



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE WORKFORCE BOARD CHAIRS

Meeting Summary and Resources – Annual Meeting, August 14-16, 2006, Jackson Hole, Wyoming

National Association of State Workforce Board Chairs

- <http://www.subnet.nga.org/workforcecouncilchairs/>
- [Policy Position: ECW-01. Governors' Principles to Ensure Workforce Excellence Policy](#)

National Governors Association

- <http://www.nga.org>
- Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano's NGA 2006-2007 Chair's Initiative – Innovation America:
<http://www.nga.org/files/pdf/06NAPOLITANOBROCHURE.pdf>

Legislative Updates: WIA and TANF Resources

Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization

- Summary of Washington Update July 2006
<http://www.nga.org/files/pdf/06SUMWASH.pdf>
- WIA House and Senate Bills - Key Issues/Differences
<http://www.nga.org/files/pdf/06WIAISSUES.pdf>
- Letter to Congress from Governors Pawlenty (R-MN) and Gregoire (D-WA) with Recommendations for Compromise Between Senate and House WIA Bills
<http://www.nga.org/files/pdf/06WIALETTER.pdf>
- Side-by-Side Comparison of Titles I and III Key State and Local Provisions in the Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization Bills and Proposals
<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0607WIA.pdf>
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Waiver Summary Report
<http://www.nga.org/files/pdf/06SUMWAIREP.pdf>

TANF Reauthorization

- NGA Issue Brief: The Wait is Over, the Work Begins: Implementing the New TANF Legislation, June 2006 <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0606TANFLEGISLATION.PDF>
- Implementing the New TANF Legislation – Guide to Strategic Decision-Making: What Governors Need to Know <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0608GUIDEDECEISION.pdf>
- “Analysis of the New Interim Final TANF Rules,” Center for Law and Social Policy and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, June 2006
http://www.clasp.org/publications/final_tanf_rules_analysis.pdf

Annual Meeting Sessions, Related Resources and Contacts:

Monday, August 14th, 2006

Welcome to Wyoming and Setting the Context

The Honorable Governor Dave Freudenthal

After welcoming Association members to Jackson Hole, the Governor described the growing Wyoming economy as a blessing and a curse. The challenge is to provide a skilled workforce that will allow growth to continue. The persistent cuts in federal dollars for the workforce system are discouraging, but the Wyoming legislature is well-informed and that has translated into state funding for workforce programs. The Governor highlighted two programs in particular: Our Families, Our Future “Climb Wyoming for Single Mothers” program (described in detail by Ray Fleming-Dinneen) and Charlie Ware’s oil and gas industry school in Casper, an effective state response to the worker shortage of approximately 800,000 in the national oil and gas industry. Both show exemplary retention rates after training.

The Governor continued with examples of what is working in Wyoming: state government is finding ways to show different companies within the same industries where and how they can work together, even though they are competitors; funding streams have been re-structured so public teachers are paid competitive salaries; and the Hathaway Scholarship Program provides post-secondary scholarships to every student with a 2.5 GPA and a 17 on the ACT.

Statewide, however, the state still struggles to reconcile the role of community colleges as workforce training entities. The philosophical differences between educating individuals for a job or educating individuals for education’s sake are entrenched. The Governor stressed the need to jointly think about what we want from these systems, and praised the Association members for taking on the task of making sure that people get and keep good jobs.

The Governor also underlined the importance of understanding a state’s demographic profile. We must accept that the world is changing: workers are different, jobs are different, industry is different, and education and training must be different. Most of the jobs in Wyoming are in small a business, for example, which requires us to think outside of the “workforce bubble.”

Final comments included a response to the question “What keeps you up at night?” The Governor described a vision of an environment that is both structured and flexible so that state economies and workers can move forward together. He expressed concern that investment in soft- or life-skills is falling through the cracks, and that as new workers enter the labor market, the value of work is changing quickly. Upon the Governor’s departure, the members continued the discussion about soft skills. Members discussed the definition of “soft skills,” the impact on workforce training of the perceived absence of soft skills in younger generations, possible reasons for their absence, and ways to incorporate soft skill training into existing training tracks. This issue became a topic of conversation for the duration of the two-and-a-half day meeting.

New ACS Data: Demographic, Social and Economic Changes in States

- Lindsey Woolsey’s Presentation: <http://www.subnet.nga.org/center/workforce/ACS.PPT>
- American Fact Finder <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

English as a Second Language: Good for Employers, Good for Workers

Presentation by Sandra Winston, Executive Director, Arkansas Workforce Board
(sandra.winston@arkansas.gov)

- Sandra’s Presentation: <http://www.nga.org/files/ppt/06ARKEFFORTS.PPT>

- New Arkansan Resource Network brochure <http://www.nga.org/files/pdf/06ARKCENTER.PDF>

Presentation by Marva Doremus, Assistant Administrator, Tennessee Adult Education
(Marva.doremus@state.tn.us)

- Marva's Presentation: <http://www.nga.org/files/ppt/06ESOLWORK.PPT>
- Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development
<http://state.tn.us/labor-wfd/>
- ESOL in the Workplace Curriculum Guide
http://cls.coe.utk.edu/curriculum/esol_workplace.html
- Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence
www.tncpe.org

Presentation by Peter Groux, Vice President, Client Services, Retention Education, LLC
(www.peter@retentioned.com)

- Peter's Presentation: <http://www.nga.org/files/ppt/06RETEDUSABER.ppt>
- Retention Ed Website: <http://www.retentioned.com>

Other Resources

- "Closing the Immigrant Skills Gap: A Report on Challenges and Opportunities Facing the Manufacturing Sector," Center for Workforce Success, National Assoc. of Manufacturers
http://www.nam.org/s_nam/bin.asp?CID=201501&DID=235689&DOC=FILE.PDF

Tuesday, August 15th, 2006

Legislative Update

Senator Michael Enzi, WY, Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

Senator Enzi opened by declaring the attendance of 30 states at the Association's Annual Meeting as the "critical mass" needed to get WIA re-authorized, his primary goal this year. To set the context for needed reauthorization, the Senator provided some threatening international comparisons and statistics, including: India today graduates 220,000 engineers per year, compared to 70,000 in the U.S. (40,000 of which are foreign-born); U.S. Students continue to perform poorly in math and science compared to other industrialized nations; and it is estimated that a young person in the U.S. will lead 14 different careers in their lifetime. The Senator asserted that these trends mean a lifetime of training and re-training for workers, and require a more articulate grasp of how education and training can meet today's skill needs.

Currently, a mismatch exists between the need and the dollars. The system struggles to effectively do its job with decreased funds. The Senate bill will increase flexibility, so states can decide which need warrants priority funding. The Senate bill also calls for improved connections with education and economic development, a renewed focus on entrepreneurship and small business development, adult and family literacy, and youth with disabilities.

The Senator asked the Association members to push for a conference committee, a must if WIA is to be reauthorized this year. He was explicit in his recommendation to members to call their congressmen individually, and to avoid letters or mass emails. If a conference committee is appointed, Enzi is convinced that the differences between the House and Senate bills will be resolved. Typically, Congress can agree to 80 percent of any issue, but the remaining 20 percent will be a fight. In this case that 20 percent includes controversy over the faith-based provision and the consolidated funding streams. Enzi and Kennedy agree that if they can agree on 80 percent, they will pass WIA. The pair has passed at least one bill per month using this agreement.

Two discussions ensued in response to one member's question of "what keeps you up at night?" The Senator expressed concern about how and why younger generations seem to de-value hard work and fail to connect achievement in school to gainful employment after school. The Senator felt a need "to light a

fire under them.” He also emphasized the need to raise the minimum wage, asserting that minimum wage and skills needed to be raised across the nation. The latter issue failed to pass in Congress in March when parties could not agree on a new minimum wage level.

Follow-Up Discussion, led by *Katie Cashen*,
NGA Consultant

Some clarification to the Senate and House bills was provided by Katie Cashen following the Senator’s session, including:

- No sunset clause exists for WIA – as long as it keeps getting appropriations, it will operate;
- The Faith-based provision allows religious preference for hiring staff, not serving clients; and
- The Senate Bill directs the Department of Labor to take no action (until full reauthorization of WIA is complete) to amend, through regulatory or other administrative action, the definition Administrative Costs for functions and activities under title I of the Workforce Investment Act. The Senate bill also prohibits further changes to the designation of local areas, and includes language that indicates that it “expects that no funds be utilized for the proposed Career Advancement Account (CAAs) initiative unless specifically authorized by law.”

The members agreed to the following:

- The urgency is that even with continued appropriations, the longer WIA reauthorization stalls, the less of a priority it appears to Congress and the public, and the more likely that funding will therefore continue to be cut. No one wants to start all over again next year;
- DOL moving forward with policy changes to workforce programs regardless of Congress is also an urgent matter for Workforce Boards. DOL continues to make and change policies, as evidenced in their 9-state pilot of Career Advancement Accounts.
- The workforce system is carrying the water for filling skills shortages and staying competitive, and yet inaction by Congress and changes by DOL undermine the efforts. The Association must get to the point when senior legislators ask: What do the Chairs think?
- The most effective action now is for each member to go back home and call their congressmen. A conference committee must be formed and WIA passed this Congress.
- A letter will be written to the House and Senate Committees to the following effect:
 - We encourage Congress to go to Conference committee and pass the WIA Reauthorization in this Congress. Our nation’s challenge is to create a well-trained, highly educated workforce to support our nation’s future economic competitiveness. WIA is an important vehicle toward that end.
- Two task forces within the Association will be formed and will report to the members on findings in December 2006. NGA will coordinate conference calls for each task force in September.
 - In response to the sentiment that DOL is inconsistent with their direction and policy intentions, the “DOL Analysis” task force will research and report back on where DOL is headed in the next few years, and how it might impact the system in states. Members include Greg White (OR), Fred Dedrick (PA), Brian McMahon (CA), and George Burkley (KY). The task force is led by the Association’s Vice Chair, Pat Hudson (SC);
 - The “PR/Marketing” task force will brainstorm a plan to get the right message out to the right decision-makers about the system’s activities and successes, including emphasis on the unique role of the system to be demand-driven. Members include Chip Evans (VT), Brenda Norman (MN), Steve Hendrickson (OK), and Mathew Chambers (MI). The task force is led by Terri Cole (NM), Association Executive Committee Member.

Advancing Low-Skilled Workers to Fill Industry and Regional Skill Shortages

Presentation by Ray Fleming-Dinneen, Executive Director, Our Families, Our Future, WY
(ray@ourfamiliesourfuture.org)

- www.ourfamiliesourfuture.org

Presentation by Booker Graves, Executive Director, CO Office Workforce Development (booker.graves@state.co.us)

- Booker's Presentation: <http://www.subnet.nga.org/center/workforce/WIRED.PPT>
- Metro Denver Regional WIRED Partnership
<http://www.doleta.gov/pdf/Pages%20from%20WIRED%20Abstracts-%20Comprehensive-11.pdf>

Presentation by Norma Noble, Deputy Secretary for Workforce Development, Oklahoma Department of Commerce (norma.noble@odoc.state.ok.us)

- Norma's Presentation: <http://www.subnet.nga.org/center/workforce/OK.PPT>

Developing the Entrepreneur and Small Business Owner in Your State

Presentation by Jon Gregory, President/CEO Golden Capital Network (jon@goldencapital.net)

- Jon's Presentation: <http://www.nga.org/files/ppt/06DEVENTREPR.PPT>
- <http://www.goldencapital.net/>

Afternoon Coffee: Ellen O'Brien Saunders from Washington State Reflects

Note: Transcript is not an exact verbatim recording:

Tuesday, August 15

Afternoon Coffee: Ellen O'Brien Saunders from Washington State Reflects

Moderator: Martin Simon, NGA

This session presented an opportunity to hear from Ellen since welcoming retirement from Washington State's Workforce System. Ellen reflected on her experiences as a workforce development leader in multiple states and framed an *Open Discussion* on:

- What State Boards can do to ensure their investments yield the highest returns in training and successful employment;
- What State Boards can do to effectively communicate successes and needs to their Governors, State Legislatures, U.S. Congress and the U.S. DOL, and to shape federal legislation and policy;
- What priorities State Boards should adopt, and how they can develop successful strategies to support them.

Transcript:

Martin: What was the most valuable experience that motivated you in this field?

Ellen: I realized early that having a job was a very important thing in an individual's life, and I really learned that through the Women's Movement. I became an activist to broaden opportunities for women, and then that expanded to all individuals and into the realm of education, and very soon I was addicted.

Martin: What can state Workforce Investment Boards do to ensure their investments yield high returns?

Ellen: State Boards are in a unique position – they're not governing entities, yet they're not operational. They're in the position of figuring out how workforce systems are going to best accomplish their goals. That calls for Boards to get very clear about the question: What is it that we want for results? If we're not clear at the Board level, we will not be clear at any level.

In Washington State, we were forced to get agreement on what we wanted out of the system because the state legislature linked funding to outcomes. For states starting down the performance measurement (i.e. The Results) path, use the IPI project as your short-cut across the race-track. Use Washington, Florida,

Oregon, Texas, Michigan and Virginia as your guides. They have made significant progress toward “system” accountability, and will be more than willing to help.

We talk “demand-driven,” but our measurement approach is a people- an individual-approach. When Senator Enzi and Governor Freudenthal talk about workforce, they also talk about the people. This makes measuring how much we’re having success in meeting particular industries’ demands difficult. Through the IPI project, we also introduced the concept of “nesting measures,” where you can pull apart numbers by industry codes and other qualifiers. This starts to get to concrete measurements of “demand-driven” outcomes for industry.

The basic message for Boards is: focus first on what you want the result to be (for example, wages or employment or retention), and then figure out how your “how’s” or your strategies (such as internships, training, mentoring) need to be shaped so that they are a B-line to hit those targets.

Martin: How do you make change with limited resources?

Ellen: Not everything requires money – the dollars may be somewhere where they’re not being used well. I am not saying that the system is well-funded. One thing I’ve found amazing is what people and system partners are willing to go through just to get a tiny amount of money or to be a part of what looks like something new – look at the states that clamored to be one of the Career Advancement Account pilot sites. State workforce systems need to rise above the various programs, especially all the new changes coming down from the Feds, and figure out what it is going to take in their states to get improve their results. .

Greg White (OR): We have done all of this in Oregon, and we just went through a statewide strategic plan centered around a globally competitive workforce, but we have no idea what that looks like.

Ellen: Right. A globally competitive workforce is adaptable and comfortable around changing technology. It’s also a workforce that knows how to work, which means the hospitality industry is not to be dismissed. This is still where many young people learn how to work.

Fred Dedrick (PA): The information about the future is not in an LMI shop – it’s in industries and companies. The past is in an LMI shop. Industry alliances and skill panels provide an opportunity for the workforce system to present itself on a very different plane.

Donna Alvarado (OH): It’s an immense task that we have, but these words strike me as descriptors of our role: portal, bridge, middle ground, catalytic connector.

Ellen: Yes, Boards need to be more than the law says. Boards must be open, fair-minded conveners of the partners in a state or community, and not just live in the WIA bubble. Frankly, some states and local areas are still stuck in 1994. Some local areas think that workforce development means One-Stops. It is the local boards’ responsibility to define local or regional workforce needs and strategies. The state boards should incentivize this with awards, grants, statewide conferences. Washington State works hard to do this. We’ve had some local revolts as a result, but that often brings in new blood.

George Burkley (KY): What is the real, tangible goal of a state Board? Is it economic development or education? How do we granulate these issues?

Ellen: This has to do with priorities. It is true that if the private sector members come directly from business instead of trade associations, for example, they have a much harder time making the transition from needing tangible results to the abstractions of public policy, but if the system can take the problems

that employers put forth (such as work readiness), take them back, cook them as needed, and then create a statewide work readiness policy solution and see it through to a piece of legislation or other implementation . . . you've got something. The employer on the Board is the messenger. Tangibility is something else. Take your Board members out on field trips to community college or training programs. Have them see first hand what the system does. Bring in testimonials of displaced workers. This does not mean you should not involve them in policy discussions. That is their major job but they may need anecdotes and live demonstrations to see the possibilities.

George Burkley (KY): My big take-away from this is that our state Board is just too mechanical.

Ron Whitley (IL): It is the make-up of the Board that makes all the difference. In our state, agency directors are very challenging to engage unless their money or issue is on the chopping block (did he say this? Maybe "on the table" would be a better term....?).

Ellen: While I think my former Chair would not agree with me, I strongly recommend that you do not get caught up in the "who is there" challenge. If the missing person has sent a representative, even of lower status or authority, and that individual is speaking for the agency director and participating, then take them! You may spend too much time and energy trying to get the "right" person there. Move on!

Terri Cole (NM): Have we ever been at a crossroads like we are now? Are we relevant?

Ellen: As a reminder, WIA is a small and shrinking program in a very large architecture that makes up workforce development and education. Yes, we have been here before, only it was worse because it was not casual assertions by Emily DeRocco that the system is not working, but hard evaluations of random assignment that illustrated negative outcomes and reversals of progress. Yes, we're relevant. Of course. Unfortunately, at the national level, we have been put into an inappropriate political conversation. We should not be involved in a conversation about faith-based providers – that's what is irrelevant.

Unknown: Who should be on the Board?

Ellen: Someone who can bring someone else – that's the key. Someone with clout and influence and interest in improvements, even if it is just for their own company or industry. Bring in the trade associations, the Chambers of Commerce, and the CEOs of major employers in key sectors, such as hospitals.

Mark Musick (GA): State WIBs are the only tables where these conversations can take place – I totally agree. I would argue that the most important players at the table are the heads of K-12, community colleges, 4-year schools – do you agree?

Ellen: Yes, but you will not get them to every meeting, and you'll slit your wrists trying to get them there. The key is to create an agenda that is compelling enough to get them there. Discussing the drop-out rate might get your state superintendent's attendance, but maybe not your community college director. On certain issues, we have had them all there, but you won't get them personally in attendance every time.

Chip Evans (VT): We created a two-page marketing handout, with a narrative and vision statement on one side, and a synopsis of industry needs, data points, and the impact of skills gaps on the state economy on the other. We traveled around the state to local WIBs, Chambers and other organizations to vet the document. The process got them on board, supportive of our vision, and increased our visibility. It was very successful.

Pat Hudson (SC): Ellen, if you were Emily DeRocco, what would your top 3 priorities be?

Ellen: (laughs) First, transform the decision-making process in ETA to be more inclusive – that’s after all how I kept my job all these years. Second, lets get IPI done! Third, I would work more closely and collaboratively with both sides of the aisle in Congress in order to get out the results of their investments. Lastly, leave innovation alone for a while. It can be a distraction, when right now we need to steady the ship.

Martin: Any last words?

Ellen: Do not underestimate the power of your role and your work. Look around. Who else is doing this work? No one. You are it. We don’t need to take on all the issues facing this nation, but take on the top ones and go forth strategically and thoughtfully. Good luck and thanks.

Wednesday, August 16th, 2006

Chairs Separate Session, Charlie Ware, WY

The Chairs-only session opened with the nomination of candidates to fill the vacant vice chair position. Pat Hudson, chair of the South Carolina State Workforce Board was elected to fill the position.

The Chairs discussed what they see as an important legacy for their state workforce board. Several common themes emerged from the discussion:

- Engaging the business community at a high enough level to make a significant difference
- Establishing the board as a “true” business partnership for change
- Being an effective voice on preparation of the workforce
- Bringing education to the table at all levels and particularly break down the barriers to higher education
- Serving as forum for bringing all stakeholders to discuss and resolve workforce problems
- Being an effective voice on increased funding for workforce development
- Providing effective oversight and evaluation of the workforce system on behalf of the Governor

The Chairs also discussed topics that they would like to see on future meeting agendas. These include successful integration of economic and workforce development; best practices on measuring the public investment in workforce development, including measures that are meaningful to the private sector; engaging the business community; and discussion with examples of states practice on good strategic planning.

Staff Directors Separate Session, Greg White, OR

Staff Directors Session, Greg White, OR

Staff Directors each spent a few minutes describing their greatest recent success and challenge. Full transcripts are below. Directors then shared areas where they were seeking technical assistance. Peers responded with offers to help where they had particular experience or expertise. Discussion emerged on the following common themes:

- Incumbent Worker Training Programs vary across states in their design, goals, funding sources, criteria for implementation, and outcomes. Many states expressed a desire to uncover these differences and the corresponding best practices.
- Sector strategies are emerging as a policy solution to being demand driven and responsive to employers within target industries, while addressing the needs of low-skilled workers. Staff Directors expressed interest in sharing more.

- Designing and implementing a “human capital agenda” that suits both political parties is important. Colorado is preparing this for both gubernatorial candidates, along with an action agenda for their first 100 days in office. Pennsylvania is aligning funding with the philosophy that companies can no longer compete by cutting costs. They must grow the top line, and they must do that with skilled workers and new product development. The Republicans love this because it requires flexible dollars, and the Democrats love it because it’s all about developing human capital.

Staff Directors agreed to be responsible for following-up where they may be of assistance to other states, or where they may need further guidance from other states. The table of requests and offers is below.

Requests for Technical Assistance from Peers:	Offers of Technical Assistance to Peers:
<p><i>Arkansas</i> needs help designing and re-thinking their Incumbent Worker Training Programs, including how to prioritize industries without favoring companies, how to fund the program, how much money and time should go to each program, overall goals, etc.</p>	<p><i>California</i> funds IWTPs with \$40 million that comes from a UI tax add-on, the rationale being that this funding provides fast, efficient training that otherwise would not happen. <i>Pennsylvania</i> runs a \$30 million IWTP but most of that money is used by the Governor to attract business to the state (no \$’s are WIA \$s). No company gets money unless part of an industry partnership, and each must first do a self-assessment of training needs. The argument, therefore, is that the state is supporting industry needs. Programs are usually 2-years long. <i>Oregon</i> requires companies to obligate 50% of funding by the end of the first 6 months of 2-year programs. <i>Vermont</i> has never been accused of corporate welfare with IWTPs because its investment in individuals, and the company must meet certain criteria (e.g. pay wages that are double the minimum wage). The argument is: Companies come and go, but Vermonters stay.</p>
<p><i>Suggestion: Brian Bosworth put together a matrix about 10 years ago that outlined UI spending and IWTP criteria – the Assisted Worker Training Program Book? Can it be updated? NGA will explore this.</i></p>	
<p><i>Missouri</i> needs Orientation materials for new State Board members.</p>	<p><i>Oklahoma</i> has a new Orientation video – scroll half way down the page on this link: http://www.okcommerce.gov/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=141&Itemid=185 <i>Minnesota</i> will have a state board orientation packet by September. They already created an Orientation Guide for Local WIB members which could easily be customized to other states (www.gwdc.org – see publications). <i>Oregon</i> has job descriptions for members that can be replicated. <i>Arkansas</i> has a guide that covers WIA, TANF and other key information.</p>
<p><i>Kentucky</i> currently relies on DOL’s America’s Job Bank for job matching. What are other states using?</p>	<p><i>Oregon</i> has always had their own system. <i>Arkansas</i> also uses America’s Job Bank, but knows that Monster.com developed a state product. <i>Missouri</i> uses Jobcrawler, a product of GeoSol. <i>Another state</i> suggested Employon.com, a similar product to Jobcrawler, which sweeps all the major services, such as Monster.com and individual company websites for jobs for an annual fee of \$3500. Employon does not offer case management. Jobcrawler does.</p>
<p><i>Colorado</i> needs input</p>	<p><i>Pennsylvania</i> is aligning funding with the philosophy that companies can no longer</p>

on formulating a human capital agenda that will be presented to both gubernatorial candidates, plus an action agenda for their first 100 days in office. Any input on content and funding sources?	compete by cutting costs. They must grow the top line, and they must do that with skilled workers and new product development. The Republicans love this because it requires flexible dollars, and the Democrats love it because it's all about developing human capital. That's the bi-partisan message.
<i>Montana and Missouri</i> need orientation materials and guidance for their youth council .	<i>Utah, Colorado and Oregon</i> can share their youth council materials.
<i>Utah</i> is struggling to connect its low-income, low-skilled populations to their sector strategies .	<i>Arkansas'</i> career pathway strategies are strong examples of strategies that address low-skilled worker needs. The "Knowledge Exchange" tier of NGA's new Sector Strategies project will also address this question. An invitation to the Exchange will be issued in September.
<i>New Hampshire</i> is in the beginning stages of implementing their new Job Corps program .	<i>Vermont:</i> Chip Evans is available for all questions about Job Corps (cevens@hric.state.vt.us)

Successes and Challenges:

Arkansas: Arkansas is again going through the fall-out of a restructuring within agencies, and trying to prepare for a new Governor in January. The most recent successes are a joint project with AARP on mature workers, a "neediest youth" initiative, and a scaling-up of career pathway approaches through the NGA Sector Strategy Learning Network project.

California: California's on-going challenge is effectively managing 50 local areas, especially as funding continues to be cut and the state board must make decisions about local funding – there are winners and losers. California legally mandated re-designing the dislocated worker formula so annual variation is more equalized.

Colorado: The grand opening of the Fitsimmons Redevelopment project and Healthcare Simulation Center is a huge success. The biggest challenge is to try to work across state borders to respond to the shortage in the energy industry.

District of Columbia: The "Way to Work" Act was passed in the District, with new requirements for living wage and benefit jobs. The Mayor gave \$20 million for youth employment, drop-out, and job opportunity bank programs. The Board also has a new Chair who is the President of the D.C. Chamber of Commerce.

Georgia: The Governor reconstituted the Board, but the DOL is the administrator for the local WIBs. The Governor is using the state Board to link education, economic development and workforce issues and policies. GA finished a strategic planning process and is rolling out corresponding initiatives including a middle school career counseling program, a high school graduation rate improvement project, and regional sector/career pathway programs in the state's BRAC area. The challenge for all of these is sustainability.

Idaho: Still seeing positive results from single-state reorganization, but the challenge for the Board is to reconfigure and cautiously take over the local roles. Despite losing \$1.6 million, the system reconverted \$675,000 into direct services. The Board also conducted 3 regional "listening sessions" to discuss worker shortages.

Kentucky: Kentucky recently revamped their Board committees, but keeping the momentum going on those committees is a significant challenge.

Minnesota: Strategic planning led to a focus on advancing sector strategies at a state policy level. A \$100,000 grant from the Joyce Foundation, and acceptance into the new NGA sector strategy Policy Academy will support this priority focus. The greatest challenge for the Board is to meaningfully answer the question of “How are we doing, as a Board and has a state?”

Missouri: Missouri implemented the Career Readiness Certificate, but it is so far woefully understaffed and currently resides as the Board’s responsibility. The Board conducted an assessment of what makes a Board extraordinary. After visiting 9 LWIBs around the nation, they concluded that the key is an effective executive director who can get the right people to the table.

Montana: The big success is re-designating the state as a single area, and a new MOU with all the tribal areas. Montana is planning 10 new workforce centers, with 4 completed so far. The challenge is to make the Board dynamic, engaged and active in the context of an aging workforce, a rural population, and a healthcare crisis.

New Hampshire: The system in New Hampshire runs well – it is a single state area and the Board is a 501-c-3. The most recent big success is finally securing a Job Corps site. An ongoing challenge is building the pool of eligible training providers, especially when community colleges still operate in a silo and speak their own language. Getting the cooperation of partnering Commissioners around the state is also challenging.

Oklahoma: The state recently mandated that the 12 LWIBs take on the role of community conveners – it has been a challenging requirement. The biggest success recently is that Oklahoma does not “talk WIA,” but instead talks issues, which works. The legislature put \$5 million into a healthcare sector initiative.

Oregon: Oregon’s big success is meaningfully engaging the education community. State WIB members and the State Board of Education members have spent the past year attending each others’ meetings. This resulted in a white paper and discussions on developing a competency-based high school diploma.

Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania implemented 80 industry partnerships in the 9 priority industries, and is transforming the workforce attitude around the state. Over 10,000 workers have been trained in the partnerships, and the Legislature appointed another \$20 million to keep them going. Pennsylvania hopes to publish summaries of each partnership. The challenge is to implement the set of high performance LWIB standards. Each LWIB has done a self-assessment and the state Board is continuing with on-site interviews, which should conclude by Christmas.

Utah: Utah submitted to the Governor’s Board a new Human Capital data report that articulates target industry skill gaps by region. Their major challenge currently is engaging public and higher education.

Vermont: Vermont received a DOL grant to pursue sector strategies in Healthcare, education, technology and construction. The past Commissioner of Economic Development and the Director of the state’s largest economic development corporation is the Board’s new chair. The states challenge is to implement financial incentives that drive education and training to align with state policies. “Cosmetology is full.”

Washington: Ellen’s retirement is the challenge! But Washington is a mature system, and the partners work well together. A new Employment Security Commissioner is taking the opportunity to re-question the independence of the Board. This disconnect is challenging right now. The Industry Skills panel are still the state’s great success, and the state is moving into 2nd and 3rd year sustainment grants in certain industries.

Wyoming: Wyoming kicked off its Workforce Summit and 4 pilots in career guidance, as well as an initiative to identify potential, un-tapped workers to fill jobs. The challenge now is keeping up with growth.

Emerging Issues and Topics for Future Panels

- **Soft Skills:** Reaching a common definition and exploring the policy interventions
 - Should engage corporate voices (CEOs, not HR representatives) in a session about soft skills, keeping in mind that the conversation will be very different among industries (e.g.

hotel operators vs. Honda America). Such a session should lead to policy interventions, not just opinions about what soft skills are.

- Present alternatives to the Work and Career Readiness Credentials, and present examples of states that are using them to develop soft skill policies.
- Variation across states in incumbent worker training programs: criteria, funding, design, importance to business, etc.
- State solutions to funding: UI, bonding, etc.
- Public Accountability: current measures are meaningless to businesses.
- English as a Second Language *and* Spanish as a Second Language
- Issues of over-, under- and dishonestly reported employment numbers
- Manufacturing Extension Partnerships – how to build stronger connections between MEPs and workforce systems.
- Continued discussions on positioning ourselves in the context of economic development.

Reflections on the Association’s “The Competitive Challenge: Building a World Class Workforce”

Synopsis of paper: <http://www.subnet.nga.org/center/workforce/REFLECTIONS.PPT>

Complete paper: <http://www.nga.org/cda/files/BuildingWorldClassWorkforce.pdf>

After a refresher on the 2002 paper, members reflected on how far the workforce system has progressed since then, and on their current definitions of a “world class workforce.” Comments included:

- It is very interesting to hear the paper presented by an individual new to the field and not deeply involved in the writing of the paper (a synopsis was provided by NGA’s Lindsey Woolsey). It showed that the ideas are still relevant, and that conversations since 2002 have totally transformed. What was new and fresh then is common language today.
- The system has progressed, and that paper was responsible for a lot of change. In 2002 there was no Competitiveness Council nor a President’s Initiative. However, the real answer to whether we have progressed or not must be answered on a state-by-state basis.
- The talking points that accompanied the paper were powerful, and if freshened up, would still be powerful now.
- We have not defined what a world class workforce is, but it is also constantly evolving.
- There are items missing from the paper, including soft skills and the need to target poor and minority populations.

Members suggested that the paper be presented again at the beginning of the January meeting, and that between now and then that a matrix be filled out by each state that indicates how far each has progressed across the 6 recommendations and corresponding strategies.

Business Meeting

Members conducted a quick business meeting to wrap up, and agreed to the following:

- Pat Hudson of South Carolina was elected to fill the vacant Vice Chair position for the Association. He will hold the position until the next election at the annual meeting in 2007.
- The Winter meeting will be held in January (tentatively January 24-26), and will include one full day of joint sessions with the National Association of Workforce Liaisons. The meeting will tentatively be held in Washington D.C., a change from its previous location in New Orleans. The change is in response to Members’ desire to use the time in D.C. to meet with their Congressmen. Confirmation of dates and location will be sent out by NGA as soon as possible.
- Members expressed a desire to market the meeting to Chairs who do not normally attend. NGA will facilitate strategies to reach out to those individuals.
- The Annual Meeting in Summer 2007 will be held in the St. Paul/Minneapolis area sometime during the first 2 weeks of August. NGA will send out confirmed dates as soon as possible.

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