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June, 2004

# Workforce Developments



## From the Chairman of the Board — by Robert Dobson

As Chairman of the Workforce Development Board of Okaloosa and Walton County, I welcome you to **the first edition** of "WorkForce Developments."

Our mission at the Workforce Development Board (WDB) is to ensure that every citizen has the opportunity and skills necessary to engage in meaningful employment throughout Okaloosa and Walton Counties, and that every business has access to educated, trained and prepared employees. In order to accomplish our mission we function as a catalyst with public and private partners in an effort to assist businesses anticipate and develop solutions for tomorrow and beyond.

Our goal is to strengthen communication with you through this quarterly newsletter. I know that my colleagues do good work and I want you to know it too. I welcome your feedback on information pertinent to business issues, your needs, and your concerns.

Perhaps we are best known for the one-stop career centers, *JobsPlus*. They provide recruitment and employment services to employers and job seekers in the two county region. Currently we have 3 full service *JobsPlus* centers in Okaloosa and Walton counties. From hiring to training to retaining, the **JobsPlus One Stop Centers** offer employers comprehensive services needed to optimize their human resources.

The WDB is a group of 38 professionals from diverse backgrounds -- all committed to the economic health of the region and the individuals who live here. The Board is both private and public sector, industry and education, appointed by the county commissioners and part of a state system. These things come together to create an informed group with a great deal of responsibility coupled with equal parts humility to do the very best for the citizens of Region 02.

## Did You Know?

- 1,561 residents of Okaloosa and Walton Counties completed new or renewed registrations for services with the JobsPlus One-Stop Career Centers during April, 2004.
- 501 job applicants were placed in employment through JobsPlus during April, 2004.
- Okaloosa and Walton County Employment increased by 4,971 jobs in April, 2004 compared to April, 2003.
- [www.jobspluseonestop.com](http://www.jobspluseonestop.com) is the web site for the Workforce Development Board of Okaloosa and Walton Counties. It is filled with information and resources for employers and businesses, job seekers, and board members.
- "Employ Florida" is an affiliate brand that serves as a single point of entry to Florida's workforce system. It provides a link for Florida businesses to the services and resources offered throughout the state. The Employ Florida web site, [www.employflorida.net](http://www.employflorida.net), contains many valuable workforce resources.
- Workforce Florida, Inc. has awarded over \$9 million in Quick Response and Incumbent Worker Training Grants to for-profit businesses during the 2003-2004 program year. These customer-driven grants are designed to enable Florida to effectively retain businesses and keep them competitive.
- Two area businesses can be found on [Florida Trend's](#) list of Top 200 Private Businesses: PMI Employee Leasing is ranked 91<sup>st</sup> and Manufacturing Technology, Inc. (MTI) is ranked 191<sup>st</sup>.

# *Workforce Development Board and JobsPlus continue to support Perdue Farms employees*

The Workforce Development Board of Okaloosa and Walton Counties and the JobsPlus OneStop Career Centers continue to coordinate the Rapid Response and re-employment activities for the employees who were laid off as a result of the April 21, 2004 closure of the poultry processing plant in DeFuniak Springs.

Rapid Response Orientations began March 9 on site at the Perdue plant. Orientations continued during Community Support Services Days on March 26 & 27 and a job fair April 3 at the DeFuniak Springs Community Center.

Florida's Mobile One-Stop and representatives of the DeFuniak Springs JobsPlus OneStop were on-site April 21-23 to provide orientation to the OneStop and available services, community services, assistance with filing for unemployment compensation.

JobsPlus representatives continue to hold ongoing workshops and individual sessions covering job search, labor market information, occupational outlook, education and training opportunities, and assistance with applications and resumes.

## Dislocated Worker Statistics

Number of Perdue workers assisted by JobsPlus .....	237
Lacking HS diploma or GED .....	82 or 34.6%
Male .....	51.5%
Female .....	48.5%
Aged 18 .....	.4%
Aged 19-21 .....	5.9%
Aged 22-29 .....	11.4%
Aged 30-54 .....	62.9%
Aged 55-or older .....	19.4%
White .....	60.9%
Black .....	29.8%
Hispanic .....	4.7%
American Indian or Alaskan Native .....	.4%
Asian .....	3.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander .....	.4%
Transferred to another Perdue facility .....	13
Remaining at DeFuniak facility .....	3
Re-employed	
(excluding transfers and those remaining at DFS facility) ...	45
Manufacturing .....	12
Florida Transformer .....	4
NC Manufacturing .....	5
Professional Products .....	2
Crestview Aerospace .....	1
Other Poultry Processors .....	8
Pilgrims Pride .....	7
Hudson .....	1
Retail .....	6
Wal-Mart .....	3
Tom Thumb .....	2
Ace Hardware .....	1
Utilities (Chelco) .....	4
Healthcare .....	4
Jackson Hospital .....	1
Destin Medical Center .....	1
Walton Convalescent .....	1
Crestview Manor .....	1
Miscellaneous .....	11
Number in training .....	4
Number in GED program .....	4

*(Below, Top) The State of Florida's Mobile JobsPlus OneStop has been on hand at Perdue Farms in DeFuniak Springs to offer services to recently dislocated workers.*

*(Below, Bottom) Employees take advantage of services brought to them by JobsPlus One Stops.*



# WDB invited to present at the 2004 Workforce Summit

The 5th annual Workforce Summit will be held in Orlando on September 21 -23, 2004. The Summit is designed to provide workforce professionals with access to exemplary education, best practices, and innovative resources and solutions.



Information will be presented at the Summit through plenary sessions, workshops, networking events and exhibits. Tracks are tentatively planned as follows:

- Economic Development
- Education
- Employment
- Workforce Development - The Profession

The Workforce Development Board with partnership of the Okaloosa County School Board is pleased to have been selected to conduct two workshops at the Summit.

Cindy Frakes, School Board Chair, will present the CHOICES program. The Okaloosa County School Board has adopted CHOICE (Community High: Okaloosa Institutes for Career Education), which is an innovative educational approach to technical or career education in Okaloosa County that allows students to receive college credits and industry credentials upon graduation. CHOICE allows for both the 18-hour early graduation and the 24-hour regular diploma. CHOICE will be phased in over the next two years and offers options for student to pursue education and training at business and industry sites in addition to the educational facilities. A representative of the Workforce Development Board serves on the Board of Directors of CHOICE.

The second program to be presented by the Okaloosa County School Board at the Summit is the Okaloosa County School Board's Plan of Care. Okaloosa's Plan of Care combining high standards, more effective teaching methods, uninflated grades, substantial extra help, and increased parental involvement and responsibility is a remarkable success. State legislative leaders have asked Okaloosa County to help craft legislation that would extend this now-proven approach to remediation throughout the state.

This idea to make Plan of Care a year-around commitment is consistent with Governor Bush's call for remediation efforts in the summer. While the Governor has restricted his summer remediation initiative to retained third graders, Okaloosa County has decided to provide year-around Plan of Care services to all retained elementary students.

## Election of 2004-05 WDB Board of Officers

**At the regularly scheduled Board meeting on May 5, 2004 the Election of Board Officers for 2004 – 2005 was held. Nomination Committee: Bill Robinson (Chair) Pam Tedesco and Earnestine Carswell.**

The Nominations Committee met by teleconference on April 22, 2004. The slate of nominees was forwarded via e-mail to the Board members on April 23, 2004. The Nominations Committee recommended, with agreement of the nominated, that the current Officers of the Board serve another term, namely: Chair: Robert Dobson; Vice Chair: Sylvia Hanks; Secretary: Bill Peebles; Treasurer: Dave Miller, Members-at-Large: Kathie O'Dell (Okaloosa) and Al Ward (Walton).

## 2004-05 Board Meetings

August 4  
September 1  
October 6 • Exec. Committee  
November 3  
December 1 Exec. Committee  
January 5  
February 2 • Exec. Committee  
March 9  
April 6 Exec. Committee  
May 4  
June 1  
Locations to be announced.

## **WDB Region II Recognized Through Education Award**

Florida Department of Education Commissioner Jim Horne recognized the Workforce Development Board of Okaloosa and Walton Counties (Region II) as an Outstanding Business Partner for 2004. The award was presented at the 17th Annual Commissioner's Business Recognition Awards ceremony held in Orlando in April. Board Chair Robert Dobson, Executive Director Mary Lou Reed, and Assistant Director Linda Sumblin accepted the award on behalf of the Workforce Development Board.



The annual award recognizes outstanding support of education in local communities throughout Florida.

The Okaloosa County School District nominated the Workforce Development Board for its leadership and partnership in the development and implementation of innovative programs for training the emerging workforce.

## **GOVERNOR BUSH PROCLAIMS "ONE-STOP CENTER WEEK"**

*Recognizes Workforce Professionals in Florida*

**TALLAHASSEE**-Governor Jeb Bush today issued a proclamation recognizing the week of May 24-31, 2004 as One-Stop Center Week in Florida. The proclamation recognizes the important contribution made by the staff of Florida's Workforce Development Boards and their One-Stop Centers, assisting Florida's businesses in finding qualified workers and improving the economic well-being of Florida's families by linking them to a wide variety of career resources.

"We are very fortunate in Florida to have dedicated staff in our workforce system who assisted Floridians through the very difficult times following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001," said Governor Jeb Bush. "Their hard work and dedication helped Florida's businesses get through this difficult time and made a difference in the lives of many Floridians."

On Friday May 21<sup>st</sup>, Governor Bush announced the latest state employment numbers showing Florida continuing to lead the nation in the creation of jobs. Florida's job market has maintained a higher rate of growth than any other state in the nation, adding 168,400 jobs (seasonally adjusted) from April 2003 to April 2004. Governor Bush highlighted these numbers at GTO, Inc., a Tallahassee manufacturing company that makes electric gate openers. GTO, Inc., grew from 40 employees five years ago to 77 employees and a \$3 million payroll today. Its worldwide sales are increasing at an annual rate of more than 20 percent.

"Small businesses like GTO are the backbone of Florida's economy and they have provided many of the jobs that are now boosting Florida's economy," said Susan Pareigis, Director of the Agency for Workforce Innovation. "It is important to note that businesses like GTO have expanded their opportunities for recruiting and hiring qualified workers by turning to Florida's workforce system."

Florida's landmark workforce development legislation was passed in 2000, under the leadership of Governor Bush and then-Senate President Toni Jennings. The legislation consolidated various workforce programs and funding streams — including Florida's pacesetter welfare reform initiative — under the single policy umbrella of Workforce Florida. Businesses and job seekers can locate workforce resources anywhere in Florida by calling toll-free 1 (866) FLA-2345 or by going to [www.EmployFlorida.net](http://www.EmployFlorida.net).

*The Workforce Development Board is an equal opportunity employer/program.  
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.*