with the District Court of Jefferson County, Division 2, performed the ceremony.

10 employer forums to be held regarding workplace credential

Ten regional forums with employers will be held around the state to announce the rollout of the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate, a portable credential that certifies that a person has core employability skills, such as math, reading and locating information, that are needed for specific jobs.

"The certificate will benefit employers, job seekers, educators and the community by reducing employee turnover, building job seeker confidence, increasing a graduate's chances for hire and boosting economic development," Department of Workforce Services Director Artee Williams said.

To obtain a CRC, a job seeker must score adequate levels in Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics and Locating Information on WorkKeys®, a comprehensive employability skills assessment tool that compares a job's skills and levels with those a job seeker currently possesses.

Upon successfully completing the desired levels of WorkKeys®, a person

• See CRC Page 2



CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE — Joe Franklin, the Transitional Employment Assistance transitional administrator for the Department of Workforce Services (right), presents information about the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate to DWS and Arkansas Workforce Center staff recently in Hot Springs. The program will be rolled out at 10 employer forums beginning in January. The CRC is a portable credential that certifies a person has core employability skills, such as reading, math and locating information.

DWS partners with IRS to share tax information

The Department of Workforce Services recently entered into a partnership agreement with the Internal Revenue Service and 28 other states to share the results of employment tax examinations.

The agreement, part of the Questionable Employment Tax Practice Initiative, provides a means for the IRS and state employment agency officials to exchange data, thereby improving compliance in the

area of employment taxes.

Combining resources will help IRS and DWS reduce fraudulent filings, uncover employment tax avoidance schemes and ensure proper worker classification.

In addition to coordinating compliance activities, the agreement calls for activities designed to help businesses understand their employment and unemployment tax responsibilities.

CRC

continued from Page 1

will then earn a bronze, silver or gold CRC signed by the governor and directors of the Department of Workforce Services and Arkansas Workforce Investment Board.

The first step toward achieving an Arkansas CRC is completing the KeyTrain® assessment. The score achieved helps determine if the job seeker is ready to take the WorkKeys® assessment. If not, KeyTrain® provides additional instruction to help build the skills needed to pass WorkKeys® and for employment. The job seeker may also be referred to Adult Education for additional instruction.

More than 30 other states have implemented some form of the career readiness certificate.

The CRC will give job seekers a competitive edge, assist them with creating a skill enhancement roadmap and assure employers that they can perform the duties required for 21st century jobs.

The certificate will help employers reduce overtime and waste, increase morale, take the guesswork out of selection decisions, improve the effectiveness of training dollars, streamline hiring and meet EEOC requirements.

It also will keep employers from moving entry-level jobs to other states, decrease the unemployment rate, create a work-ready community, increase the tax base and attract new employers to the state.

The first forum will be held

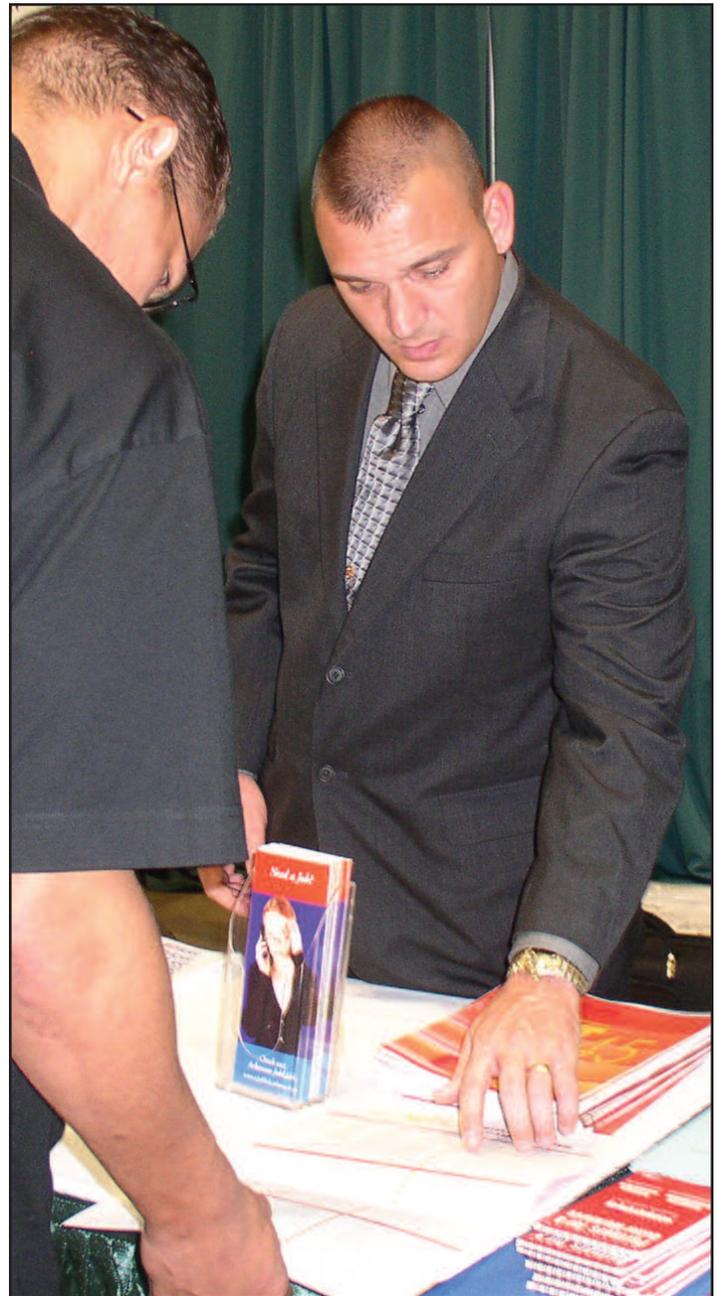
More than 30 other states have implemented some form of the career readiness certificate.

from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Jan. 14, 2008, at Pulaski Technical College in North Little Rock. Additional forums will be held in West Memphis, Bentonville, Fort Smith, Hope, Hot Springs, El Dorado, Paragould, Pine Bluff and Newport. An invitation letter from the governor will be sent to employers.

DWS and Arkansas Workforce Center staff are available to assist employers who want to make the CRC a necessary credential for hiring.

Job seekers can take KeyTrain® at any DWS office or at several Arkansas Workforce Centers around the state. WorkKeys® is administered at Arkansas' 22 two-year colleges; the Valley View Adult Education Center at Jonesboro; the Adult Education Centers at Conway, Magnolia, Texarkana and Russellville; the Henderson State University/Southwest Arkansas Technology Learning Center; the Center of Business and Professional Development at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith; Arkansas Tech University-Ozark; and the University of Arkansas at Monticello-Technical Colleges at McGehee and Crossett.

For more information, call 1-866-757-2999, send an e-mail to crc@arkansas.gov or go to www.ArkansasAtWork.org.



JOB FAIR — John Donovan, the veterans' program assistant for the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (right), assists a job seeker at the May Job Fair sponsored by the Central Arkansas Human Resources Association and *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. More than 75 vendors participated, and an estimated 3,700 people attended the event held twice a year at the Statehouse Convention Center.

Jobs for People. People for Jobs.
DWS
Department of
WORKFORCE Services

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