



SIWIB NEWS

NEWSLETTER FOR BOARD MEMBERS

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SIWIB COMMITTEE CONTACT INFORMATION

EXECUTIVE

Mary M. Roe, Chair

e-mail: maga7roe@yahoo.com

William Armstrong, 1st Vice Chair

e-mail: armstrong@mvn.net

John Alongi, 2nd Vice Chair

e-mail: johnr@alongis.com

Jim McPhail, 3rd Vice Chair

e-mail: jim MCP@4siwi.com

Janice McConnaughy, 4th Vice Chair

e-mail: jmconnaughy@shsdc.org

Kathy Lively, Treasurer

e-mail: kathy.lively@mantracon.org

Milton Maxwell, Parliamentarian

e-mail: info@siwib.org

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Milton Maxwell, Chair

e-mail: info@siwib.org

Kathy Lively, Vice Chair

e-mail: kathy.lively@mantracon.org

BUSINESS &

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

William Armstrong, Chair

e-mail: armstrong@mvn.net

John Hammack, Vice Chair

hammack@midwest.net

ONE-STOP

Alan Summers, Chair

e-mail: alansummers@illinois.gov

Angela Holmes-Young, Vice Chair

e-mail: a-holmes@aisinil.com

WIA POLICY & PLANNING

Michele Rheinecker, Chair

e-mail: michele.rheinecker@

cooperindustries.com

John Alongi, Vice Chair

e-mail: johnr@alongis.com

YOUTH COUNCIL

Tyler Young, Chair

e-mail: tyjr@midwest.net

June Hickey, Vice Chair

e-mail:

jhickey@cchs165.jacksn.k12.il.us

Visit our Web site at
www.siwib.org

CONNECT SI CREATES INDUSTRY GROUPS TO DEVELOP ACTION PLANS NEW INDUSTRY CLUSTERS SEEKING ACTIONABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NICHE MARKETS

Connect SI is facilitating the creation of two 20-county Industry Clusters. The clusters are the Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL) Cluster and the Energy Cluster. The clusters will be guiding over \$500,000 of research designed to develop action plans that identify and expand opportunities to create new jobs within the TDL and Energy sectors.

"Connect SI is pleased to be taking the lead in identifying and researching growth opportunities in the Southern Illinois region," said Kathy Lively, Connect SI Executive Director. "Ultimately, participation is the key to the success of our activities. Good ideas and strong partnerships lead to new opportunities and job creation within our region," she added.

Anyone with ideas or ties to the cluster targets is encouraged to participate in the ongoing research and planning activities. The kickoff events for the clusters will be held January 27-28, 2009 as follows:

- Transportation Distribution and Logistics Cluster – Tuesday, January 27, 2009 from 8:00-11:00am at the Mt Vernon Municipal Building; and
- Energy Cluster – Wednesday, January 28, 2009 from 8:00-11:00am at John A. Logan College in the Tarvin/Crisp room.

"With the incoming administration seeking ways to stimulate the economy, now is the time to prepare Southern Illinois to take advantage of upcoming opportunities to transform our local economy," said Cary Minnis, Connect SI Industry Cluster Coordinator.

The goal of the Clusters is to create implementation plans for each identified industry that will:

- Identify up to three specific actionable niche markets, which are defined, qualified in terms of reality and quantified in terms of opportunity
- Include up to three unique business opportunities per niche market that have industry led action teams ready to implement
- Identify opportunity areas that will be supported by valid business case research and create higher value jobs and profits for the Southern Illinois region

If you would like to participate in one of the Industry Clusters or would like more information, please contact Cary Minnis, Industry Cluster Coordinator, at caryminnis@mantracon.org or 618-998-0970 x211. ■

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Message from Our Chair...



MARY M. ROE

Happy New Year!

With the start of another New Year, it is customary to look back and reflect on the year we are leaving, and what a year it was, and then to look to the year ahead. This applies to our personal lives and to our roles as Board members.

Change has begun—with a new Congress, a new President, and an economy that defies old rules. We can be proactive about change or reactive. I believe that we will be the former.

As we watch what unfolds in Washington, DC, we will assess how those policies will affect our local and regional needs. This will involve evaluating any new policies and then determine how best to capitalize on them when setting long and short term-goals. Finally, we will need to continually evaluate our progress and outcomes to determine if the Board's policies provide the desired results. Thank you for your commitment to advance our mission of serving as the premier source for information about, and access to, the array of workforce development programs and services offered for our citizens and employers in Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Perry, and Williamson counties.

Most importantly, thank all of you for “being the change” by volunteering your valuable time and many varied talents in service to our communities and our neighbors as a member of the Southern Illinois Workforce Investment Board! ■

December SIWIB Meeting Notes

The Southern Illinois Workforce Investment Board met in the Great Room at the Rend Lake Resort and Conference Center in the Wayne Fitzgerald State Park in Whittington, Illinois on Thursday, December 11, 2008.

On behalf of the board, Chairperson Mary M. Roe recognized our Chief Local Elected Officials who provided their leadership this year. She then asked the CLEOs to stand and be recognized: CLEO Chair Wayne Bigham - who represented Perry County for Chairman James Epplin, and CLEO Vice Chair Brent Gentry - who represented Williamson County, and Jackson County Board Chair John Evans and Franklin County Board Chair Randall Crocker, and Jefferson County Board Chair Ted Buck.

Chair Roe also recognized Mr. Bob Kelly - the newly elected Chair of Perry County and Ms. Tracey Glenn - the newly elected Chair of Williamson County, who could not be with us. Chair Roe congratulated John Evans on just being elected CLEO Chair and Randall Crocker for having been elected CLEO Vice Chair. She acknowledged the CLEO's contributions are vital to the successes of the local workforce system and she appreciated their support and leadership.

Chair Roe welcomed the new members of the Board. Mr. Rex Cusumano with Cusumano & Sons in Mt. Vernon (who replaced Ed Beck) and Mr. Victor Harris with the Illinois Department of Employment Security (who replaced Pat Drake), and Mr. Terance Henry with Southern Illinois Small Business Solutions (who replaced Carole Spurling), and Mr. Charley Holstein with Rend Lake College (who replaced Mark Kern).

Chair Mary M. Roe asked all the Board members to stand and be recognized. They each introduced themselves and the business or organization they represent. The Chair thanked them all for their time, devoted service and the valued leadership they provide the Board.

There were some special individuals Chair Roe mentioned who volunteer their time and talents in service on our various committees: Kendra Humphreys, who serves on the One-Stop Committee; Sheila Ahlgren, Ethel Holladay, Peggy Falcone, Steve Buntin, Lisa Price and Linda Tilley, who serve on the Youth Council and Leo Childers, who serves on the Business & Economic Development Committee. The SIWIB Chair thanked them for sharing their expertise on our committees.

Chair Roe also recognized the Man-Tra-Con Corporate Board members: Phil Minnis, Carroll Turner, Bob Carlock, Mary Ellen Bechtel, Mary Sullivan and herself. The Chair expressed her thanks to the Man-Tra-Con staff for the many hours of work and effort they provide in service to the Board. They have had a very difficult and long year and have served the people of our area very well!

A few special guests were also recognized for their partnership with the SIWIB. Larry Woolard with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Dr. Carl Planinc with the Williamson County Regional Airport, and Ike Kirkikis with the Greater Egypt Regional Planning and Development Commission. Each was thanked for his many years of support of the Board and its work.

Chair Roe thanked the spouses and significant others of the members.

The SIWIB Chair then recognized a very special person. On October 18, 2008, the Inspiring Women organization honored four women of achievement who had made significant contributions in their chosen field to their cities and towns, business, governmental service or educational organization and whose achievements brought honor to the Southern Illinois region. One of the honorees was our CEO of Man-Tra-Con, Kathy Lively.

Chair Mary M. Roe presented new Board members (Rex Cusumano, Victor Harris, Terance Henry and Charley Holstein) with a SIWIB lapel pin. She asked them to wear their lapel pin to Board functions and be recognized as a member of one of the nation's premier Workforce Investment Boards.

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December SIWIB Meeting Notes

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Chair Mary M. Roe asked One-Stop Committee Chair Alan Summers to explain the Innovative Solution Award. Mr. Summers explained the award recognizes innovative workforce and economic development programs, projects, and/or initiatives that have resulted in the economic growth of a community or region. This year's 2008 Innovative Solution Award recipient was nominated by Cindy Webb with Man-Tra-Con.

The Southern Illinois Reentry Group (SIRG) is a coalition of agencies, faith-based organizations, social services agencies, and concerned community citizens that have joined together to establish statewide guidelines and effective procedures for use with individuals being released from a correctional facility or other confinement situation. The SIRG members have developed several initiatives that have proven to be extremely successful such as the "Passport". This resource document lists addresses and telephone numbers of organizations providing clothing, counseling, food, employment training and placement, medical treatment, and transportation. Parole agents use the Passport as a way to monitor the activities and because of its success; it has been incorporated into the Illinois Department of Correction's Parole School system.

It has also been involved with family outreach and support through the Family and Children of Prisoners Committee that works to provide services to the children of parents who are incarcerated. The above examples reflect the ongoing effort of SIRG to develop and implement innovative methods in service delivery. Other areas are beginning to emulate them and due to their success SIRG is recognized by the State and has been designated as the location of a Community Support Advisory Council (CSAC).

SIWIB Chair Roe presented awards to: Ms. Terri De Neal, Mr. John Holmes, and Ms. Beth Spezia representing SIRG and an award to Ms. Cindy Webb for submitting the nomination.

Ms. Kathy Lively stated the appreciation award was being presented to Mr. Bill Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong served as Chair of the SIWIB for over three years. He has always endeavored to learn and understand more about our funding stream and services we can provide. He and Cynthia both have been willing to attend conferences. This is a small token of appreciation for his service. Even though he is still with us, we want him to know how very much we appreciated his service as Chairman of the SIWIB from July 2004 through September 2008!

SIWIB Chair Mary M. Roe presented Mr. Armstrong with the Certificate of Appreciation. She also thanked Mr. Armstrong for his support and confidence. ■

How Can We Help?

BY KATHY LIVELY

Thank you all for your service to the workforce needs in our five county region. Unfortunately, the following unemployment rates tell only part of the story: Franklin 10.9; Jackson 6.6; Jefferson 7.8; Perry 10.7; Williamson 8.1. Daily our Resource Rooms and partner agency offices are flooded with dislocated workers. It is more important than ever that we continue to work together to best serve our workforce. In addition to services within offices, we are visiting with nervous employers who want to better understand the state services available to their workforce should a lay off or plant closure occur. Just this week we are visiting as a Rapid Response team to Circuit City. If you are aware of any possible reduction in force with one of your local employers, we are very willing to meet with them to share information in a confidential manner.

In addition to high unemployment, we are faced with the exciting challenge of proposed stimulus plans. Please know that we are attempting to stay up to date with proposed legislation and stimulus plans and are, in fact, already thinking about the possibility of a summer youth program that could rival the summer work programs of old. All of our partner agencies are also facing the possibility of additional funding and responsibilities. The workforce board is the only entity with all of the partners at the table who can help us to maximize the important dollars that will be flowing into our region. You can follow the progress of the stimulus legislation at www.america.gov.

Our economic development partners continue to be an important part of our work. We enjoy great relationships with our economic development partners in all of our counties and will continue to work with them to bring opportunities to our region. If you know of someone working with potential employers who might need our assistance with a summary of WIA benefits, GIS mapping of existing workforce by sector, 30 and 60 mile radius maps, etc., please have them contact me so that we can meet their needs.

Connect SI is also beginning a Transportation, Distribution, Logistics (TDL) and Energy study and implementation process in the southern-most 20 counties of Illinois. We are attempting to discover opportunity areas within our region in both of those sectors. If you or anyone you know would be interested in helping to guide the \$250,000+ research, please have them contact Cary Minnis at 618.998.0970, extension 211 and/or attend the meetings next week.

Please continue to refer people in need to any and all of the wonderful partner agencies represented on the Southern Illinois Workforce Board. A visit to www.siwib.org will remind you of our partner services. Thank you again for your commitment in service to our workforce. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 3, 2008

One-Stop Committee
8:00 a.m. at the
One-Stop Business
& Employment Center in
Marion, Illinois

FEBRUARY 18, 2008

Chief Local Elected Officials
11:30 a.m. at the
Man-Tra-Con Office
West Frankfort, Illinois

FEBRUARY 6, 2009

**WIA Policy and Planning
Committee**
4:30 p.m. at the
One-Stop Business
& Employment Center in
Marion, Illinois

MARCH 19, 2009

SIWIB
5:30 p.m. at the
One-Stop Business
& Employment Center in
Marion, Illinois

Youth Council Update

The Youth Council met on December 10, 2008, at the Marion Man-Tra-Con office. A new format for the *Providers' Monthly Report* was presented to the Council members for approval. This revision will allow more dialogue for each youth provider to elaborate on their program and report impact, challenges, and successes relevant to each of the three performance measures.

Ms. Cerutti reported the newly created providers' spreadsheets reflect cumulative numbers for the year and will incorporate information from various reports eliminating redundancy in reporting and allowing for ease of review. She also reported the 2008 performance measures have ended and each of the goals have been met or have been exceeded. Chairman Young will contact Abdul Houck for more information on the proposed Youth Build Grant proposal due January 16, 2009. Mr. Houck has requested a letter of support from the Youth Council and Man-Tra-Con. The members voted to reevaluate the request for the letter when more details are available regarding content of the proposal.



Business and Economic Development Committee Meeting Notes

Chairman Armstrong cited the first agenda item in which he introduced Cary Minnis and asked him to speak about the incumbent worker MSN project. Mr. Minnis began by giving a brief update on the origination of the MSN Scholarships and the grant that was awarded to Connect SI. While the original plan was to fund the training 100% it was determined by DCEO that these grant funds would have to be spent using our local IWT policies and would require a 10% match from community colleges. Each of the six community colleges will be able to access \$17,000 to upgrade current faculty with BSN degrees to MSN faculty. This would allow more RN's to be trained. Dr. Mees added that the community colleges encounter problems finding qualified instructors. Typically working nurses do not have the free time to pursue additional training. Dr. Mees informed the committee that the University of Illinois would be developing an on-line degree program which should help. Mr. Minnis pointed out that the grant currently is scheduled to end on 6/30/2009, but he is working on an agreement with DCEO to return some of the funding in exchange for a new grant with an extended deadline. Mr. Minnis prepared the committee and let them know that hopefully he will be coming back to this group and ask for approval for each IWT project with the community colleges.

Jamie Galli of Man-Tra-Con discussed the recent inquiries that she has had from local companies in the region who had questions about our rapid response services. She stated some of them have asked to remain confidential at this time. Ms. Galli stated that 200 of the Maytag students are set to graduate May '09 along with 169 Technicolor customers. There were over 400 graduates in December 2008 from the program. Our objective now is to help those individuals find employment. Jamie explained that unemployment and additional benefits were available because of the trade act. Now, because of new DCEO policy changes some of the same services would not qualify for additional funding. Currently Man-Tra-con was able to assist those individuals laid off from Godfrey Marine and Pinckneyville Skilled Care with our regular formula funds. If a large company does decide to shut down and if their employment total is below 250, applications for additional assistance cannot be requested. Employee total must be over 250. Ms. Galli stated that if WPS does not receive another contract, they might have to layoff 300 employees and Goody's in Mt. Vernon is shutting down, affecting 40 people. Ms. Galli added that this is not just a local problem and every workforce provider throughout the state is concerned. ■