

WORKFORCE FLORIDA

PARTNERS' REPORT



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EMPLOY FLORIDA: The Missing Link

Following more than a year of research, collaboration and brand labs, the new state-wide affiliate brand for Florida's One-Stop Career Center system has been launched. **Employ Florida** provides a tool for finding workforce services anywhere in the state.

Many employers do business in more than one of the 24 local workforce regions that administer the 100+ One-Stops in Florida. The many names and brands they need to know in order to access services in multiple regions can be confusing. To build on the power of the existing local brands Workforce Florida created the new "linking brand", **Employ Florida**, similar to the FTD affiliate model used to link floral services.

The **Employ Florida** logo design was chosen because of its strong call to action as well as the use of icons that represent the diversity of businesses in Florida. The name also resonates with other existing Florida brands such as Visit Florida, Enterprise Florida and Workforce Florida.



One-Stops throughout the state are already displaying **Employ Florida** decals on their doors and windows. Several regions will be adding the logo to their One-Stop street signage this fall.

Statewide marketing began in mid-August with thirteen weeks of in-cinema advertising in Florida's major media markets and seven weeks of radio spots aired in all 67 counties. Print ads are appearing in several Florida Trend publications. A simple portal website, www.employflorida.net and the toll-free number 1-866-FLA-2345, will be the initial tools to link customers to Florida's workforce services and resources. ■



Groomed for Success . . .

Cory Comstock is seventeen years of age and lives with his parents in West Palm Beach. Cory has already started on the road to a rewarding career—the on-ramp to that road was provided by the Juvenile Offender Re-Entry Project (JORP) funded by Workforce Florida's First Jobs/First Wages Council.

Upon his release from Avon Park Youth Academy, a residential and educational program for juvenile offenders, Cory returned to high school but had problems with poor attendance. The JORP referred Cory to Gulfstream Goodwill for a vocational assessment. His assessment indicated poor basic skills and he was given a *Reading-Free Vocational Interest Inventory*. Cory's highest vocational interests are horticulture, animal care, building trades, and housekeeping.

In May, the JORP developed a partnership with the Agricultural Training Center, a new nonprofit organization that provides education, training and employment to those interested in the fields of equine management and horticulture. Cory seemed to be a good candidate for the center's Basic Equine Management Training program and was referred for an orientation. Cory was accepted

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into the training program, completed it, and passed the competency based test with flying colors. His hard work and ability earned him a position working as a groom at a nearby stable.

In this position, Cory went to a competition in Gladstone New Jersey, where he was able to see for himself that opportunities for travel and high paying jobs are available and realistic for hard working individuals. He had a wonderful experience in Gladstone, met numerous people and was readily accepted by the equestrian community there. ■

To his career counselor, Cory writes:

"Thank you for helping me with my life. I appreciate everything you did. I really enjoy the job working with horses. Thanks for helping me get that job..."

SPECIAL FEATURE:**Workforce Florida's Council Project Highlights**

The Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 directed the Workforce Florida board to create three state-level councils—**High Skills/High Wages, Better Jobs/Better Wages, First Jobs/First Wages**—to strategically address Florida's workforce issues. In addition to making policy recommendations to the board, these councils also fund innovative projects aimed at increasing the competitiveness of both Florida's workforce and businesses.

During fiscal year 2002-03 Workforce Florida committed over \$27.8 million to council training initiatives in key targeted industries and critical shortage areas. This investment will result in over 33,000 workers being trained. An additional \$154 million was leveraged for these initiatives from both private and public sector sources. Highlights are provided below.

The **High Skills/High Wages** (HS/HW) council seeks to develop a more skilled workforce by aligning education and training programs with higher-paying, high-demand jobs that advance careers and build a more skilled workforce, and to partner with economic development to enhance the state's efforts to attract, grow and expand job-creating businesses.

This year the *Skills Upgrade Training* project focused on skills upgrade training in industries targeted by Enterprise Florida (manufacturing, finance/insurance services, wholesale trade, information technology, and ad-

ministrative/support management, professional/scientific/technical services). The project promoted coordination among industry consortiums, multi-employer consortiums, business associations, economic development organizations, chambers of commerce and regional workforce boards. The council also targeted dislocated workers, particularly those with bachelors' degrees, to transition to teaching careers (emphasis in math/science) through the *Teacher Training Initiative for Dislocated Workers*. Funding was also provided to regional workforce boards supporting the establishment and continued utilization of an *Employed Worker Training* (EWT) program as specified in their five-year plan modifications. Additional funds will be competitively provided to the regions for EWT for the current fiscal year.

Workforce Florida's two employer-specific training programs—the *Quick Response Training* (QRT) and *Incumbent Worker Training* (IWT) fall under the oversight of the High Skills/High Wages Council. This fiscal year QRT funded employer-specific training for 9,382 workers for 11 new and 28 expanding Florida companies creating new high skill/high wage jobs in targeted industries. The IWT program provided grant funds to assist 142 Florida businesses with skills upgrade training for 11,851 incumbent workers to help the companies and workers remain competi-

In the current fiscal year, the HS/HW council is targeting *BioTech Industry Training* via competitive funding to conduct focus groups, perform needs assessment, design, develop and deliver a modular, short-term, web-based, interactive training program designed and validated by the industry.

The **Better Jobs/Better Wages** (BJ/BW) council assists families transitioning from welfare to work and former welfare recipients working in low-wage jobs with limited mobility, and the larger population of under-employed adults. Higher skills lead to higher income and movement toward self-sufficiency.

In FY02-03 the council used the *Career Advancement & Retention Challenge II* (CARC II) to fund innovative employed worker training programs that targeted career advancement and retention for current and former TANF recipients and TANF eligible families at risk of welfare dependency. The council's *Step-Up Training Challenge III* assisted targeted populations to obtain or enhance work skills leading to career placement, advancement and retention. The BJ/BW council is funding new CARC III projects in the current fiscal year.

The **First Jobs/First Wages** council promotes successful entry into the workforce through education and job experience. Its focus includes initiatives that enlist business and community sup-

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IN THE NEWS

Workforce Florida President Testifies Before Congress

“The first priority is the consolidation of workforce funding streams.”

*Curtis Austin, President
Workforce Florida*

Curtis Austin, President of Workforce Florida, was invited to provide testimony to the Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Safety & Training on June 18, 2003. Austin credited the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) with assisting the state's advancement in workforce services to both workers and employers and characterized the reauthorization of WIA as an opportunity to “fine-tune” the workforce system. Following are highlights of his comments to the sub-committee on WIA reauthorization.

More Flexibility

“September 11, 2001 demonstrated how conditions can quickly change from a situation in some localities of near full-employment, with a desperate need for additional workers, to one of significant layoffs. Priority services and priority programs may change over-night,” stated Austin. “The ability to invest public resources in labor market exchange, training dislocated workers, retraining incumbent workers, or assisting disadvantaged adults to the next career level should be only one factor to influence workforce activities. Labor market conditions in a given area should be the other factor. Today, changes occur quickly and must be responded to quickly.”

Austin urged the sub-committee to support proposals that would give states additional flexibility with regard to state board composition and gubernatorial leadership in program administration. Examples cited included streamlining state boards, strengthening state authority to change local area designations, and proposals for funding one-stop infrastructure by all mandated one-stop partners.

Workforce Investment is Economic Development

Noting that Florida has taken the increased freedom granted under WIA to begin an outreach to business, Austin stated “Focusing on providing credentialed, skilled workers—no matter what funding streams were used in obtaining that preparation—has been essential to Florida's success.” For FY 02/03 Workforce Florida committed over \$27.8 million in the state's WIA discretionary funds alone to special training initiatives in key targeted industries and critical shortage areas. Leveraging an additional \$154 million from both private and public sector sources for this effort, over 33,000 workers are being trained.

Focus on Outcomes

Austin urged the sub-committee to consider consolidated performance measures that document how well states have used their funds to answer the following questions: After all we have done, did the person get a job?; How valuable are the skills that person has acquired in the market place?; Have they been able to retain their employment?; and, How much is this costing us? A copy of Florida's results for three years of tracking these measures was provided to the members. ■

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port to ensure that students have the educational and occupational skills required to succeed in the workforce and also addresses adults entering the workforce for the first time and youth programs related to welfare reform. *Skills Training for Youth* provided training and job experiences (mentoring, tutoring, internships, placement) to youth that will provide them skills to enter, retain or advance their employment opportunities, particularly in high growth sectors and critical job shortage areas. The council's *Youthful Offender Re-Entry Grant II* helped youthful offenders released from DJJ supervision obtain OJT, mentoring, and job placements with employers (see the Cory Comstock story on page 1). In the current year the FJ/FW Council is funding more *Skills Training for Youth* projects as well as *Education: The Pathway to Independence* projects for activities that support drop-out prevention /retrieval programs requiring training in reading, math, workforce attitudes as well as four additional intervention strategies. ■

WORKFORCE FLORIDA BOARD & RELATED MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER 17, 2003

Executive Committee and
Council/Committee Chairs Teleconference

OCTOBER 15, 2003

Executive Committee and
Council/Committee Chairs Teleconference

NOVEMBER 19, 2003

Partners' Meeting (RWB Executive Directors)
Orlando, Embassy Suites, Downtown

NOVEMBER 20, 2003

Board of Directors and Committee Meetings
Orlando, Embassy Suites, Downtown

WORKFORCE 2003 October 6-9, Orlando

Florida's WORKFORCE 2003 is the 4th annual workforce summit hosted by Dynamic Works Institute. This is THE annual event that puts workforce professionals in touch with what's working in Florida, a national workforce development leader. Speakers include Emily Stover DeRocco, Assistant Secretary of USDOL Employment and Training and Lt. Governor Toni Jennings. To register or obtain more information log onto:

www.dynamicinstitute.com

Florida's Performance Comes a Long Way in a Short Time

Workforce Florida has conducted a preliminary longitudinal analysis of the performance of the workforce system since the reorganization mandated by the Workforce Innovation Act of 2000. A quick snapshot of the highlights shows that:

- ◆ Market share continues to climb for both employees and employers—the number of “new hires” in Florida that received services from one of Florida's One-Stop centers jumped from 8% in 2000 to over 23% in 2003. The number of employers who hired over that same period and received services from a One-Stop center increased from 11% in 2000 to almost 26% in 2003.

- ◆ More jobseekers that access Florida's workforce services are getting jobs—39% in 2003 as compared with not quite 33% in 2000.

- ◆ Customer satisfaction continues to climb for employers—2003 surveys yielded a score of 78.34 by employers who received workforce services—up from a score of 68.69 in 2001, the first survey year. Customer Satisfaction scores are composite scores provided by the American Customer Satisfaction Index. The index scaled from 0 to 100 allows comparison between the private and public sectors. The composite federal government score was 71 for 2001.

For more information on the performance of Florida's workforce system view the “Red and Green” reports at www.workforceflorida.com. ■



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