



Humboldt County Workforce Investment Board

Minutes

Friday • December 12, 2008 • 8:30 am – 10:30 am
College of the Redwoods • Downtown Site
605 K Street • Eureka, CA

Members Present: Greg Aslanian, Emilia Bartolomeu, Helen Callahan, Terry Coltra, Joe Davey, Janet DePace, Maura Eastman, Ahn Fielding, Maggie Gainer, Barbara Groom, Mariann Hassler, Carol Hill, Beverly M. Lewis, Val Martinez, Libby Maynard, Jeff Nelson, David Perry, Bryan Plumley, Cedar Reuben, Bob Sampson, Jon Sapper, Liana Simpson, James Smith, Sallie Speaker and Alex Stillman

Members Absent: Ernie Behm, Ben Fewell, Linda Grimm, Bob Laffranchi, Tina Nerat, Liana Simpson and John Woolley

Others Present: Bruce Alexander, Mary Cruse, Jim Ferguson, Evelyn Giddings, Dennis Mullins, Ron Samuels, Jerry Saner, Barbara Shults, Jacqueline Debets, Jose Quezada and Sandy Alcaraz

1. OPENING:

- 1.1 Call to Order: Chair Cedar Reuben called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.
- 1.2 Self-introductions of WIB members, staff and public present: Introductions were made around the table.
- 1.3 Adjustments to the Agenda: Ron Samuels will present at 8:45.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: Barbara Schultz gave an update on her situation trying to access WIB funds for retraining. She requires outside funding in order to get her life back on track. Barbara is being told that because she has not chosen an employer in Humboldt County she does not qualify for services. She would like to know her entitlement and her understanding of the nursing program; wages, jobs available etc. *What is the correct process?* She needs to work with a vocational counselor. Complaints can be filed with EEO. According to Southern Humboldt residents, the Job Fair in Fortuna was something that was not known to the southern area or even to the WIB. Jim Ferguson, a Shelter Cove resident, believes that Southern Humboldt pretty much ends in Fortuna; there is no real outreach or opportunities to the Shelter Cove area. As we do our job and expand our outreach there is a specific need for the Garberville and Shelter Cove areas. The Board extended thanks to those people who came such a long way to give their comments.

3. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS:

- 3.1 Consent Agenda: **Motion** made by Maura Eastman to approve October 17th minutes, second by Janet DePace, so carried.
- 3.2 Time Set Presentation: Ron Samuels from Marimba One gave a quick presentation. This business is a clear member of the Niche Manufacturing group from Targets of Opportunity. Highlights follow:
 - Marimba One began as a personal interest then turned business
 - Low volume, high value business
 - Concert grade instrument that is custom made
 - Most of his business is Europe and Asia

- 20 employees-office staff found through local employment agencies
- Instruments are made from cherry, mahogany and rosewood
- Typical profile of buyer-young student, young adult, very passionate
- May expand to xylophones and vibraphones-high end
- This spring bringing out a lower cost instrument due to the current economy
- Average cost-\$10,000.00-\$20,000.00 per instrument

3.3 State of Economic and layoffs – Dennis Mullins has some insight on what these numbers are showing. Since 1990 (manufacturing, forest products and timber) lost 2500 jobs over an 18 year period. If we didn't sort these out into the Target areas we would not see businesses like Marimba One which is doing quite well. Dennis sends out a monthly data table; Humboldt unemployment rate in October was 7.5%. Humboldt is ranked 2/3 lower than other counties in California. Historically, 1982 was 16.7%, unemployment topped out in 1993 with an estimated 1700 people unemployed in this county. Many of the layoffs are seasonal, such as the pulp mill; layoffs just started earlier this year than usual. *Is it common to be so on top of this?* Because Dennis is being so accurate in his counting, other counties may be worse off than they realize. *Do you take age dynamics into account?* Some retirees may be reentering the workforce. *Do we have a higher retirement age for California?* Yes, we are at 1.8% higher. For the most part we are counting more people unemployed. Our economy in the earlier years was related to the industries that had seasonal layoffs. The economy is different now from 1982. Our story has been "it's bad here", the timber industry was going through tremendous changes. The problems in Humboldt County are not the cause; they are all related to the national economy. It's how we are dealing with the national economy, not our regional area. We are more resilient than we have been in the past; more stable over time. These are very bleak economic times; these are the worst figures since 1943. This will affect us in the first quarter in the manufacturing area. Heavy industry will probably see a turndown. One hundred one thousand people have lost their jobs in California in the past year. Nonprofits are not an industry but there is going to be a huge drop off in this area. Median real wages are going up; lower employment, higher wages. *Is there any analysis for the baby boomers that will create a lot of new jobs?* Forty-two thousand PG&E employees will retire in the next 5-7 years. Two-thirds of the future jobs will be replacement jobs; replacing those who are retiring. *Are the chronically unemployed dropped off the lists?* No. *Any change in that measurement since the 70's and 80's?* No. Federal extensions can change the numbers a little. About half of the population in Humboldt County is in the workforce; that's approximately 60,000 people. The seasonally unadjusted rate is what Dennis uses in his calculations. There have been more layoffs than are on the chart. These layoffs are housing related, mortgage related layoffs. We have seen no other layoffs in the other Targets of Opportunity areas. The areas that have been growing over the past 15 years are holding their own. Public Works construction (not private construction) is beginning in the next year. *How ready is our workforce to do Public Works construction?* Ultimately we may have to hire from outside the County. Pay back time for these services from the state is extremely slow. PG&E repowering project has a 32 million dollar budget; the state can't touch this. Demolition of the old plant will take 5 years; 50-60 people will be employed for this project. St. Joe's project is \$60,000,000.00; Blue Lake Casino will have 40 construction jobs coming in. McKinleyville bridge project will begin Spring 2009 and continue until 2013. This came in 11% lower than budgeted. Four bridges in Hoopa, HSU student dormitory project, and CR student union project all in the works. *Can some of these state projects be held up?* It's possible with the economy looking the way it is.

3.4 Targets and Occupations talking points and plans for 2009 – There have been lots of demand for presentations. Jacqueline was sequestered in her office writing a grant for 2 million dollars that seeks to align College of the Redwoods with Targets of Opportunity. This money will be for new certificate programs and a redesign of CR;

analyzing wages and programs. CR is reworking their master plan to produce the workforce that this region needs. Looking at 12 degree programs in healthcare, distance learning, paramedics program, building systems and maintenance, electricians certificate program, upgrade the welding program, solar installation program, industry standard program, water and wastewater treatment program; all of this being fast tracked by Jeff Marsee. One example of a need to accelerate job training is there are currently 350 different water and wastewater treatment plants in Humboldt County. There is a huge demand all across the state for people who can do this particular kind of work. Also looking at having an AS degree for this. We're looking forward to getting funding for Targets Regional Planning. Also we're beginning to set up a series of economic summits; going to be bringing in subject matter experts. This should result in a regional economic plan. Youth Programs went from 9 million dollars in CETA a number of years ago to \$400,000.00 that we have at our disposal now. Branding – working on a project to develop the images and language that help people want to buy “who we are” here in Humboldt County. We would give that away to local businesses to use.

- 3.5 Celebration for John Woolley – The Full WIB would like to try and find time when we can all get together and thank John for his service. We'll set a date, time and place and then make an announcement.

4. REPORTS:

- 5.1 Executive Committee and Staff report – None
- 5.2 Community-Based Job Training Grant – None
- 5.3 Additional Assistance for Veterans – None
- 5.4 Job Market Operators – None

- 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS:** DVD developed by Digital Pathways students. DVD is back by the door for pickup.

- 6. CLOSING:** Meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.