

MICHIGAN WORKS! WEST CENTRAL
WDB/LEO JOINT MEETING
HOLIDAY INN, BIG RAPIDS
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2008

MINUTES

LEO Members Present

Emig, Larry
Gardner, Pat
Hogenson, Tom (Alt Warba)
Howard, Linda
Myers, Robert
Pinkerton, James

LEO Members Absent

Powell, Daniel
Scott, Brent
Warba, Mark

WDB Members Present

Arnoldi, John
Christensen, Sharon
Fettig, Grant
Finch, Curtis
Fridsma, Chris
Goward, Scott
Jensen, James
Massy, Dan
Smith-Olson, Debbie
Stanek, Bill
Thompson, Sheri

WDB Members Absent

Aultman, Robb
Bonga, Roger
Crandall, Sandy
Ferguson, Tim
Frost, Jim
Geno, Buck
Gilbert, Gary
Masternak, Jason
Stuck, Brian
Trucks, Mary
Varenhorst, Michael

Michigan Works! West Central Staff

Griffith, Paul Reed, Brigette Shoemaker, Connie Wyman, Michael

Others Present

Bozeman, Jerri – Hope Network	Hall, Marie – Eagle Village	Thomas, Jackie – Hope Network
Buron, Dan – Goodwill	Roley, Jeff – Eagle Village	Tykoski, Sherry – Goodwill
Evans, Coralee – Client	Sayles, Maggie – DLEG	Wood, Janet – Hope Network
Frendo, Joe – NCRESA	Schreer, Ron – Hope Network	Wyers, Kirk – NCRESA

Call to Order

WDB Chairperson, Sheri Thompson brought the meeting to order at 12:50 p.m. at the Holiday Inn in Big Rapids. A quorum was present of both the WDB and the LEO.

Introduction of Guests

Guests were introduced and welcomed.

Maggie Sayles, Workforce Consultant, DLEG Rapid Response Unit

Paul introduced Maggie Sayles, Workforce Consultant, from the MDLEG Rapid Response Unit.

Maggie said the Rapid Response Unit works directly with Michigan Works! Agencies and the Unemployment Insurance Agency to bring technical assistance and services to workers who are going to be dislocated. Paul and Mike do an excellent job and always seem to be on top of things, they communicate greatly with the department and it is greatly appreciated in Lansing. Currently the Department is very busy; she has three co-workers and a director and they are out of the office about 75% of the time traveling and making sure that they can assist as best as they can. Technical Assistance includes getting the needed funds for services to the affected workforce.

Sheri thanked Maggie for taking time out of her schedule to come for the West Central WDB/LEO meeting.

Showcase: Jerri Bozeman – Hope Network & Ron Schreer, Remediation Teacher for GED Prep –

Handout

Jerri thanked the Boards for their vote of confidence in the opportunity to start GED in the Michigan Works! program. The Boards received a sample of the GED brochure that will be given out. Reed City Community Ed has worked wonderfully with Michigan Works! in this transition. The examiners Theresa Emington and Lois Ingraham have contracted with Hope Network to continue doing the exams so new examiners won't have to be trained. They have also taken the time to train Jerri in this. The first test will be the 29th of October in Reed City. GED Prep will be starting Monday, the 6th of October in collaboration with the Mecosta Osceola Intermediate School District Career Center working with Jennifer Harrison, who has been wonderful to work with. Jerri introduced Ron Schreer, the instructor for GED Prep.

Ron Schreer said that he is so pleased that the Michigan Works! Boards have brought GED where it belongs, here through Michigan Works! open all year round and in the business of helping people

find jobs and what better thing can be done than to help the clientele at least be armed with their GED. He explained that the relationship with Reed City Schools for the past year and a half has been phenomenal. The secretary in the Adult Ed, Catherine, has been extremely helpful in getting the scores on time and just wonderful in public relations. He also thanked Curt Finch for his willingness to get things set up at the Career Center – 19 computers, headsets, two conference rooms, and an office area – absolutely a marvelous way to start this program.

Ron has been working with this program now for about a year and a half and have 17 graduates with an average score of 525 – the statewide average is 450.

Ron introduced Coralee Evans who came as an individual seeking a GED and has attained it and is now moving on. Ron asked her a few questions and was so impressed with her response that he'd like to ask her again for the Boards.

What does the program mean to you?

Coralee: It allowed me to actually get a career and in order to get the career I want I needed to go to college and obviously I needed the GED or a high school diploma. I am currently enrolled in school and it starts in October. I am doing the internet course now because I do not want to travel to Grand Rapids and in the spring she is enrolled in Ferris and will be taking courses in marketing and computer graphics.

Ron explained that of the 17 graduates, three of them are in college.

Tell the Boards about the story of your husband's reading.

Coralee: My husband didn't really like reading, he always had a hard time in school and was the kid that got left behind. He took the first exam for pre-testing for the GED and got a 360 on reading. He studied and kept with it and when he took the final test he got an 800 which is a perfect score.

Ron explained that a 360 is really only a little better than guessing on the test. Ron asked him if he was ready, if there was more that he could do to help him, he said, "You have done more than

enough.” When he scored a perfect score on the GED reading, which is not easy, he was so very proud of him because he represented the best. This is someone who is ready to read and understand but also the commitment that’s needed to go along with this.

What has he found to do?

Coralee: He is also enrolled in school, taking general computer programming and will be going back to Ferris. He will be the guy you call to fix your computers.

Ron explained that Coralee and Brock have moved around quite a bit and have been involved in several GED programs over the years.

What made this GED program different?

Coralee: I left high school when I was 16 and pregnant, they did not want me in the general populous and put me in Alternative Ed with lots of other teen mothers. This program was not where I wanted to be so I left. Later I went to another one in Kalamazoo county for pregnant moms. The concept was a great idea but the problem was I wanted my GED; they concentrated more on being a good mom and worked around inner city mothers. There were no math programs or anything but how to be a good parent. This was good, but not what I was looking for. Other GED classes wanted you to sit in a room and would not allow you to work at your own pace. They kept saying it would take months and months to get my GED, which I never understood because I knew I was ready. I needed to work on math, but they still wanted me to sit through science and social studies and work at their pace, which is very frustrating. With Ron, I remember talking to him and telling him that I wanted to take the test and I only needed help in math. Ron allowed her to take her first three tests which were science, social studies and reading and passed all of those and in the following two weeks I took the last two and passed. So I had everything taken care of within a month. This is something that I was not able to do in any of the other programs. I had just left a program prior to this one and was told it would take me at least six months. If it were not for

this program, I would not be enrolled in Ferris or any other college if I had not been able to work at my own pace.

Ron explained that many years ago he was taught that we take a student from where they are and move them forward. He took this seriously but to his chagrin years later he found that this was not meant to be taken seriously because too many times in education regardless of what pace a student is able to move forward at, all students must plow on at the same pace. There is some sense and continuity to this but he also realized that taking a person where they are and taking them to where they can go is treating people as individuals. In Cora's case or any student, it doesn't take long at all to realize their talents are extremely high. Their time does not have to be wasted; they can pre-test, study post-test and move them on.

Other students need special tutoring, even to the point of gathering their special ed materials from their prior schools and looking at a program that would start them at perhaps a third grade level of reading and lift them up from there. This will be difficult with a 12-week program for completing the GED program, but thanks to Jerri, Janet, Paul and the Boards the wheels have been set in motion to help those people to lift themselves up too and perhaps be ready to attain the same thing Cora was able to do in a month.

What did you notice about those people that came in that were at vastly different levels?

Coralee: I'm not sure how you did it, it's probably a good thing I'm not going to be a teacher. There were some that were working at their own pace, on the computer, studying on their own and there were others who needed Ron's attention and he was there. We were all in the same room but all working at our own pace and he was able to help us if we had a question but still help those that needed more. It worked out but I'm not sure how he did it.

How have you been using "mean, median and mode" averages lately?

Coralee: There is a joke because I always knew what it meant, but not officially. I knew that median means medium – in the middle. I was watching CNN and they were talking about the

economic crisis and how male salaries have dropped since 1969 about 12% in the median and I actually knew what that meant. I wasn't guessing, it felt good to know what they were talking about on CNN. Now I can help my kids! I even help them with their math and math is now easy for me.

Sheri congratulated Coralee and her husband on the payoff for all their hard work and thanked Ron for the gift he's given to Cora and others like her.

Paul received a congratulatory email from Ferris' President Eisler and he feels that this was the tipping point when Dr. Eisler said he was on the Governor's Council on Labor and Economic Development Growth and offered to call Andy Levin, who is the Deputy Director. That one telephone call really started things happening for Michigan Works! to become an official testing site.

Sheri said this all stems from finding a need and filling it with great follow-through.

NOTE: Ron Schreer and Coralee Evans left at 1:14 p.m.

Consent Agenda

- Minutes of August 6, 2008 WDB/LEO Joint Meeting – Mailed Prior
- August Financial Report – Mailed Prior/Handout (Goldenrod)

Larry Emig moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; supported by James Pinkerton; motion approved by both the WDB and the LEO. 1:15 p.m.

August Program Reports

- ▶ Hope Network – Service Provider Highlighted

Janet thanked Jerri Bozeman for “doing her homework” on the GED venture and thanked Paul for his support. Together we can do this.

► Enrollment/Expenditure Reports – Handout

Paul explained that the report for Goodwill shows their budget being moved around some, and even though the program started October 1, it really didn't get started until January based on some protocol that we needed to follow with the Department of Corrections. Because of this, some money was returned back to the state.

The Muskegon Community Health Project is a relatively small dollar amount but is extremely important in terms of the services they provide, primarily to the inmates before they leave the facility. They “capture” where their health is and make sure they have a 30-day supply of their medications.

MPRI is up to 168 parolees – 33 parolees out of the 168 received some kind of housing assistance. There are 19 with subsidized employment with an average wage of \$8.69 and 32 in unsubsidized employment with an average wage of \$8.09. Of the 168, 118 WorkKeys tests were administered with the average for Applied Math at 4.1, Locating Information at 3.7 and Reading for Information at 4.5.

John Arnoldi explained that as of September 2008 the State of Michigan prison population was 49,453; statewide probationers were at 57,057; parolees were 18,832 with a total supervised population for the State of Michigan at 125,342.

For the same time period Lake County had 89 active probationers and 24 active parolees with 11 of those designated as MPRI – Mason County had 92 active parolees and 35 active parolees with 24 designated as MPRI – Mecosta County had 234 active probationers with 58 active parolees and 19 designated as MPRI – Newaygo County has 210 active probationers, 56 active parolees with 27 designated as MPRI and Osceola County has 124 active probationers with 24 active parolees and 13 designated as MPRI.

Plans/Modifications *Summary Blue*

1. High Concentration Youth (08-00)

Our area received \$9,002 in this statewide youth funding.

2. Disability Navigator (08-00)

This Plan is going into its third year. This area will receive \$10,000 to assist in staff training, and providing technology for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.

3. National Emergency Grant (08-00)

This is funding the state applied for to train additional dislocated workers as a result of layoffs in the automotive industry. Planning instructions show our allocation at \$57,894.

4. Carry-In Modifications (08-01)

Modifications to show actual carry-in amounts in place of earlier estimated amounts have been prepared for the major programs. The carry-in amount for last years Incentive Grant requires a signature. This funding was released for the previous year in June and almost all of the \$31,000 carried in.

5. JET (08-04)

This Modification adds \$50,000 in TANF funding to support additional programming and de-obligates \$10,500 in GF/GP for NWLB. Signatures are not required.

6. JET (09-00)

The new Plan instructions have been received in draft. The initial allocation of \$1,206,514 (TANF & GF/GP, without the WIA allocation), which is about \$64,607 lower than last year. However, last year there was various supplemental funding during the year. If that happens this year it would make up some of the difference. The Plan has been revised to a much shorter agreement among the partners (DHS, MRS and Michigan Works!).

7. Food Assistance Plans (09-00)

We received allocations of \$80,951 for program operations and \$2,011 for supportive services.

Mike explained that No Worker Left Behind state funding is \$10 million with West Central allocation about \$180,000 which maybe too high.

8. Comprehensive Plan (09-01)

The Department of Corrections has approved the Comprehensive plan, and requests several changes. They also approved an additional \$12,000 to continue workshops at the Lake County Residential Re-entry Facility and this money is being added to the plan.

Robert Myers moved to accept the High Concentration Youth 08-00; the Disability Navigator 08-00; the National Emergency Grant 08-00; the Carry-in Modifications 08-01; the JET 08-04; the JET 09-00; the Food Assistance Plans 09-00; and the Comprehensive Plan 09-01 as presented by Michael Wyman; supported by Bill Stanek; motion accepted by both the WDB and the LEO. 1:39 p.m.

Personnel Committee Report – Mailed Prior

Jim Pinkerton explained that the Personnel Committee met a couple times with Paul checking health insurance costs and the type of coverage. A ceiling was discussed to keep a handle on health insurance costs. The recommendation from the Personnel Committee for this year is a ceiling on the monthly health insurance cost of \$1,097 and next year's monthly ceiling being reduced to \$1,000. The committee also recommended a 2.5% increase in staff wages across the board. The committee looked at other industries to see where they were with insurance expense; this recommendation is not at the low end but certainly not at the high end either.

James Pinkerton moved to accept the recommendation from the Personnel Committee as stated; supported by James Jensen; motion accepted by both the WDB and the LEO. 1.41 p.m.

Jim Jensen thanked Paul and his staff for the good job they do.

NOTE: Marie Hall left at 1:43 p.m.

Commercial Credit Card Agreement for Participant Classroom Training Tuition

Brigette explained that the Michigan Works! agencies have been mandated by DLEG to have some kind of credit card/debit card system to process payments for tuition related expenses so they can be expensed immediately and reported in a timely manner as a state to USDOL.

5th/3rd Bank offers a system that does not require a large credit line; West Central's credit line would be \$100,000. There will be no cards given out to clients, there will be one card kept at the office for our Service Provider which is NCRESA who has the contract for Trade Act. NCRESA will get the invoices and list of students and where they go to school; the fiscal department at West Central will make the call to authorize the payment. There is no charge for this service, as it is part of online banking.

Paul explained that West Central recommends a credit line of \$100,000 with 5th/3rd Bank; one card issued to be used by the fiscal department at West Central. This will be started with Trade Act only and if all goes well then we would check into bringing the other programs on line with it.

Larry Emig moved to authorize Michigan Works! West Central to establish a \$100,000 credit line with 5th/3rd Bank to use for tuition for Trade Act; supported by James Pinkerton; motion accepted by both the WDB and the LEO. 1:48 p.m.

Incumbent Worker Committee – Concurrence of Award – Handout

Bill Stanek explained that the Incumbent Worker Committee met just this morning – the Committee recommendations are Mason County Manufacturer's \$15,870; Dura \$1,700; Fluid Routing Systems \$42,430; and Yoplait \$40,000.

James Pinkerton moved to accept the recommendation of the Incumbent Worker Committee as explained by Bill Stanek; supported by Chris Fridsma; motion accepted by both the WDB and the LEO. Jim Jensen abstained. 1:49 p.m.

Annual Audit

Brigette explained that the auditors will be at the West Central office all this week and the report will be given at the December meeting.

- ▶ Annual Acknowledgement of Fraud Policy

It is time for Board members and staff to sign the Fraud Policy again. Please sign and return to Connie.

NOTE: Brigitte Reed left at 1:54 p.m.

WorkKeys/KeyTrain Update – Handouts

Statewide there are 37,000 WorkKeys Certificates earned – West Central scores are above the state average.

- ▶ High School Merit Exam

Starting in March 2009, all Michigan high school juniors will be taking the three (3) WorkKeys Career Readiness Certificate assessments as part of the high school Michigan Merit Exam.

Paul explained that last year's juniors and seniors had only taken Applied Math and Reading for Information. If they took the third one which is Locating Information, they would be eligible, based on their scores, to earn a Bronze, Silver or Gold Certificate.

Paul thanked Kirk Wyers for an awesome job in having the juniors and seniors at the Newaygo County Career Center participate in the third module.

Debbie Smith-Olson asked if there was a charge for this service to employers. Paul explained that there is no charge to job seekers and those employers who are willing to work with Michigan Works! have not been charged either.

Maggie Sayles noted that this creates a universal language between employers and education.

Haworth Video Interviews – Handout (Blue)

Chris Fridsma explained that Haworth is right in the middle of the interview process and have realized a drastic decrease in the timeframe by utilizing the InterviewStream tool. Very good feedback has been received so far.

Paul explained that Hope Network conducted 100 interviews in two days.

This is a private for profit product, where the employer pays the bill directly to InterviewStream. Michigan Works! contribution is the staff time involved in scheduling and facilitating the interviews.

Yoplait has also used this service.

Customer Count Walk-ins – Handout (Pink)

Paul explained that the customer count for walk-ins at our Centers is not just for Michigan Works! MRS is in every Center and in Fremont there is Northern Staffing a private for profit temp agency and in Reed City we have Mid Michigan Community Action Agency – this count is for all customers coming through the front door.

Business Activity

▶ North Lake Correctional Facility, Baldwin

Paul explained that this is the second “Fact Sheet” put out for North Lake Correctional Facility. We try to do one about every two or three months. They have backed off the initial construction schedule a little because of the federal fiscal year. They are hoping to have the facility accept prisoners a year from today, provided they secure a contract.

▶ Gerber Products, Fremont

The Newaygo County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to apply to the state for an Agricultural Processing Renaissance Zone to keep the Gerber Products Company in Fremont for at

least another 15 years. The company agrees to continue employing at least the current 1,100 workers in Fremont and invest \$50 million in its operations over the next nine years.

Pat Gardner explained that this is a project that has been in the works for about two years and had to be kept quiet. In addition to the 1,100 employees they now have they plan to hire another 200. This is the number one employer in Newaygo County and it's good to be on the pro-active side of things. This equates to 2,500 jobs locally and 3,500 jobs regionally.

▶ Yoplait, Reed City

Paul explained that once a month a letter is sent from Jim Epolito, President and CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Yoplait is highlighted in this letter stating that ground was broken for the \$32 million expansion expected to create more than 50 new jobs.

▶ Federal Screw Works, Big Rapids

Federal Screw has experienced two rounds of lay-offs and may be eligible for Trade Act certification.

▶ Possible Business Expansions

Besides Gerber Products there are still a couple other companies in the West Central area with good possibilities for expanding.

▶ Mason County Manufacturers' Association

The Mason County Manufacturers' Association were the winners of the Innovation of Excellence Award at the Michigan Works! Annual Conference held in September in Detroit.

NOTE: Jim Pinkerton left at 2:29 p.m.

Exploration of Film Industry

In April 2008 the Governor signed into law, a bill that would allow up to a 42% tax credit for films shot in Michigan. There is a 30% tax credit if they bring talent from outside the state in. West Central has been exploring the possibility of paying for the training for individuals in this new emerging

industry, as West Shore Community College has been approached and is considering running some certificate programs.

Tom Hogenson stated that this would bring people from the coast to an area they've not explored before.

Bill Stanek Re-elected Chair of the Michigan Works! Association

Sheri congratulated Bill Stanek on being re-elected Chair of the Michigan Works! Association.

NOTE: Linda Howard and Jeff Roley left at 2:36 p.m.

Mailing Packet Items

- ▶ Unemployment Ranking by County – August 2008

Good news is that the unemployment dropped in all of our five counties.

Resignation of WDB Member Ken Rocco

Ken Rocco from Whitehall Industries has resigned from the WDB due to other commitments. Paul will get a clock to present to him. Whitehall Industries is the largest industrial employer in Mason County with two good size physical locations.

Next Meeting, December 10, 2008 – Ludington/Scottville Chamber of Commerce – 2nd Wednesday

The next meeting will be the **SECOND** Wednesday in December on the 10th at the Ludington/Scottville Chamber of Commerce/Airport. This will be Jim Pinkerton's last Michigan Works! West Central Board meeting.

- ▶ 2009 Calendars

Round-the-Table

- » Hogenson, City of Big Rapids – Mecosta County Medical Center is having talks with Spectrum regarding a possible merger. The Board of Trustees will make a decision in the next couple months – generally the consensus is good.
- » Christensen, Michigan Department of Human Services – the counties are sharing with DHS the best practices for Work First clients. She congratulated West Central on the participant rate at 69% compared to the state at 49%. If the state does not make 50% the state will suffer sanctions which would amount to millions of dollars lost.
- » Goward, Ice Mountain – another 17 people were laid off, this was not unexpected and is directly related to the economy. The intent is to have everyone back in the spring.
- » Massy, Osceola Economic Alliance – the Brownfield board held their first outreach meetings and as a result there may be one property that may qualify.
- » Fettig, Fettig Farms – Agriculture is the state’s second largest industry, and as we enter harvest season when traveling the rural roads watch for combines and other large pieces of equipment.
- » Jensen, West Shore Community College – Last year West Shore completed a new student services center for \$8 million with state match of \$4 million, it was recently announced that another grant from the state of \$3.5 million will be received to modify the Arts and Science Center.
- » Myers, Lake County – Working on a Promise Commission for the people of Lake County into technical training, perhaps some workshops at West Shore. This involves some grants in the amount of \$5,000 a year for four years.
- » Stanek, Kitson Manufacturing – At Kitson business is slow – downtown Big Rapids is planning a celebration October 24 and 25 there will be a pumpkin roll, kids games, moonlight madness, a parade and other activities.
- » Sayles, DLEG – Appreciated being invited to the Board meeting and being able to share what the Rapid Response is all about.

- » Fridsma, Big Rapids Components – Looking to increase capacity in the wood facility.
- » Smith-Olson, Lake Osceola State Bank – LOSB celebrated 100 year anniversary on September 20. They are watching the process going on at the national level with the little banks carrying the large banks.
- » Gardner, Newaygo County – The county is excited about the Gerber deal and the commissioners are going after everything big or small to help the community; recently they received a grant in the amount of \$162; literally we are going after whatever we can get.

Other Business

Reserved for the Public

Adjournment

Meeting stands adjourned at 2:50 p.m.