

# **Congressional Connection Newsletter Content**

## **Spring 2014 - March, April, May**

### **CRWC**

#### **District 3**

#### **Congressman Tipton**

#### **RR/ME/WE/SW/PB**

#### **Pueblo**

Pueblo Workforce Center hosted a hiring Event for Vonage this Spring. Representatives from the company met with job seekers and were extremely happy with the event. A sales manager and seven full-time sales staff were hired. After these new employees are trained and the launch is complete, Vonage plans on hiring additional part-time staff.

The Pueblo Workforce Center facilities were used for “Family Dollar Manager Training”. There were more than 20 managers in the training and they traveled here from Pueblo West, Colorado City, and all the towns as far as the Kansas border. Business Services staff made presentations to these managers about the services available to them as employers.

The Pueblo Workforce Region launched a new workshop series called Keys to Success. The workshop works very well for both youth and adults in helping them understand what skills they have, how to identify employers looking for their skills, what they are willing to pay, and how to address skill gaps. Customers leave the workshop with a detailed job search plan, in-depth knowledge of job search techniques, master application, and resume. The workshops have been well received by the customers.

The Pueblo Youth Employment Council approved joining the City-County Health Department in a community-wide initiative called the Community Health Improvement Plan. The council identified and committed to several goals for the balance of the calendar year. The goals have been base-lined and will be measured and reported on for impact to the overarching goal of promoting positive teen behaviors in the community.

Business Services staff in the Pueblo region worked to convene and develop a new Health care group for the Sector summit. The staff invited community businesses, and College representatives to discuss and move forward on working on the Sector. Several representatives attended the SECTOR Summit II held in Denver in May, including four Pueblo staff, Community partners and private businesses from the Healthcare sector. Plans are to launch this new sector initiative fall 2014. A Business administrative assistant sector was identified as another area to explore for a new initiative. The Pueblo Workforce Center was recognized at the May SECTOR Summit for their leadership and work in the manufacturing sector.

On March 27, a customer visited the Pueblo Workforce Center looking for work as she had just relocated from Georgia. In reviewing her work history the staff member noted she had worked at Bennie's Red Barn. Since this is not a local place, but does have a unique name, he recalled waiting on another

customer who had worked there. He commented to her that he had heard of the place a few weeks ago from someone else who had worked there. She said, "That is my son. He told me you had got him a job and he loves it. He told me to go to the Workforce Center and see my friend, John." In addition to giving him a referral to the job, the staff coached him on going to the employer when the business would not be overly busy, encouraged him to dress appropriately in the manner he would expect to go to work, and to have a positive, can-do attitude. It is great to come to work and provide customer service in such a manner that our customers appreciate the service, but more importantly remember the experience. This is one of those fulfilling situations that make our jobs very satisfying.

### **Rural Resort**

The Summit High School Job & Activity & Resource Fair was held at the Summit High School commons area for all 720 registered students, 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade in March. The youth fair was held in conjunction with the workforce center, Town of Frisco, Summit High School principal, and the Summit County Youth Recreational Roundtable Committee. There were 15 exhibitors, 9 employers and 6 education or volunteer representatives. Workforce staffs sent flyers to the students, and also recruited employers and exhibitors, and helped with set up, break down, and clean up. A Virtual Job Fair was held in conjunction and a total of 20 students registered for the Governor's Summer Job Hunt program at the event. Staff were also invited to attend the Parent-Teacher conferences to provide information about the program services and information regarding Governor's Summer Job Hunt, Workforce Investment Act for Youth, and other job hunting and resume preparation information to approximately 12 students and parents.

Edwards workforce staff attended the Eagle County Career and Job Fair held at the Battle Mountain High School also in March. Workforce partnered with Eagle County School District, Vail Valley Partnership and Vail Rotary to present the event and participated as an exhibitor. Workforce staff sent messages to 224 area employers to help recruit for the event. Two of those employers responded and attended the event. Approximately 200 students, parents, and others attended the event. Frisco youth staff created and presented to 23 students of the SOS Outreach Program in Gypsum, CO. Staff created a workshop that gave information on building resumes, completing applications, and interviewing skills. Students participated in group activities and discussions.

Information was given to students about the Governor's Summer Job Hunt program, Workforce Investment Act for Youth, and other workforce services and programs at these events. Edwards staff also provided information on how to file for unemployment benefits and other information at the Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch for employees that will be affected by seasonal layoffs. Approximately 26 employees attended.

In May, Edwards staff attended and presented at the "Family Jam & Plan," a resource event for Eagle County residents and sponsored by the Eagle River Youth Coalition. Workforce staff presented information regarding the Workforce Investment Act (Youth and Adult programs), On the Job Training program, Governor's Summer Job Hunt, and youth Work Experience programs. Information was given to approximately 35 potential applicants.

Rifle staff met with New Castle head Librarian to give overview of Virtual Workforce at the Library

program and website for customers. Updated laptop, gave instructions on the little help needed for any customers scheduled for virtual case management, saved several helpful job search websites on laptop, and gave other information to Librarian. Staff also attended a Resource Fair at Hotel Jerome in Aspen that the hotel holds yearly. Workforce staff attended to assist those employees who will be part of seasonal layoffs and gave information regarding how to file for unemployment benefits, job search, and workforce services. The St Regis Hotel in Aspen was visited to provide employees who are going to be affected by seasonal layoffs, information regarding how to file for unemployment benefits, job search, and workforce services was provided to employees. Rifle workforce staff met with 13 industry leaders and school counselors at Colorado Mountain College for the Integrated Energy Program to seek input from the energy industry so the training programs will produce highly qualified technicians for the field. Workforce staff presented information on workforce programs and services which help to finance training for new workers in the industry.

Frisco workforce staff gave a presentation on KeyTrain and the Career Ready Colorado certificates to 11 students of the Colorado Mountain College GED class in Dillon. Students were registered into KeyTrain and given the instructions for the 3 preparation assessments for the Career Ready certificates. The students also completed workforce registration forms and will be registered in Connecting Colorado. In May, staff partnered with the college to hold the Summit County Summer Job Fair at the Breckenridge campus. All staff worked on recruiting employers and 27 employers were present at the event. Flyers were made for job seeker recruitment and posted throughout the community at libraries, coffee shops, and other locations. A public service announcement was done by the newspapers as well as an ad regarding the event. There were 124 job seekers that attended, many of which were new workforce registrations.

Frisco youth staff met with students of the Eagle County High School business class to prepare them to take Career Ready Colorado assessments in March. This group meeting is ongoing to help prepare the students for the assessments which are required by the class at the end of the year. Nineteen students have completed the KeyTrain assessments in Reading, Math, and Locating Information. Workforce staff discussed those assessments and instructed them in how to interpret the completed trainings and access the tutorials in order to do well for the Career Ready certificates. Several other students were registered into KeyTrain to start their Career Skills training at this meeting.

Glenwood Springs workforce staff provided information regarding how to file for unemployment benefits and other information to employees of the Westin Hotel and Wildwood Inn in Snowmass Village who will be affected by seasonal layoffs. Staff spoke with approximately 15 employees who wanted information regarding unemployment questions. Staff also held a monthly presentation at Garfield County Jail for inmates that are nearing release dates. Colorado Mountain College and Workforce partnered to give information on services. Workforce staff gave information on all programs and services offered by the workforce, including information on Tax Credits and Federal Bonding. They also receive information on gathering work history, creating a functional resume, interview techniques, how to do on-line applications and referrals to supportive services. Questions about local job market, unemployment, Career Ready Colorado certificate assessments are also answered. This session was

attended in March by 20 male and female inmates and in May by 15 inmates. Staff attended the 25th anniversary celebration for Gateway Wo/Men in Transition, a collaboration of Garfield County Human Services, Colorado Mountain College and other community non-profits. Workforce representatives are on the board of the program and provide such services as Career Ready Colorado certificates and information and referrals to the Workforce Investment Act for single parents who are trying to complete, or gain, their education.

Leadville staff held a Career Skills Workshop at Lake County High School in March. This project involves sophomore students who are part of the Internship Program of the school. Ten students completed KeyTrain Career Skills tutorials, attended presentations on Writing a Resume and Interviewing Skills and participated in other activities designed to build work readiness skills. Workforce staff created the workshop, presented to the class and issued certificates of completion of the KeyTrain assessments to the 10 students. In May, the staff again partnered with Lake County High School Multi Occupational/Job Readiness instructor to present information to 17 students regarding resumes, applications, and interviewing skills. Students prepare their resumes and applications and then “mock” interviews are held for a variety of positions. The instructor and workforce representative grade the students on appearance, body language, communication skills, and other interviewing techniques. The scoring adds to their final grade for the class.

Workforce Center staff in Leadville partnered with the Leadville/Lake Chamber of Commerce and Lake County Economic Development office to hold a job fair in May. The event was held at the National Mining Hall of Fame Conference Center. Workforce staff coordinated the event by securing the venue and recruiting both employers and job seekers, and posted flyers announcing the event in several locations of the community. The Chamber and Economic Development sponsored newspaper ads and email blasts. Twelve employers attended the event, including several who came from Silverthorne/Breckenridge area to recruit summer seasonal resort workers. Messages were sent to approximately 660 registered job seekers in the Leadville area. There were 45 job seekers in attendance.

Workforce Investment Act case managers met with Eagle, Garfield, and Pitkin County Human Services, Center for Independence, Colorado Mountain College and Colorado Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to present information on various assistance programs available in the tri-county area. All the agencies have an employment focus and can work together to provide services to meet the goals. The meeting took place in El Jebel in March. Workforce representatives gave information regarding Workforce Investment Act for Adults and Youth and other basic services that the workforce centers can provide. Other agencies and providers gave information regarding their programs. This is an ongoing collaborative effort by all supportive service agencies to let each other know of assistance available within our communities and to provide referrals to various agencies. There were approximately 50 attendees at the meeting which was recorded and aired on the local television channel in Aspen.

### **Western**

The Region 10 Economic Development Meeting was held in Delta. The meeting brought representatives from Delta and Gunnison counties together to discuss the recent mine layoffs and the economic impact.

Representatives from the federal Economic Development Agency (EDA), local economic development, workforce and state representatives to discuss possible steps to help Delta and Gunnison counties recover from recent mine layoffs. The group decided to pursue an EDA grant that would fund an in-depth economic feasibility study and action plans for area. The Western Region has developed strong relationships with economic development partners in the region to help workforce center customers and local communities. The Workforce Center will be an active participant in local economic planning efforts including being a part of the Comprehensive Economic Development planning and the Delta/Gunnison County Economic grant writing team.

The Montrose Workforce Center co-sponsored the Teen Opportunity Expo in March at Montrose High School. Over 150 students from area schools attended the expo and participated in career exploration and employment activities. The Expo was organized by local high school students who recruited area employers and organization. The Workforce Center also provided individual instruction on how to apply for work and how to interview for jobs.

The Advanced Manufacturing Sector Launch was convened by Montrose Economic Development Corporation and local manufactures. The Western region Director and staff attended the organizational and initial launching of the sector. Representatives from the advanced manufacturing sector discussed common issues. The Montrose Workforce Center will be involved in future advanced manufacturing partnership meetings. The advanced manufacturing group was made up of businesses within the 6 county region. The launch is the second sector partnership to be launched in the region within the last year.

A Delta Montrose Technical College Career Fair was held in March. The Colorado Workforce Center was a co-sponsor of the event. The career fair brought area schools together to explore possible career paths and also to talk to area employers. Workforce Center staff assisted students with information on how to apply for jobs, how to access ConnectingColorado and how to interview for possible job opportunities. Other events include the Montrose Virtual Job Fair – Migrant Head Start Program.

The Fatherhood Grant with Montrose Health and Human Services in the Western region was recognized as a best practice. The project is modeled after the Hire Colorado and places fathers in internships with local employers. The project is in the final year of a three year grant cycle with a possible extension for one additional year pending.

The Western Workforce Board listened to local issues in the timber industry and took a tour of the Montrose Forest Products mill which is the largest finished lumber mill in the state of Colorado and is facing a shortage of trees available for purchase. A new owner is automating the mill to make it more efficient and profitable.

Once a month members of Senator Bennet's Durango Office hold a meeting at the local Veteran of Foreign Wars (VFW), staff attends these meetings to acquire new information from the state level to share with veterans when visiting the Workforce Centers in the Southwest.

The Western Region Workforce Centers are in support of Adult Basic Education ( ABE) providers who were recently notified that their state funding had been eliminated. As a result many are scrambling to

find other funding sources so they can continue to provide adult basic education services locally. The Workforce Center has worked closely with area ABE providers in helping individuals develop the necessary basic academic skills to compete in today's job market. The reduction or elimination of Adult Basic Education Funding will have an impact locally in providing academic instruction and remediation locally. The Western Region will be working with our ABE partners to explore ways to replace state funding.

The Western Region Sector Partnership core team was recognized for their efforts during the Colorado Sector Summit II conference. The region has launched two sector partnerships during the last year and is planning on launching an additional partnership this fall.

### **Southwest**

Over 80 people attended the four hour Cortez Workforce Center's sixth annual job-a-thon and job fair. One of the four employers with a table at the fair tested thirteen people and hired three of the thirteen. The other employers stated they were very happy with the applicants that came to their table and they expect to hire from those. The radio announcer stated there was very good interaction with the public, both job seekers and employers, and he looks forward to holding the event next year.

The Durango Workforce Center co-hosted a job fair with the Durango Herald. Twenty-nine employers set up booths and over 300 people attended. The workforce center staff had three laptops and a printer setup to assist job seekers with registering in Connecting Colorado and with preparing or revising their resumes. Many resumes were tailored for the open positions employers at the job fair had available. Labor market information was given that showed the supply and demand for furthering an education and how to select an in-demand career. Job search books gave excellent information on dos and don'ts of the interview process including the hard to answer questions. First time job fair attendees received an explanation on how the job fair works.

In partnerships with the Southwest Open High School, Cortez Workforce Center staff has held and will continue to hold a workshop on most Monday's until the Cortez schools are dismissed for the year. The schools bring over 3-5 seniors to register in Connecting Colorado, see the features available in Reality Check, utilize the resume software, be introduced to some of the assessment tools available at the workforce center, and receive an explanation of how Workforce Investment Act may be able to assist them with training.

Air Products is building a large helium plant in Dolores County. The Cortez Workforce Center staff invited Chamber, City, Economic Development, Housing & Schools to come to the Workforce Center to explain some of the resources that are available to Air Products in the Southwest Region.

The Southwest Workforce Board and the Workforce Development Network are focusing on growing the agriculture sector and the topic of cooperative efforts to market local food production to local consumers/customers in the five county region.

Senator Bennett's staff held a Colorado Serves Durango meeting to discuss the region's existing veteran

resources and how to address gaps in services. The newly created organization, Solute to Veterans, made great progress on getting organized and direction for creating a logo, letterhead, website, business cards, etc. The group established a marketing plan in hopes to recruit sponsorship for supporting the organization which in turn will support veterans and their families.

The Southwest Workforce Center enrolled a laid-off veteran into the UI Pilot program and is sponsoring his Drone/UAV Pilot training with the Unmanned Vehicle University. After three weeks of training & before obtaining his certificate, he was contacted by NavMar in Arizona who wants to fly him to Arizona for an interview for a position operating Drones in Afghanistan. If he is offered and accepts the position, he will be deported to Afghanistan for a year upon completing this training, earning \$475/day seven days a week. He feels he would not have had this opportunity had it not been for the Workforce Center helping him.

A Southwest Region Durango Workforce Center staff member is active in the Veterans to Veterans of Archuleta County organization, keeping the workforce center services on the agenda of each meeting. Several veterans have utilized Connecting Colorado due to this relationship. This group was recently able to collaborate to include the Pagosa Springs Hospital to be a place where veterans can go for medical assistance instead of having to go to Grand Junction, Albuquerque or further. Having local medical services available will help keep working veteran's healthy and able to work.

The 14th Annual Teen Maze event was a success in the Southwest region; this year's theme was Your Brain on Adolescence and taught students in a safe environment about consequences due to their choices, both positive and negative. 500+ students from 7 local schools participated in different scenarios by drawing a card when they entered the maze to give them their scenario such as they chose to go to a party and drive drunk therefore they were given an underage consumption ticket and a drunken driving ticket. Another card may say they chose not to do drugs, study hard, keep their grades up and stay out of trouble. The booths included such topics as violence, alcohol, drugs and bullying/diversity with support from local businesses and agencies.

#### **District 4**

#### **Congressman Gardner**

#### **SE/EA**

#### **Eastern**

The Eastern Region works very hard to develop and maintain relationships with community partners and other agencies that can provide beneficial services to our customers. This month the Elizabeth office has made some new connections as well as fine-tuned some existing connections. The region Director attended the Colorado Workforce Development Council luncheon session on Poverty in Colorado. The Eastern Region continues to build local youth councils in each of our six office areas. The Yuma, Elizabeth, Limon and Burlington offices have developed a presentation for the Burlington Youth Grant skills training component. This presentation involves members from each office and information regarding youth programs region wide. Fort Morgan staff attended the Morgan County Economic Development Corporations monthly Legislative Coffee to discuss various issues with local representative Jerry

Sonnenberg.

The Eastern Workforce Region is also working with our SECTOR convener Dan Marler from Morgan Community College to renew the Region 1 efforts to create a SECTOR partnership. The chosen SECTOR is the Energy Industry (encompassing Oil/Gas, Wind, and Utilities) and an initial meeting was held to lay the framework for this renewed effort. The meeting was attended by Jay Lee and Jason Hazlet, Northeastern Junior College; Dan Marler, Morgan Community College; John Melville and Frankie Genz, Office of Workforce Development; Emily Lesh, CDLE SECTOR Coordinator; Dawn Garcia and Dale Cecil, Eastern Workforce Region and Ken Starch, J-W Wireline, Harvey Greenwood, Select Energy. The idea of moving forward with this SECTOR was discussed, and industry challenges and issues were brought up as well as how, when, and where the group moves forward.

The Elizabeth Workforce Center staff coordinated with Sam Rothrock and Candiss Leathers, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation/Colorado AgriAbility project to assist individuals in local community with issues of aging/disabilities in agriculture and assistance available. The Workforce Center hosted an employer roundtable that featured Sam Rothrock, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor. Topics were regarding services available as well as tips on adaptive equipment. Four employers attended this event. The partners are currently working with a client to assist them with their Agricultural challenges as seniors. This client has also referred another potential client to the Colorado AgrAbility Project Program.

The Elizabeth office has also partnered with Heads Up Colorado to conduct a mini youth Fair.

The Small Business Development Corporation was able to utilize the Elizabeth office for two weeks to meet with potential small business clients.

Fort Morgan Workforce Center held its annual Job Fair. Twenty three employers attended and fifty six job seekers. The majority of employers were pleased with the quality of applicants in spite of the low turnout.

One member of the Ft Morgan staff attended the first planning meeting for Career Exploration Camp scheduled the first full week in June--meeting included Elise Gerken, Centennial BOCES; Dan Marler, MCC; Dawn Hayes, 13th Judicial Probation; Lexi Ververs, IOG Coordinator; and Jodi Strous, Centennial Mental Health. The meeting was to discuss which SECTOR venues to cover, employer visits, and partner roles and assign tasks for completion.

The new Youth Case Manager in the Fort Morgan workforce center continues to work on building stronger relationships with Morgan County Human Services, Morgan Community College (Adult Basic Education program) and Goodwill Industries work program.

Regional staff attended an Employer Roundtable hosted by the Morgan County Economic Development Office, resulting in discussion of youth services that may pair the region with the City of Fort Morgan to design an internship program for area youth. Subsequently, Staff attended and presented to the senior class of Fort Morgan High School on a summer internship program developed with the City of Fort

Morgan. They also discussed the Workforce Investment Act work experience program and Governor's Summer Job Hunt. The career fair was also attended by staff where the Colorado Reality Check and Governor's Summer Job Hunt Overview was provided.

The Eastern Workforce Centers are working on a new partnership with community partners in Yuma, Logan and Morgan counties. The partnership will involve the continued development of a six week job club titled "Get to Work". The partnership involves Morgan, Yuma, Washington and Logan County Human Services.

- Get to Work will last for six weeks and cover all phases of looking for work.
- Other partners include Morgan Community College, North Eastern Junior College, Adult Basic Education from both schools, Centennial Mental Health, Centennial Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Goodwill Industries, School to Work Alliance Program and Goal Academy.
- These groups will partner to present or co-present various days of the workshop.
- All agencies will make appropriate referrals of their clients to the "Get to Work" program.
- These agencies will also work together to develop curriculum, teaching items, workshop topics and teaching methods.
- The various agencies will also track success of job seeker participants.

The Limon area is experiencing an economic boom due to another wind tower construction project. The Limon Workforce Center is involved in every aspect of this six week project. Some of the activities are:

- Job Fair for Blattner Energy assisted by staff from the Elizabeth Workforce Center and Morgan Community College.
- Laptops used to register all individuals who were not registered in ConnectingColorado.
- Thirteen students from the Northeastern Junior College Wind Tech Program interviewed and introduced to the Vestas Corporation for possible hire.
- Community partnerships were developed at the fair, local business visited and offered services, potential workers, housing rentals, etc.
- Developed relationships with new employers in the area, several job orders resulted.
- 68 people attended the Job Fair, submitted applications and were interviewed on the spot.

Burlington and Limon staff members met with Cheyenne County Health and Human Services to discuss the interagency agreement between them and Eastern Workforce Centers which will use Temporary Aide for Needy Families dollars to provide summer youth work experience opportunities in Kit Carson.

In Yuma, the Workforce Center staff participated in the "Millenials Interview" employer roundtable. The Division of Vocational rehabilitation was co-sponsor of this event.

### **Southeast**

Southeast Region staff attended a Human Resources committee meeting where information on the

CO-PEP program was presented. This program helps the non-custodial parent to obtain employment to assist with child support and help parents and co-parents have a better relationship in order to benefit their visitation rights. The committee provided attendees with some success stories and some areas where they may need to seek some assistance in the future.

In the Southeast region, there are many efforts taking place to incorporate Workforce Center services into the community. Staff in the Southeast Region has been working very closely with Chae Organics over the past few months. Chae is to the point where they had a need for some higher level positions to be filled, one being a Production Manager; Chae chose to list that position with the Workforce Center exclusively. In the month of March Chae also utilized the Workforce Investment Act and they have two individuals that they have hired that are currently taking part in on the job trainings.

In March, the 16th Annual Girls in the Middle Conference was held at Otero Junior College. Workforce Center staff on the planning committee attended the conference and assisted with various duties on the day of the conference. This was another successful Girls in the Middle Conference.

Southeast Colorado Workforce Center along with 11 other agencies provided reports. A continued request from the Workforce Center staff was made to the coalition to refer individuals to the Workforce Center if they have been long term unemployed. There is a possibility they may be eligible for the Workforce Investment Act program. The coalition's goal for the upcoming year is to contact as many migrant/seasonal farmworkers. The numbers for all agencies across the board have been going down for the last five years. This year could be the worst ever seen in the Arkansas Valley, agriculturally speaking.

Southeast Workforce Center staff attended the Otero Junior College Perkins Local Plan Committee meeting. The Local Plan Committee serves as an advisory committee to review, plan and implement Otero Junior College's Career Technical Education. The Advisory Committee is a partnership between the education system and business world, to include business owners, managers, and employees in various fields of industry in the community, or a focused industry with a variety of members.

Staff in the Southeast Region is now becoming more involved in the Valley Manufacturing Group; this group would like to have an influence on manufacturing in Colorado. The group is looking to take advantage of resources that could be utilized by manufacturing companies in the industrial park for the betterment of the industrial park in turn bettering the community.

Southeast Workforce Center staff attended Sector Summit in Denver. The Sectors Summit's purpose is to create Industry specific regional partnerships, led by business in partnership with economic development, education, and workforce development. This year's Summit focused on two things; continuing to grow and expand sector partnerships across Colorado and utilizing sector partnerships as the vehicle to develop industry-driven career pathways in Colorado.

The Southeast region had three economic development representatives in attendance, two higher education representatives, a representative from one of the largest manufacturing employers in the area and three workforce development representatives. Plans are already under way to increase membership in the Arkansas Valley Manufacturing group to include representatives from across several

counties.

Southeast Colorado Workforce Center Staff attended the monthly Salvation Army Food Bank meeting. A new system will be put in place to help out single mothers with rental/utilities assistance. This will be on a trial basis. The board has approved to assist on a six month trial basis. The concern is they may run out of monies by providing too much assistance.

Lamar Workforce Center staff attended Juniper Village's annual Ladies Luncheon. The Workforce Center Staff are creating a stronger partnership between Lamar Community College Admissions office. We want to make sure that the students are aware of opportunities of the WIA program and different services of the Workforce. Also wanting to make sure Workforce Center clients who are

Workforce Center staff traveled to the La Junta Jr./Sr. High School to meet with Gear-Up Advisors from La Junta High School. Gear-Up is a service offered to High School students to encourage them to pursue higher education after high school. The purpose of the meeting was to see how the Workforce Center can participate in the La Junta High School's Career Fair held in April. Workforce Center staff will have a booth at La Junta's Career Fair and assist by providing labor market information on careers highlighted during the Career Fair. La Junta and Rocky Ford Workforce Center staff conducted outreach and presented an orientation to students and their parents regarding the eligibility process for the 16-hour internships offered through the grant for the Youth Career Conference. Workforce Center staff provided information and assisted youth who attended the Youth Career Conference in filling out applications for the Workforce Investment Act Program who were interested in doing a 16-hour internship. Several youth and their parents attended the orientation and eligibility is being determined for WIA enrollment. In addition, the Workforce Center has been granted 5% window slots to assist some youth in obtaining 16-hour paid internships that may not have otherwise been financially eligible.

The successful Southeast Region Youth Career Conference was held at Inspiration Field in La Junta with 65 youth from local area schools attending. Professionals from various categories gave workshops about their industries regarding educational and training needs for careers in these areas. Since conclusion of the conference youth have been identified for award of internships and plans are underway to assess their interest and eligibility for a 16-hour paid internship included in the grant that funded the conference. Of these youth many will be eligible to co-enroll in the Workforce Investment Act Program and may work additional hours funded through the WIA Program.

Southeast Region staff attended an employer meeting with American Transit Works. Staff toured the building and was able to see the process from start to finish of the work that the employees do at American Transit Works. Staff spoke with the manager letting him know of the different services that could be provided through the Workforce Center.

The Trinidad Workforce Center held a Hiring Event for Expert Exteriors on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 with a total of twelve people participating. This is a company based out of Denver. The employer was pleased with the attendees, they were able to hire the employees that they needed.

The Trinidad Workforce Center held its 4th annual "Youth Rocks Trinidad Youth Fair" with employer participation from Brix, City of Trinidad, Monument Lake and Trinidad Lake State Park. The Army

recruiter was present along with Job Corp, College in Colorado, Trinidad State Junior College and Highlands University. Services provided were outlined to 33 youth with a total of 24 new registrations completed and 623 views on the Virtual Job Fair resulted as well.

The Lamar Workforce Center Office had a MSFW Program review on March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. As required by Federal Regulations 20 CFR 653.108, State agency self-monitoring, all significant offices are to be reviewed by the State Monitor Advocate office at least once each program year. It was found that the Lamar Workforce Center is in compliance.

Workforce center staff spoke with high school students at Lamar High School about the programs offered at the workforce center, employment opportunities and qualifications for funding to attend college or participate in the Work experience program. Workforce Center Staff worked with the Gear up program at the school to provide a resume workshop to the students.

Lamar Workforce Center staff attended the Partners for HOPE meeting. During this meeting it was discussed the end of the year schedule and summer schedules. The board also discussed the funding for the upcoming year. It was looking like they will get funding for a portion of their needs.

Lamar Workforce Center staff hosted Altruistic Staffing hiring event where fifteen were interviewed and hired and they will have five more individuals for reserves for the positions that do work out; hosted United States Census hiring event where four out of nine individuals were tested, interviewed, and hired for the position; and, hosted Dish Network hiring event where one out of two individuals were tested, interviewed, and hired for the position.

The following testimonials are from Workforce Investment Act participants in the Southeast region:

“The Colorado Work Force has aided me greatly in my last year of nursing school. They gave me gas vouchers to help my traveling expenses and help pay for my final semester of tuition. Workforce also paid for my NCLEX examination and registration fee. The aid given to me by workforce helped me finish my schooling and complete my nursing degree. Thanks!”

“The workforce program has been very supportive and a key factor to my success in getting my CNA certificate. If it wasn't for the workforce program I would not have been able to accomplish the things I have been able to accomplish today. Workforce staff was there for me every step of the way. Thank you so much for getting me where I am today!”

“Hello my name is Jose Ramos and I'm currently enrolled in the WIA program. This program has helped me in many ways like help paying my tuition and also helping me with my CDL. I appreciate everything that this program has provided. I am about to graduate from Trinidad state junior college with a Line-tech certificate and I own it all to this program. Thank you”

**Congressman Udall**  
**Congressman Bennet**

## **Statewide**

### **South Central**

South Central Region staff and the South Central WIB have been working on the “Soft Skills Tool Kit” for job seekers. This is designed to educate and assist job seekers with a variety of basic soft skills that employers want, and will assist job seekers with employment. This will also benefit employers by providing better qualified applicants for a job. An industry specific meeting for the Hospitality Industry was held in March. This meeting was held in order to obtain input specifically from employers about their needs within the Hospitality Industry. A small sample of job seekers will be completing assessments for soft skills to evaluate their skills.

The City of Monte Vista has requested Monte Vista Workforce Center staff to administer Provelt tests for their top four candidates for the receptionist/clerk position that was listed at the local workforce center in February, 2014. Staff will be administering the following tests: Customer Service Mindset; Data Entry; 3 minute Typing tests and Basic Office Skills.

A partnership between the Ft Garland Library and the Alamosa Workforce Center has been established. The Ft. Garland Library will be a place where services and expertise can be provided in outlying areas. This will provide important services to a population with limited resources and abilities to travel to Alamosa. With this new partnership people in these areas will be receiving more comprehensive services. Workshops will be given every first and third Wednesday at 2:00p.m., at the Ft. Garland Library. The first job readiness workshop was held in March and there were two individuals in attendance.

South Central Region staff along with Maria DeHerrera from the Conejos County Library was interviewed on the People Speaks Program on KGIW. This interview was in regards to the success of the Virtual on-line learning program and the partnership between the Alamosa Workforce Center and the library. Because of this partnership many individuals are improving their job skills or life skills through on-line learning free of charge, and through workshops given by Alamosa Workforce Center staff addressing job search, job readiness, etc. Information was also provided to listeners instructing them how they can sign up for the programs.

South Central Region staff met with staff at Community Corrections. Workforce Center services were presented to the staff of Community Corrections, at which time it was decided that Community Corrections would like for Workforce Center staff to conduct job readiness workshops every second and fourth Monday at 9:00a.m., at San Luis Valley Community Corrections. The first workshop was held in March, there were sixteen individuals in attendance.

A hiring event in the South Central region for Nestle Toll House Café, a new business in Alamosa, was held in April. There were approximately 20 individuals interviewed, with 10 jobs being filled as a result of jobs being posted with the Workforce and the hiring event.

A new partnership with Conejos County Department of Social Services has been formed, and the South Central Workforce Center is now participating in monthly TANF orientations by conducting job search

workshops, conducting mock interviews, Prove-It testing, and providing information for free classes offered through Virtual On-Line Learning. These monthly orientations are similar to what has been done with the Rio Grande County TANF program. South Central Workforce Staff showcased The Skills Tool Kit that is being developed to improve the quality of referrals to employers, and the Virtual On-Line Learning program partnership with Conejos County Library and Conejos County Commissioners.

Staff conducted job readiness classes/workshops at Alamosa High School for freshmen and sophomores. There were 23 freshmen and 61 sophomores that participated in the workshop in May.

### **Upper Arkansas**

The Cañon City Workforce Center conducted a focused hiring event for youth participants who were seeking seasonal employment. Due to the high unemployment in Fremont County, job opportunities for youth remains to be a challenge as they compete for positions with older, more qualified job seekers. Five local employers offering approximately fifty seasonal jobs to youth is expected to have a major, positive impact on youth employment in the Cañon City area. Nine youths were hired at the event with the remaining positions to be filled from event participants in the coming weeks.

The Cañon City Workforce Center partnered with the City of Cañon City Human Resources Department in a focused job fair for ten-to-twelve open seasonal positions for their Parks Department. Over sixty-five candidates were triaged, given city-provided assessments, and interviewed. Successful candidates were then tested on driving skills on a driving course. Nine finalists were identified for possible hire as a result of the activity. The Human Resources Manager commented that the successful operation of the job fair was due to the professionalism and tenacity of the Cañon City Workforce Center team members.

The Cañon City Workforce Center recently hosted high school students from the Florence School District for an office tour and a workshop detailing the array of services available to them as job seekers. One of the students inquired about whether marijuana would now be allowed in the workplace now that it is legal for both medicinal and recreational use. The workforce center team stated that although marijuana is now legal for adult consumption, employers still retain the right to prohibit it in their respective organizations and can refuse to hire or terminate individuals who test positive for marijuana usage. The high school teacher commented that recent changes in legal marijuana usage are an active topic of conversation in the schools today and more awareness is needed. Additionally, he commented that it was gratifying to partner with the workforce center in sending a unified, consistent message to the youths regarding the potential impact of marijuana use on employment.

The Upper Arkansas Regional Workforce Investment Board planned for the SECTOR summit discussing the regional labor market data and how it can be used that for making strategic decisions and also how to improve and use workforce intelligence to educate the Community to pursue careers in demand fields. The region kicked off its Health and Wellness SECTORS program by inviting several key industry partners to a meeting in Salida, CO to discuss strategies, challenges, and common goals. The region was recognized at the Sector summit in May for having the most recent sector that had kicked off, this was in Health Care.

The Upper Arkansas Region forged a partnership with a community charity, Loaves and Fishes, to help

disadvantaged and economically challenged individuals find employment. The Cañon City Workforce Center will assist clients with all workforce center services as needed.

The Salida Workforce Center of the Upper Arkansas region will be losing a key partner (Colorado Department of Vocational Rehabilitation) in June that helped cover office rental costs. This will leave one person in an office that is too large for just administering Wagner-Peyser services. Consequently, a search is on for smaller, more cost-effective office space that is suitable for job-seeking and employer customers. A suitable office was located on April 22, 2014 that is being pursued.

The Upper Arkansas Salida Workforce Center will be losing a key partner (Colorado Department of Vocational Rehabilitation) in June that helped cover office rental costs. This will leave one person in an office that is too large for administering only Wagner-Peyser services. Consequently, a smaller, more cost-effective office space that is owned by the City of Salida and is suitable for job-seeking and employer customers was located. Lease documents have been drawn up and are in the process of being presented to the Salida City Council for a city ordinance that will permit a multi-year lease between the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and the City of Salida. Final readings before the Salida City Council will occur mid-July, 2014 with a lease commencement date of August 1, 2014.

The Cañon City Workforce Center participated in the Cañon City Chamber of Commerce's Prospectors meetings to help promote Chamber activities; Penrose Chamber of Commerce's Business after Hours meeting; and the City of Cañon City's Parks Department Job Fair focused to hire ten-twelve seasonal workers for its Parks Department.

The Upper Arkansas Regional Supervisor conducted Connecting Colorado training for Department of Corrections Re-entry personnel.

### **Northwest**

While recruiting attendees for the Leadville Job Fair in the Rural Resort region, Northwest region staff tried a technique suggested at the recent Business Services Summit. An entry "ticket" was offered to attendees for the job fair. It was intended to reinforce the value of events of this nature. The "ticket" also had tips on preparedness to attend a job fair and being able to present to employers.

Approximately half of the attendees had the tickets and were also better dressed, had resumes to submit, and were better able to present to the businesses in attendance than those who had not received one. Workforce staff said the difference was entirely noticeable. Regional business services groups plan to use this idea for all of their brick and mortar job fairs in the future.

Meeker staff planned, recruited, and partnered with Pioneer's Medical Center and Meeker Chamber of Commerce to hold a job fair for the general contractor and sub-contractors of the new Medical Center on March 6, 2014. The Medical Center posted information on Facebook and in newspaper ads. Meeker Chamber of Commerce sent email blasts. Workforce staff posted flyers, sent messages to job seekers, reserved space, and set up and cleaned up the space. 5 sub-contractors were in attendance along with the general contractor. Approximately 40 local job seekers attended the event. All recruiters were

pleased with the outcome and with the services the workforce center offered for assistance. Another event is planned for April 2014.

In Granby, the workforce staff met with the principal of Middle Park High School in Granby to present information regarding an overview of workforce services and programs including the Governor's Summer Job Hunt for students, Career Fairs and Resource Fairs. Staff also introduced the KeyTrain soft skills program in hopes of establishing long term collaboration with the school and the workforce.

The staff organized, and held the Grand County Human Resources Group meeting in partnership with the C Lazy U Ranch. 10 human resources representatives and 1 county commissioner attended the meeting which is being held monthly. Discussions were held regarding how to hire qualified employees, employee housing, and the upcoming Spring Job Fair.

Staff also attended a community meeting for the new Highway 9 Colorado Department of Transportation Project which has begun and is scheduled for completion in 2017. Staff participated and offered workforce assistance and services to contractors and subcontractors involved in hiring for the 10 mile road improvement project.

The youth staff, with several members of the Grand County community are creating an upstart of the Youth Engagement group with funds available through the county and employer matching funds to assist youth with achieving soft skills, understanding business, entrepreneurship and other endeavors to assist youth when entering the labor market. A presentation was done on special programs and services offered by the workforce for youth between ages 16 to 22.

City Market held a Hiring Event at their Granby store and workforce staff coordinated with them to send messages about the event to registered job seekers. Approximately 1200 registered job seekers throughout the state received information from the workforce about the event.

Granby workforce staff presented an "Employer Expectations" workshop at Middle Park High School, detailing what to wear and personal appearance at an interview. In attendance were 1 teacher and 4 students. Staff also gave information on Colorado Reality Check. Three of the four students in attendance were referred to the Workforce Investment Act program.

Steamboat Springs workforce staff attended a planning meeting for Routt County Youth Services Coalition. The Coalition, Workforce, Steamboat Springs Youth Council, Grand Futures, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation are partnering on the Youth Career and Job Fair to be held April 16, 2014 at the Steamboat Springs High School. Workforce staff are recruiting employers for the event.