KY Skills Network: Partnership Update

It has now been over a year since the creation and implementation of the Kentucky Skills Network. This unique partnership links dedicated workforce professionals from the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, Kentucky Community & Technical College System, Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, and the Kentucky Labor Cabinet. The Network exists to provide unified, efficient, quality and seamless workforce services and resources to new, existing and expanding companies within the Commonwealth. The Network’s mission has four primary components:

1. Customer Service with a Single Point of Contact
2. Streamlined Resources
3. Unified Marketing & Performance Measuring
4. Workforce Pipeline Development

Customer service is delivered through three levels of service. Level one consists of the State Team which is the first point of contact for all companies. The state team includes:

- Josh Benton, Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development
- Dr. Larry Ferguson, KCTCS Economic Development & Workforce Solutions
- Ben Hayden, Kentucky Career Center
- Mike Donta, Kentucky Labor Cabinet

These individuals work synergistically to ensure that companies receive unified and coordinated information and services related to their workforce development needs. Level two includes the Business Service Team Leaders from each of the Workforce Investment Boards across Kentucky. Level three includes all local representatives from the Cabinet for Economic Development, KCTCS Workforce Solutions, and the Kentucky Career Centers.

In the first quarter of 2015, Site Selection Magazine ranked Kentucky #1 in the South Central region for workforce development and cited the KY Skills Network as a primary reason for this designation. Kentucky was also awarded the Site Selection Magazine’s Governor’s Cup Award in March as a result of having the most business projects per capita in the nation. Last year, Kentucky announced more than 350 new location and expansion projects, which are projected to create nearly 15,000 jobs and more than $3.7 billion in new investment. That is the most business investment in Kentucky since the state started recording investment data nearly 30 years ago. As the largest provider of postsecondary education in Kentucky, KCTCS continues to play a critical role in enhancing the economic and workforce development of the Commonwealth.
Work-Ready-Communities Best Practices Summit

On April 29th, 2015 KCTCS hosted the Kentucky Work Ready Communities Best Practices Summit at the Central Office. The summit was sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland and the keynote speaker was Kentucky Lieutenant Governor Crit Luallen. President Box as well as all 16 College Presidents were in attendance. The summit was attended by 115 individuals throughout the Commonwealth.

KCTCS, the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet and the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB) delivered the summit in an effort to help communities that want to improve their economic development potential by working toward Kentucky Work Ready Communities certification. The certification assures employers that a local workforce has the talent and skills necessary to staff existing jobs and to master the innovative technologies new jobs will require. Since this innovative program started in 2011, 51 counties have achieved either Kentucky Work Ready Communities or Work Ready in Progress certification, and 29 are actively pursuing certification. This initiative has been lead and supported by several KCTCS College Presidents, staff and faculty in counties across the state.

To be designated a Kentucky Work Ready Community, business, education, economic, and elected leaders must collaborate and apply for the certification. Counties have to meet criteria in six areas including high school graduation rate, National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) holders, demonstrated community commitment, educational attainment, soft-skills development and digital literacy.

KCTCS-TRAINS

Beginning in fiscal year 2000-2001, KCTCS has supported and funded workforce development training. As of April 30, 2015, 25 career pathway projects, 1 Academic Program Development project, and 1,700 business and industry training projects have been funded. The status of the 1,700 business and industry training projects is that 1,589 are completed and 111 projects remain active. These projects have provided training and assessment services for 248,398 participants.

From July 1, 2014, through April 30, 2015, KCTCS colleges awarded 10,533 hours of academic credit to 8,662 individuals and provided non-credit training for 1,757 individuals for 8,593 clock hours through workforce development training projects.

As shown in the chart on the following page, for fiscal year 2014-15, KCTCS has funded 112 business and industry training projects through April 30, 2015; the average wage is $28.10.
Background

Economic Development and Workforce Solutions updates are presented twice a year at the June and December Board meetings. The intent for these updates are to keep the Board apprised of all activities and initiatives that KCTCS is engaged in to enhance economic and workforce development for Kentucky.