

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Minutes of August 29, 2000

Chair Karen McGee called the Council to order at 1:00 p.m.

Consent Agenda – Lupe Wissel moved, and Dave Whaley seconded, to approve the consent agenda, including the minutes from the April 27 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

NGA Conference Review – Chair McGee reported on the National Association of State Workforce Board Chairs Summer Meeting, held Sunday through Tuesday morning preceding the Council Meeting. She cited the following:

- It is critical to have business buy-in to the workforce development system in order to be successful.
- The issue of local workforce investment boards and/or their staff delivering services is an issue in other states. The Council's policy is consistent with the approach being taken by other states.
- Marketing and awareness of the workforce development system is a big issue.
- The issues and challenges in economic development, education, and workforce are all closely linked.
- Workforce programs don't stand alone. There is a need to coordinate and leverage among the programs.
- Performance measures continue to be an issue nationwide.
- Dropout rates, particular those of Hispanics, Native Americans, and African Americans, are a concern. Youth are our future workforce, and we need to be paying attention to this issue.

This conference was a great opportunity to showcase Idaho initiatives and acquaint other states with what we are doing.

Update on Information Technology Initiatives – Pam Ahrens, Director of the Department of Administration, reported on technology initiatives in Idaho. She stated Governor Kempthorne expects all state agencies to work together, and discussed what the state is doing in deploying IT solutions. The size of the Internet doubles every 100 days. The Internet economy is changing everything...shopping, vacationing, job seeking, banking, news reporting, entertainment, education...why not Government? She cited the following quote: "In today's New Economy a state's most valuable real estate is its Home Page". She described some of Idaho's initiatives, including several to make government services more accessible to customers electronically. She indicated one of the biggest challenges is infrastructure in rural Idaho. A second challenge is recruiting and retaining a quality workforce in the public sector. At the state level, 90% of states describe the IT worker shortage as either "chronic" or "regular".

Entrepreneurial Initiative – Gary Mahn, Director of the Department of Commerce, reported on the state’s Entrepreneurial Initiative. Idaho has been very fortunate to have enjoyed a 13-year period of economic expansion – exports are up 41% during the last 10 years, personal income is up, business startups have increased. Many of the good things that are happening are driven by the workforce. However, we have pockets of real problems in the state. One solution to address these problems is to embrace entrepreneurship - the willingness to take risks and seek opportunity - in the public as well as the private sector. Through a foundation grant, a team of 15 individuals from the private and public sectors is participating in an NGA policy academy to learn how to become a better nurturing ground for entrepreneurship.

Jobs for America’s Graduates Implementation in Idaho – Mike Rush, State Administrator, Division of Professional-Technical Education, provided an update on JAG implementation. At its April meeting, the Council passed a motion to advise the Governor that the Council supports the JAG program in concept. The Governor’s office called together a group of Council members and other interested parties to further explore the possibility of piloting JAG in Idaho. A “Request for Information” to solicit pilot applications has been drafted and is in the final review stage. The RFI is scheduled to be released to school districts, postsecondary institutions, and state agencies on September 8. Applications are due to be returned by October 13. Selection of pilot sites is scheduled for October 30, with full implementation to begin January 2, 2001. The RFI targets the Senior Year application and the Out of School Drop Out Recovery application. TANF funding from the Department of Labor’s TANF grant to serve youth will be used to fund 2-4 pilots. Contracts will be administered through the Division of Professional-Technical Education. The Workforce Development Council will serve as the State Advisory Board. The local *IdahoWorks* Boards will serve as the local Advisory Boards. At this point everything is looking very positive for operating JAG pilots in Idaho during 2001. Mike emphasized this has been a collaborative effort between the Department of Labor, Health and Welfare, Department of Education, Division of Professional-Technical Education, and Department of Juvenile Corrections, led by the Council and the Governor’s office.

Review of Three Grant Applications (Executive Committee Minutes, July 27, 2000) – Chair McGee reported on the Executive Committee conference call, the purpose of which was to review three proposals (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Idaho Employment Initiative; Department of Health and Welfare – Medicaid Buy In; Employment Development Corporation). The proposers had asked for letters of support from the Governor, who was seeking recommendations from the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee recommended to the Governor that he provide letters of support for all three proposals. They also expressed the desire that the grants, if funded, work closely with the *IdahoWorks* system and with the Workforce Development Council.

Update from Governor’s Task Force on Rural Development – Gary Mahn reported that the 65 members of the Governor’s Task Force on Rural Development have held three meetings in March, April, and May, to identify issues affecting rural Idaho and make recommendations for rural development. The group has concentrated on areas of local leadership, telecommunications, education and workforce, infrastructure and economic

development. The task force is working to finalize its recommendations and deliver a report to the Governor in early September.

Update on Workforce Development Training Fund – Gary Mahn and Roger Madsen reported the fund has served 43 businesses, creating 6,983 new jobs, at an average wage of \$10.72 plus benefits, and an average training cost per employee of \$1,254. There are 17 contracts pending finalization. Both Directors believe the fund is an effective tool in attracting business to Idaho, and assisting existing business to expand. The Fund is scheduled to sunset next year. A bill will be introduced in the 2001 Legislature to extend the fund for an additional five years.

Update on WIA Implementation and One Stop – Pat Debban, Idaho Department of Labor, provided an update on WIA and One Stop implementation. Idaho submitted our State plan to USDOL on April 1. The plan was one of 28 in the nation approved as being in compliance and substantially ready to implement WIA on July 1. This is due in no small part to the Council's diligence in deliberating and establishing the state policies and framework necessary for development of a quality plan. We successfully negotiated performance levels with USDOL. The eligible provider list for WIA training has been initially developed, and we continue to work with the local areas to add to the list. Our automated Management Information and Financial Information systems came online July 1, and we were one of only a few states with entirely new WIA automated systems who succeeded in bringing those systems online July 1. There are many enhancements to these systems underway, as well as many planned for the future. Over 200 staff from across the state received training in June. A new *IdahoWorks* website has been created, which includes Council announcements and materials, as well as other system information. We have enrolled 1888 participants to date, which includes carryin participants from JTPA:

- o 548 Adults (35 exited)
- o 846 Dislocated Works (80 exited)
- o 494 Youth (13 exited)

The newest and most exciting undertaking is the deployment of thirty *IdahoWorks* kiosks, which were demonstrated at the Governor's reception the previous evening.

Update on Performance Measures (Transmittal # 1) – Larry Hertling, Department of Labor, described the process for negotiating WIA's 17 core performance measures with US Department of Labor. Each of Idaho's six local areas has agreed to meet these performance levels. These will be used for issuing incentives or sanctions based on State and local performance.

Process for Award of WIA Continuous Improvement Funds (Transmittal # 2) – Larry Hertling presented a proposal for awarding the \$60,000 set aside by the Council as continuous improvement initiative funds. For the first year of WIA, the funds will be utilized to emphasize the importance of incorporating customer feedback into service delivery improvements. Each local *IdahoWorks* Board is eligible to receive \$10,000

contingent upon submitting evidence to the Council of successfully implementing this activity into their WIA service delivery. Local proposals will be brought to the Council at its next meeting. **Emma Gebo moved, and Steve Ahrens seconded, approval of the proposal. The Council voted unanimously to approve the proposal.**

IdahoWorks Marketing Initiative Update – Dwight Johnson, Idaho Department of Labor, provided information on the *IdahoWorks* marketing initiative. He provided copies of brochures being utilized in the initiative, and discussed the radio and television “Dream Job” campaign that will air in the Spring. He demonstrated the new *IdahoWorks* website, www.idahoworks.org.

TANF/CHIP Update – Karl Kurtz, Director of the Department of Health and Welfare, provided an update on TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TAFI in Idaho) and CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program). Idaho is a top performing state in terms of caseload reduction, ranking second among the states in reduction of caseload since 1993. Idaho ranks first among the states in percentage of caseload reduction since the start of the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in 1996, with a 64.2% caseload reduction compared to the national average of 50.2%. DHW has conducted its fourth in a series of surveys to assess the well being of former AFDC and TAFI recipients. Some key results of the survey include:

- 54% (AFDC) / 57% (TAFI) respondents are currently employed, working an average of 37 hours per week, and earning an average of \$260 (AFDC) / \$241 (TAFI) per week.
- 47% (AFDC) / 53% (TAFI) have someone other than a spouse or partners taking care of their children outside of school. Of those,
 - 85% (AFDC) / 93% (TAFI) get help from the Idaho Child Care Program to pay child care costs;
 - 61% (AFDC) / 58% (TAFI) have had no difficulties in finding adequate child care; and
 - 95% (AFDC) / 94% (TAFI) are at least somewhat satisfied with their child care arrangements.
- 54% (AFDC) / 49% (TAFI) say their overall quality of life is at least somewhat better after leaving cash assistance.
- 76% (AFDC) / 74% (TAFI) think that it is at least somewhat unlikely they will need cash assistance within the next 6 months.

Other areas of the survey address housing, food, child support, and health care.

Director Kurtz also provided information on successful partnerships between TANF and other workforce agencies and programs, including Department of Labor, Department of Education/Adult Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Idaho Commission on Aging, and Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. These partnerships have used TAFI funds to collaborate between agencies to help promote and protect the economic, mental, and physical health and safety of Idahoans.

Director Kurtz also reported on CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) outreach and enrollment. In the fall of 1999 the Department undertook a major initiative to enroll Medicaid-eligible children. Enrollment processes were substantially redesigned to streamline and simplify the process, including reducing the application from 17 to 4 pages. Television, newspaper and radio advertising was done throughout the state. Outreach was coordinated with other community groups. A goal was set to enroll 8,000 children each year for the next four years. In fact, more than 16,000 children were enrolled during the first year. In July, the total number of children covered was 72,608. The impressive results demonstrate Idaho's commitment to developing successful planned and collaborative approaches to addressing the problem of Idaho's uninsured children.

Report on National Transition Alliance for Youth with Disabilities Conference – Ruth Rathbun reported on the May conference she attended. A focus of the conference was sustaining successful school-to-work practices and principles for all youth. Several states were profiled. Key elements for success include leadership, partnership, and alignment. The Idaho team attending the conference developed a possible plan of action for Idaho.

Update on Workplace Competencies (Transmittal # 3) – Mike Rush expressed appreciation for the support from partners in the workforce development system. As the entity charged with the responsibility for coordinating the professional-technical education piece of that system, they see their role as one of coordinating, facilitating, bringing together, obtaining, leveraging and focusing resources so that the schools and institutions can meet the professional-technical needs in their communities.

Efforts of the Division have focused in the following four areas:

1. Providing new ways to organize professional-technical curricula. This has been done primarily through career pathways.
2. Supporting effective career guidance.
3. Revamping curricula.
 - Developing a guide for workplace basics.
 - Supporting new curricular organization strategies such as the IPSI software which allows the curricula to be broken down and then reconstituted to expand technical offerings with recreating complete new programs.
 - Developing a facilities manual for technical programs.
 - Facilitating industry partnerships and certifications in a variety of areas to improve and expand programs.
 - Convening industry technical committees to develop curricula.
4. Increasing capacity.
 - Obtaining increased support for basic programs.
 - Developing professional-technical schools.
 - Facilitating increased collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education.
 - Creating new types of programs such as Individualized Occupational Training and Web-based programs.

- Melding and focusing multiple sources of funds and initiatives and infrastructures to address particular educational needs, such as the Information Technology initiative.

Idaho has received national recognition in its efforts to improve and expand professional-technical education.

Exiting Standards – Chair McGee discussed exiting or “achievement” standards. Standards for reading, writing, and math have been given approval by the Legislature. The difficult part is finding assessment instruments. An individual is being hired to coordinate development of the assessment. We will be taking best practices from other states. Businesses want to be a part of this effort, and workforce development is a big part of what is being considered. Chair McGee will keep the Council informed as this unfolds.

New Business –

- Barry Thompson, Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, advised the Council of a satellite broadcast September 27, 11:00 – 12:00 noon, on National Partnerships for Reinventing Government.
- Coleen Erickson advised the Council that PacifiCorp has merged with Scottish Power, and they will have open learning centers throughout their organizations. These will allow self-directed training using computers for employees and their families. This training includes “soft skills” such as time management, as well as technical skills such as Microsoft Office. Coleen is an advisor for this effort.
- Chair McGee reiterated how pleased she is with what is happening in workforce development in Idaho.
- No date was selected for the next Council meeting. Depending upon the business to come before it, the Chair may call a meeting in November or December. There will be a meeting in March.

Attendance:

Workforce Development Council
August 29, 2000

Council Members:

Steve Ahrens
Jerry Beck
Mark Briggs
Richard Cortez (absent)
Coleen Erickson
Mike Rush for Greg Fitch
Millie Flandro
Emma Gebo
Marilyn Howard
Karl Kurtz
Roger Madsen
Gary Mahn
Karen McGee
"RD" Palmer (absent)
Ruth Rathbun
Charles Ruch
Shirley Silver
Shirley Stensgar
Rhett Van Paepeghem (absent)
Dave Whaley
Lupe Wissel

Guests:

Melinda Adams
Pam Ahrens
Linda Beene, AR
Melanie Blakney
Larry Barnhardt
Mike Brauser
Terry Butikofer
Kim Chesnovar
Pat Debban
Jim Deffenbaugh
Jay Engstrom
Myla Florence, NV
David Gish
Sam Greer
Larry Hertling
Dwight Johnson
Pamela Langley
LaDonna Larson
Toni Maxwell
Candy McElfresh
Archie McGregor
Sue Payne
Bob Perky
Christine Pisani
Judie Rowbury
Jack Shaver
Tana Shillingstad
Ann Stephens
Rachel Stocking
Alice Taylor
Allan Taylor
Jannett Taylor
Barry Thompson
Chris Thompson, NGA WN