

Older Workers Sub-Committee

(A Subcommittee of Workforce Recruitment Task Force)

January 23, 2008

Meeting Notes

I. Welcome and Introductions

Philippe Chino, Jim Craig, Matt Jones, Kevin Messamer, Shari Peddicord, Linda Gostas, Barb Dougherty, Jenny Craft, Janelle Martinsen, Carmen Rideout (chair).

Not present: Les Engelter (AARP), Experience Works (Sr. Employment), SHRM representative, Nancy Etchingham (DVR).

Ask to Next Meeting: YMCA Active Older Adults Program, mature individuals

II. Forward Sheridan - Economic Development Challenge: Workforce Shortage

Forward Sheridan is here to provide support to the task forces. Philippe Chino explained the workforce shortage initiatives in the Strategic Plan for Economic Development in Sheridan County and encouraged attendees to review the Strategic Plan on the Forward Sheridan website, www.forwardsheridan.com (click Strategic Plan in the top navigation bar). He explained the task forces involved in the Workforce Shortage initiatives.

III. Remediation Goal – Utilizing Mature Workers, Encouraging workers to return to the workforce and encouraging companies to hire mature workers.

Challenges: Discrimination, insurance, schedules, training, caregiving needs within the family, etc.

Positives: Wealth of talent available in skills to tap. Training funds available. Classes they can take or teach.

Age range: Legal age is 40. Age ranges discussed here 50-70, when not in the technology curve, or perhaps simply at the time an individual enters into retirement. This needs to be defined more clearly as to the age range this subcommittee is targeting.

Ideas: Job fair, clearinghouse of jobs and skills available.

Discussion regarding clearinghouse of jobs, as well as clearinghouse of skills available in mature workers and kinds of jobs that are posted online with Workforce Center.

IV. Initiative – Older Workforce (Development and Utilization)

- a. **Overview** – Packets include some articles and information of what we are facing in the future in terms of workforce shortages. Packets also include a literature review. Members are encouraged to review these pieces of information prior to our next meeting.
- b. **Strategies** – At the workforce recruitment task force level, strategies were requested. Target timeline is one year.
 - i. Educate employers about how to hire older workers and what will attract older workers.
 1. Need to educate about need for flexibility among employers to accommodate the older workers
 - ii. Central database for older workers – one place where they can look for work and where employers can find them by skill set.
 1. Workforce Center screens both ways, but there are some issues that may preclude the Workforce Center’s system. We need to investigate it further.
 2. Older workers need a network they can plug into when they are ready to work – perhaps leave – then come back.
 3. Sophisticated system that will identify skills available to employers as well as jobs available to older workers.
 4. NAICS coding is how the center captures skills.
 - iii. Older worker job fairs – scheduled often.
 - iv. Education opportunities for workers to learn where to go to find jobs (word of mouth)
 - v. State of Wyoming is pushing WorkKeys skills testing
 1. Core skills tests, particularly good for younger workers and workers who have been laid off or are leaving due to illness or disability.
 2. Workforce Center will be doing WorkKeys testing
 3. Sheridan College offers WorkKeys
 - a. Evaluate what WorkKeys actually tests for
 - vi. Career guidance through assessments

- vii. Retraining opportunities for workers leaving one job and wanting to transition into another career
- viii. Businesses would be able to ascertain the level of expertise needed.

Consensus: Come at it from both sides – educate both employers and older workers

- Chamber luncheon on the subject
- Speak on the issue to civic clubs and organizations
- Older worker job fairs on a regular basis
- Posters in public places
- Speaker from Casper (Kevin)
- Recruit the business community
- Information for businesses on how to hire older workers on websites, such as Chamber and Forward Sheridan
- Workforce Services create a position of a specialist to work exclusively with mature workers - similar to the veterans rep
 - Kevin will work through this and discuss the concept and come back to the next meeting with options

c. Sub-Committee Responsibility

- Name the group
- Need to identify the need and how far reaching the need goes.
- Philippe identify employers to bring to the table.
- Jim will bring some additional older citizens
- First priority is to create the structure – create the database – the hub
- Second, educate employers and older workers

V. Action Plans need to include the following

- a. Identify individual tasks
- b. Identify potential resources
- c. Specific timeframes

VI. Meeting schedule: Monthly. 4th Wednesday 2:00 PM.

VII. Next meeting date and time – Workforce Center -- Feb 27, 2:00 PM