

# IDAHO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

November 19, 2008 – Meeting Minutes

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Council Chair Con Paulos called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. He welcomed everyone and added that the meeting was being held in conjunction with the Governor's Workforce Summit and was hopeful that many would attend that event which begins at noon. The intent of the summit is for local teams of engaged community members and workforce system partners to set an action agenda for creating a workforce to sustain critical industries. Today's council agenda leads into that with our primary focus on delivering a set of priorities for action. The agenda will begin with an economic update from Director Madsen and his team. Kim Toryanski who is heading up the NGA policy academy on civic engagement will make a presentation and then the council will conclude with our primary task of setting priorities. After a review of the agenda, Chair Paulos proceeded with the consent agenda.

## **Consent Agenda**

Chair Paulos accepted a motion by Jim Schmidt and second by Don Smith to approve the minutes of September 10, 2008, and the additions to the Eligible Providers List (Transmittal 1 Eligible Training Provider List). The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Economic Update 2006-2016 Regional Employment Projection**

Chair Paulos stated that over the last six months dramatic changes have occurred in Idaho's economy as companies closed their doors and shed workers. A fresh look at our economic and employment projections is timely.

Idaho Department of Labor's Chief Research Officer Bob Uhlenkott updated the council on the job and business growth in the six regions of the state. His presentation can be viewed at Economic Update 2006-2016 Regional Employment Projection.

Chair Paulos welcomed Idaho Department of Labor Director Roger B. Madsen who detailed the need to preserve the integrity of the trust fund and the impact of the rapid growth in unemployment on the unemployment system.

## **Impact of Economy on Unemployment Insurance – Tax and Benefit Rates**

Director Madsen's, presentation can be viewed at Economic Update 2006-2016 Regional Employment Projection (the last section) *Unemployment Insurance and Tax Rates for 2009*.

Director Madsen said that currently Idaho has the lowest tax rate that we have ever had, but benefits are going out at extremely high rates - \$7 million a week. He said by law he is required

to send out a letter on Dec. 19, 2008 to taxpayers telling them of a huge tax increase that is coming with 50 percent of employers receiving an above 70 percent unemployment insurance tax increase while 50 percent of employers will receive a below 70 percent tax increase, and few will receive tax reductions.

Director Madsen had received a report from Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter of good news that detailed the growth of small businesses including Premier Technology in eastern Idaho, hospitals and schools construction and over 500 high paying nursing jobs. He noted that almost every state's UI fund is in trouble particularly the large industrial states and many will go broke in the coming months. Idaho's state fund has been better managed and balanced well and our governor is focused on workers and business issues.

Director Madsen relayed that many workers are dependent on unemployment benefits, and explained that this is not welfare; it is an insurance program. He recently traveled to Priest River where 300 mill workers were layed off, which can be completely devastating to a small city of 3,000. Benefits can help workers re-train and hopefully stay in the labor market, pay mortgages and groceries and help small business stay open on Main Street.

Chair Paulos thanked Director Madsen for his remarks and for his service to the state during this hard time.

### **NGA Policy Academy on Civic Engagement - Engaging Seniors in Volunteering & Employment**

Chair Paulos introduced Commission on Aging Administrator Kim Wherry Toryanski who provided a status report on the progress of the Idaho leadership team at the Policy Academy of the National Governor's Association. Her presentation can be viewed at [NGA Policy Academy on Civic Engagement--Update](#)

Chair Paulos commended Kim for her presentation and her team leadership at the NGA meeting. He stated that Idaho stacks up well with the other six states and is ahead of others that participated in the policy academy.

### **Chair's Report**

Chair Paulos advised the council that our mission is to advise both Governor Otter and the State Board of Education on issues relating to growing and sustaining a quality workforce. The purpose today is to focus on priorities in the context of the current economy and the governor's priorities. As goals and objectives were reviewed, they touch on all of the governor's priorities, some directly and some indirectly by making sure that Idaho has a quality workforce system.

The governor's goals are (1) promoting responsible government, (2) enhancing economic opportunity and (3) empowering Idahoans. The objectives most directly aligned to our mission are (a) implementing business practices in government, (b) providing education and workforce training opportunities, (c) growing Idaho's economy and perhaps (d) improving health care through our work with the Nursing Workforce Advisory Council.

Chair Paulos reported on some exciting initiatives taking place across the state under the WIRED grant in Region IV and the RIG planning grants in Regions I, V and VI—hopefully in Region II. As an example, under the WIRED grant, partners around the area are working to establish workforce standards and processes for assessing and recognizing those standards, improving processes to identify specific employer needs and trying to identify ways to improve our one-stop system. All of these can yield processes that can be adapted to other parts of the state if the efforts prove successful.

Chair Paulos relayed that a group of individuals from north Idaho visited the Boise area last week to learn more about establishing a collaborative technical education school. Jim Schmidt is to be congratulated for his pioneering efforts in establishing the Dehryl A. Dennis Professional-Technical Education Center which is a partnership of the state's two largest school districts and many smaller public and private schools. The north Idaho team left with a sense of excitement and optimism that they could replicate this or the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (of southwest Idaho). Chair Paulos stressed that we need to be able to share and learn from the very exciting work happening in our own state.

Idaho Department of Labor's Workforce Policy Advisor Cheryl Brush reported on the Nov. 17, 2008 Nursing Workforce Advisory Council meeting. Cheryl stated that Council Chair B.J. Swanson would normally give the report, but was attending another meeting. She informed the council that Idaho Department of Labor Chief Research Officer Bob Uhlenkott and Research Analyst Principal Sara Scudder provided a presentation for the council and that the council will make a recommendation to expand their research. At the last Workforce Development Council meeting, scholarships were approved for post graduate degrees and for nursing students in rural areas, recipients have been selected and notified and are very grateful.

**Transmittal #3 - Identifying Priorities – Aligning Goals & Objectives.** This can be viewed at: [Transmittal 3 Identifying Priorities--Aligning Goals & Objectives](#)

Chair Paulos recommended that the council identify three or four priorities to focus on for the next 24 months in light of the limited resources we might have.

Cheryl Brush led the discussion and pointed out *Attachment 1: Goals and Objectives* which showed the council's adopted priorities at the May 2008 meeting--when the major concern was finding enough workers to fill openings. Today we are facing the challenge of moving existing workers who have lost their jobs back into the workplace. Secondly, she referred to the workforce programs that the council oversees in *Table 2: Idaho Workforce Development System – Inventory of Major Programs and Services for Coordination Opportunities*. She pointed out that one thing that the chart did not provide for is for the educational investment. The total investment of all the programs listed on the chart and the investments in education is \$2.75 billion in Idaho. Our major investments are K-12, the community colleges and university system and professional-technical education.

Cheryl further stated that hot growth jobs are dependent on post-secondary or professional-technical education and the availability of a quality workforce is dependent upon access to a quality education system. Our priorities call for continuing support of reforms, expanded professional-technical education and increased growth in education capacity.

Cheryl noted that substantial funding has been lost in the last two years for workforce support employment and training for low income individuals through WIA, TANF and Food Stamps and dollars to pay for retraining and re-employment through WIA and Trade. The department is currently applying for discretionary grants and assumes this will be successful.

Chair Paulos directed a discussion centered on the importance of four main topics:

- (1) Education – policy changes, dollars for technical education, short term training for inmates, early exploration of career opportunities for students, re-training of unemployed or older workers and funding for higher education
- (2) Infrastructure – water, energy, transportation
- (3) Partnerships – business help education, finding ways to solve problems with current resources at no costs
- (4) Finished product – soft skills – attitude of workers – transition for students in the workforce

Further discussion centered around actions that the council could do that wouldn't cost a lot of money, such as, apprenticeships – business/employers expense, options for job awareness – college not the answer for everyone, partnership among the universities, business and industries providing internships, motivation and enhancements to the basic core skills, Idaho business week program adjusting to teach some basic skills like balancing a checkbook and basic skills needed in business, using the community Chamber of Commerce organization as a resource – let them know about partnerships in education and let them know of the council goals, encouraging scholarships and the budget to provide for Career Information Systems services at universities.

Kim suggested publishing the plan and goals of the council. Cheryl Brush and Leandra Burns were assigned to accomplish this.

#### **Further Business:**

Jim Schmidt proposed that the Youth Program Design Committee could meet and move ahead with the procurement process which was discussed at the last meeting. Jim moved the council to authorize the committee to take action in the procurement process, seconded by Cindy Hedge and approved unanimously.

Jim Schmidt proposed that the next council meeting take place at the Meridian School District to see first hand how they are expanding the professional-education programs K-12.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

## Workforce Development Council

### Members:

Con Paulos  
Dave Yoder  
Dave Whaley  
Kim Toryanski  
Dene Thomas  
Don Smith  
Jim Schmidt  
Mike Rush  
Gail Cushman for Brent Reinke  
Jan Nielsen  
Roger Madsen  
Alex LaBeau  
Cindy Hedge  
John Currin  
Kent Tingey

### Guests:

John McAllister  
Todd Schwarz  
Ann Stephens  
Denise McDonald  
Gil Bates  
Melinda Adams  
Susan Choate  
Stan Brings  
Sara Scudder  
Renee Bourque  
Cheryl Engel  
Jim Adams  
Tammy Perkins  
Cheryl Brush  
Georgia Smith  
Terry Butikofer  
Jay Engstrom  
Alice Taylor  
Bob Uhlenkott  
Rob Lohrmeyer  
Leandra Burns  
Roy Valdez