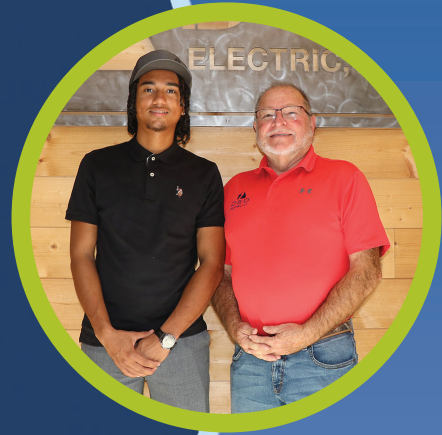


# SIWDB ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 1, 2023 – NOVEMBER 30, 2024

**Workforce  
Development  
in Action!**



**Southern Illinois  
Workforce Development  
BOARD**

*One Region Workforce Strong*



The American Job Center and partner agencies serve businesses and residents of Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Perry and Williamson Counties. The partner system supports the economic health of Southern Illinois by providing services designed to build a quality workforce. The need to provide a quality workforce for local employers drives our collective work.

With guidance from our Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO) and the Southern Illinois Workforce Development Board (SIWDB), the partners work to improve workforce preparation and quality of life for all the customers we serve. Enclosed please find the facts and figures surrounding collaborative work in serving our local workforce area and southern Illinois.

# WIOA Title 1B: Adult, DW & Youth Services

*Man-Tra-Con is proud to be a partner of the American Job Center for LWIA 25, serving the communities of Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Perry, and Williamson Counties. The following report shows Title 1B Service and Performance reports for December 1, 2023, through November 30, 2024.*



## Employer Services

*The Employer Services team offers recruitment services including: individual meetings with employers; participation in group employer gatherings; and hiring events. The team, in collaboration with AJC partners, provides up-to-date labor market statistics and other helpful demographic data to assist in the recruitment and retention of southern Illinois employers. Coordinating employer workshops and retention visits in connection with local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development partners are important elements of the business service team in LWIA 25.*

### ECONOMIC IMPACT – Total Amount Spent on Employer and Customer Services

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Adult .....            | \$1,023,585.11        |
| Dislocated Worker..... | \$211,629.41          |
| Youth.....             | \$614,135.83          |
| Special Grants .....   | \$1,204,850.52        |
| Employer Services..... | \$292,224.54          |
| <b>TOTAL .....</b>     | <b>\$3,346,425.41</b> |

### WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (WEP) CONTRACTS SIGNED WITH 38 EMPLOYERS

- 13RF
- Affordable Lawn Service
- American Job Center SI
- Allied Automotive
- Arthur Agency
- Attucks
- Best Ever Body
- Black Diamond RV Service Center
- Carbondale Park District
- Carbondale United
- City of Herrin
- City of Marion
- Com-Pac
- Crucial
- Dayempur Farm
- Enhanced Aero
- Extreme Exigency
- Franklin County Senior Services
- Gift of Love
- Herron
- JMO Modular
- Keens Trucking
- Longbranch
- Man-Tra-Con
- Miller Contracting Services, LLC
- Miz BJ's Hair Haven
- Oasis
- Odyssey Railcar
- Prime Realty of America
- Quality Inn
- Rafi's Custom Remodeling
- Resource Room
- Schirm USA
- SI Prime Cleaning
- Sidney & Solomon
- Take Action Today
- Town Square
- Wit and Wisdom

# WIOA Title 1B: Adult, DW & Youth Services

## Man-Tra-Con Employer & Customer Services Impact



**DEMOGRAPHICS:  
ADULT**

|                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Total Registered</b> .....    | <b>166</b> |
| Male .....                       | 47.0%      |
| Female .....                     | 52.4%      |
| Felony.....                      | 22.9%      |
| Misdemeanor .....                | 9.6%       |
| Food Stamp Recipient .....       | 82.5%      |
| Determined Low Income.....       | 100%       |
| Veteran.....                     | 1.8%       |
| Disability .....                 | 4.8%       |
| Received Training Services ..... | 61%        |

**Race**

|                              |       |
|------------------------------|-------|
| White .....                  | 65.7% |
| Black .....                  | 31.3% |
| Hispanic.....                | 2.4%  |
| Preferred not to answer..... | 4.3%  |

**Education Level**

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Dropout.....           | 13.3% |
| HS Grad .....          | 33.7% |
| Post HS Attendee ..... | 27.7% |
| College Grad.....      | 17.5% |

**DEMOGRAPHICS:  
DISLOCATED WORKER**

|                                  |           |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Total Registered</b> .....    | <b>78</b> |
| Male .....                       | 62.3%     |
| Female .....                     | 37.7%     |
| Felony.....                      | 16.9%     |
| Misdemeanor .....                | 15.6%     |
| Food Stamp Recipient .....       | 49.4%     |
| Determined Low Income.....       | 51.9%     |
| Veteran.....                     | 6.5%      |
| Disability .....                 | 2.6%      |
| Received Training Services ..... | 53%       |

**Race**

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| White .....                    | 87.0% |
| Black .....                    | 13.0% |
| Am. Indian/Alaskan Native..... | 1.3%  |
| Hispanic.....                  | 2.6%  |
| Preferred not to answer.....   | 1.3%  |

**Education Level**

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Dropout.....           | 3.9%  |
| HS Grad .....          | 32.5% |
| Post HS Attendee ..... | 31.2% |
| College Grad.....      | 23.4% |

**DEMOGRAPHICS:  
YOUTH**

|                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Total Registered</b> .....    | <b>166</b> |
| Male .....                       | 48.1%      |
| Female .....                     | 50.0%      |
| Age 14-18.....                   | 48.8%      |
| Age 18-21.....                   | 33.1%      |
| Age 22+ .....                    | 18.1%      |
| Food Stamp Recipient .....       | 53.8%      |
| Determined Low Income.....       | 63.8%      |
| Veteran.....                     | 1.3%       |
| Disability .....                 | 14.6%      |
| Received Training Services ..... | 58%        |

**Race**

|                                 |       |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| White .....                     | 88.1% |
| Black .....                     | 10.6% |
| Am. Indian/Alaskan Native.....  | 0.6%  |
| Asian .....                     | 0.6%  |
| Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ..... | 0.6%  |
| Hispanic.....                   | 3.1%  |
| Preferred not to answer.....    | 3.1%  |

**Education Level**

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Dropout.....           | 71.7% |
| HS Grad .....          | 8.7%  |
| Post HS Attendee ..... | 4.3%  |
| College Grad.....      | 1.3%  |

## Adult Success: McKenzie Yates

Career Specialist Nikki Lanham reports on her customer. “McKenzie was a mom of 3 children when she came to Man-Tra-Con in July 2022, seeking WIOA training assistance. She was interested in becoming a nurse and needed our services to enroll in the Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program at John A. Logan College for the fall 2022 semester. Through WIOA funding, McKenzie was eligible to receive assistance with transportation costs, fees, and tuition, plus other supportive services like uniforms and books,” Nikki explains.



“McKenzie faced several obstacles while in the LPN program. In addition to caring for her 3 children, she helped her dad care for her 3-year-old sister Juniper. She also endured a legal battle for custody of Juniper. When Juniper was admitted to the hospital with major health issues, McKenzie had to miss 12 days of the nursing program. McKenzie overcame all these obstacles, successfully completed the program, and received her LPN license in August 2023,” Nikki reports.

“In November 2023, Mckenzie began working for Advantage Nursing Services in Marion, Illinois, as a full-time LPN earning \$30.00 per hour. It is a pediatric home health care position and she works “one-on-one” with her patient. McKenzie plans to apply for the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program, and continue with her

(Continued on next page)

## Dislocated Worker Success: Laci Pearce Woolard

### Statewide Individual Achievement Award Winner!

Career Specialist Nikki Lanham reports on her customer. “Laci came to Man-Tra-Con for assistance in July of 2022. She had been laid-off from her job at the Hyatt Reservation Center in Marion, Illinois, since 2020. Laci wanted to return to school to become a nurse. She was seeking training assistance to enroll in the Associate Degree in Nursing program at John A. Logan College,” Nikki says.

“Through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding and Man-Tra-Con services for dislocated workers, Laci was determined eligible to receive career coaching and financial assistance for occupational skills training. Man-Tra-Con also helped pay for her transportation costs, books, exam fees, and childcare,” Nikki adds.

“Laci graduated from John A. Logan College in May of 2024, with a grade point average of 3.76. In August, she began working for Southern Illinois Healthcare in Carbondale as a full-time nurse in the “mother/baby” unit earning \$30.25 per hour,” Nikki says.

(Continued on page 6)



Laci and her daughter celebrate pinning day at John A. Logan College.

## Adult Success: McKenzie Yates

(Continued from page 4)

education to eventually earn her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing She is a determined woman, and I know she can do it,” Nikki says.

McKenzie was thankful for the assistance she received from Man-Tra-Con. “I don’t know what I would have done without Man-Tra-Con. I don’t know how I would have made it. My books, tuition, everything was paid for, and it made me be able to live on my financial aid,” McKenzie says. ■

## Youth Success: Jemma Gamble

Career Specialist Mady Senior reports on her customer. “In September 2023, Jemma began receiving Man-Tra-Con services as a youth customer through Workforce Investment & Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Supplemental Grant funding. She was also enrolled at ECHO Alternative School to receive her high school diploma. During her time at ECHO, Jemma received cash incentives from Man-Tra-Con for attendance and completing classes, as well as a transportation allowance,” Mady reports.

“After Jemma had graduated from Project ECHO, she enrolled in a paid Work Experience Program (WEP) at the American Job Center in Marion, Illinois. The work experience allowed Jemma ‘bulk up’ her resume, and get paid while developing skills for future employment,” Mady explains.

(Continued on page 6)



## Employer Success: Shawnee Health

### Statewide Business Leadership Award Winner!

During the pandemic in 2020, Shawnee, like many employers, experienced substantial staffing challenges. Shawnee recognized that there were individuals in our local communities who wanted to work in healthcare but had experienced barriers to employment. Many individuals were unable attend traditional educational institutions full-time while working to support their families, and some adults struggled with traditional classroom learning with practical application at a later date. Becoming a certified medical assistant took several months, and dental assistants faced years to complete the certification process.



To address these issues, Shawnee expanded their “grow your own” programs to include paid registered apprenticeships in partnership with Man-Tra-Con Corporation and the Department of Labor. The apprenticeship program trains individuals to become certified staff through an educational course, on-the-job training, and coaching from experienced clinicians. Apprentices are hired as employees and paid for all on-the-job training hours. In October 2021, Shawnee and Man-Tra-Con successfully registered the Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program. In November 2021, Shawnee and Man-Tra-Con successfully registered the Dental Assistant Apprenticeship Program. In December 2022, Shawnee and Man-Tra-Con successfully registered the Community Health Worker Apprenticeship Program.

In spring 2022, Shawnee began its first Medical Assistant Apprenticeship program in partnership with the National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement (NIMAA). To date, Shawnee has successfully completed four (4) apprenticeships, with two (2) currently in progress, and one (1) upcoming for spring 2025. Shawnee has a success rate of 100% for apprentices completing the program, with the majority of them receiving high honors throughout the entirety of the NIMAA coursework. Thirteen (13) of the fifteen (15) apprentices are still working with Shawnee as Certified Medical Assistants.

Shawnee began its first Dental Assistant Apprenticeship with participants enrolled at Southern Illinois University – Carbondale in spring 2022. To date, Shawnee has successfully completed one (1) apprenticeship and has begun three (3) additional apprenticeships.

*(Continued on page 10)*

## Dislocated Worker Success: Laci Pearce Woolard

*(Continued from page 5)*

*“Laci has always been pleasant and cheerful – even in the face of adversity. With the challenges of being a mother of a 3-year-old daughter, Laci still made it through nursing school. She is a very caring person and her goal all along was to become a nurse working with mothers and babies. She set a goal, put her mind into it, and that is what she is doing now in her career,”* Nikki adds.

Laci was thankful to receive training assistance from Man-Tra-Con, and has plans to continue with her education.

*“I really know I would not have made it without Man-Tra-Con. It allowed me to pay for my expenses and not have to turn to loans as an option. Now, I will be starting my BSN in the fall,”* Laci says. ■

## Youth Success: Jemma Gamble

*(Continued from page 5)*

Jemma is thankful for the assistance she received. *“I have benefitted from Man-Tra-Con and the help they’ve given me. I finished my classes early, I’ve gotten two scholarships, and I’m about to start my first year of college this fall. I just hope that more kids who are in a tough situation can receive the resources they provide, plus the help that they can give from helping you sign up for SNAP to helping you get a degree in science. Man-Tra-Con has truly provided a lot for me and I truly appreciate them,”* Jemma says. ■

## Apprenticeship Program Proclamation & Signing Event: D & D Electric, LLC

Representatives from the State of Illinois, Apprenticeship Illinois, and Man-Tra-Con Corporation held a State Proclamation and Apprenticeship Program signing event on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of National Apprenticeship Week (NAW).

NAW was established by the U.S. Department of Labor to showcase and promote high-quality, inclusive, in-demand career pathway opportunities through Registered Apprenticeships.

The event was held at D & D Electric, LLC, in Harrisburg, Illinois, to promote emerging industries during National Apprenticeship Week. D & D Electric, LLC, a family-owned company founded by Dave and Darla Martin, is committed to developing and supporting the renewable energy revolution by installing solar energy projects throughout Southern Illinois and beyond.

D & D Electric currently employs over 50 energy professionals with a variety of “hands-on” experience and expertise. A dedicated supporter of apprenticeship programs from the U.S. Department of Labor, D & D Electric has recently partnered with Man-Tra-Con Corporation and Apprenticeship Illinois to train employees for solar energy installation projects within Southern Illinois. The Apprenticeship Program allows employees to learn skills on the job while getting paid. The program also pays for any tools or supplies participants need to perform the work.

(Continued on page 10)



## Apprenticeship Success: Fawne Maguire

Fawne joined the Air Force after she graduated high school. She worked as a licensed C-17 Aircraft mechanic in the Air Force for four years until her honorable discharge. After leaving the Air Force, Fawne continued her education to earn her Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) license. She wanted to become a pilot and enrolled in flight and management courses in the Aviation Program at Southern Illinois University (SIUC) in Carbondale, Illinois.

After receiving her A&P license, Fawne applied for employment at Crucial MRO in Murphysboro, Illinois. In November 2022, she enrolled in the Apprenticeship Program through Man-Tra-Con with assistance from Apprenticeship and Special Grants Coordinator Erica Travelstead, and began working part-time at Crucial MRO as an apprentice mechanic while going to school at SIUC.

As a participant in the Apprenticeship Program, Fawne was able to use her aviation training, plus learn additional skills on the job while being employed at Crucial. Fawne was also able to receive financial assistance to help pay for the tools, and supplies she needed to perform her job. Fawne is currently working at Crucial MRO as a mechanic, and is scheduled to graduate from the SIUC Aviation program in May of 2025.

*“When I moved here, I didn’t have any tools yet, but was a licensed mechanic. This opportunity has saved me a lot of money and time and I am very thankful for this grant opportunity. I was in the Air Force for four years as a C-17 Aircraft mechanic. When I was honorably discharged, I took my exams to get my Airframe and Powerplant license. I moved to Southern Illinois to go to school to be a pilot and now I also work at Crucial MRO using my A&P license. I love airplanes and am thankful every day that I get to work on them and fly them,”* Fawne explains. ■



# LOCAL WORKS: Connecting Young Adults with Employers

Through supplemental grant funding from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Man-Tra-Con Corporation developed the “Local Works” program which sponsored tours for high school students located within LWIA 25 (Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Perry, and Williamson Counties). The Local Works program was designed to connect young adults with local employers in the area and raise awareness about potential job and/or apprenticeship opportunities available to them after graduation.

Students received water bottles, Local Works t-shirts, tape measure keychains, and drawstring bags before beginning the tour. Man-Tra-Con also purchased regulation “steel-toed” boots for the students to wear during the plant tours and keep after the tours ended.

The tours began at 9:00 a.m. and ended with breakfast presentations where students learned about potential career or training opportunities.

**Du Quoin High School** students toured the **Prysmian** plant on February 14, 2024. The Prysmian plant, (formerly General Cable) is a division of Prysmian — a world leader in the energy and telecom cable industry.

Prysmian manufactures thousands of miles of cables and systems for power transmission and distribution, as well as cables in micro-grids, energy storage, renewable energy and EVs and EV charging stations.

Prysmian is currently developing a \$63.8 million expansion project at its Du Quoin, Illinois plant to increase cable manufacturing for the renewable energy and electric vehicle sectors.

**West Frankfort High School** students toured the **Continental Tire** plant in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, on February 28, 2024. A major employer within the region, Continental Tire produces passenger and light truck tires, truck tires, and pre-cure tread.

With 3,500 employees, Continental Tire offers job opportunities in production, supervision, engineering, maintenance and much more. Manufacturing its first tire in 1974 as General Tire in Mt. Vernon, the company is currently celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year.

**Marion High School** students toured the **Aisin Illinois** manufacturing plant in Marion, Illinois, on March 7, 2024. Students were able to use Virtual Reality headsets to see inside the plant before the tour began.

Founded in 1965, Aisin supplies engine, drivetrain, body and chassis, aftermarket, and other automotive parts for the Toyota Motor Corporation, plus OEM parts for other companies such as Subaru, General Motors, and Mercedes.

**Benton High School** students visited the **JOLT, LLC**, plant in Sessor, Illinois, on March 18, 2024. Established in

*(Continued on next page)*





## Student Spotlight: Camden Walker



Several students inspired by the Prysmian tour applied and were eventually hired. One of those students was Camden Walker.

Eric Gossman from Prysmian says, “Camden Walker is an inspiring employee at Prysmian. Camden’s journey with the company began during a high school tour, where he was fascinated by the intricate processes and impressed by the welcoming atmosphere. Reflecting on that experience, Camden shared, ‘They even fed us!’ —a moment that left a lasting impression.”

“After graduating, Camden knew Prysmian was where he wanted to build his career. He credits Sarah McKinnies for encouraging him to take the tour, which ultimately shaped his path. Camden lives by the motto, ‘Perseverance is the key to success,’ a principle that has guided him in his professional journey,” Eric Gossman adds. ■

(Continued from page 8)

2005, JOLT offers CNC machining, welding, fabrication, machine rebuilds, CAD, and consulting services.

With the success of the Local Works pilot project and continued DCEO supplemental grant funding, a new round of tours for high school students are currently in the works for December 2024 and 2025. ■

Students learned about career opportunities and explored new technology during the plant tours.



## Apprenticeship Program Proclamation & Signing Event: D & D Electric

(Continued from page 7)



Left to right: Man-Tra-Con CEO Robyn Russell, Apprentice Domarion Nunez, and co-founder of D & D Electric Dave Martin.

Darrell Hampsten, Southern Region Manager Team RED, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), presented proclamation certificates to D & D Electric and Man-Tra-Con Corporation.

*“Apprenticeships are a powerful way to create economic growth across Illinois. By connecting individuals with a skillset with employers, they present not just jobs, but also careers. From manufacturing, healthcare and IT to construction and hospitality, Illinois companies are using apprenticeships to recruit, train, and retain top talent. Apprenticeships are more than jobs, they are pathways for lasting career success,”* Darrell Hampsten says.

Man-Tra-Con CEO Robyn Russell states, *“Watching these apprenticeships develop and grow is exciting! There is a lot of work that goes in on the front end to get them set up, but you’re setting up to build a career for someone, not just getting them a job, and a partnership is the best way to strengthen these programs and make sure you have buy-in from all the partners. Man-Tra-Con truly appreciates the Employer partners we have and their willingness to help us develop new programs that can be delivered throughout the Southern Illinois region.”*

(Continued on next page)

## Employer Success: Shawnee Health

(Continued from page 6)

Of the eight (8) enrolled, two (2) have completed the apprenticeship program as Certified Dental Assistants. While one (1) apprentice exited the program, the remaining five (5) continue their progress toward certification. Even while in training, the apprentices serve approximately 1,800 patients per year.

In fall 2022, Shawnee began its first Community Health Worker Apprenticeship in partnership with NIMAA. NIMAA developed the educational coursework using guidance provided by the Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA) regarding the specific competencies the state of Illinois will require for future community health worker licensing. The apprenticeship program trains individuals through educational coursework and on-the-job training to become community health workers, serving as a liaison between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality-of-service delivery. Apprentices are hired as employees and paid for all learning and on-the-job training hours. To date, Shawnee has successfully completed one (1) apprenticeship with a success rate of 100% for apprentices completing the program. Of the six (6) apprentices, three (3) are still working with Shawnee as Community Health Workers. As the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) works on the design and implementation of a licensing process for community health workers, Shawnee routinely provides feedback from both the perspective of an employer of community health workers and as community health workers working in the role.

Through apprenticeships, “grow your own” programs, and the assistance of local partners, Shawnee has successfully enhanced and stabilized its workforce while contributing to the economic viability of the local workforce, as well as expanded access to care for its community. ■

## ROE 21 & 30 Career Fairs for HS Students

Man-Tra-Con partnered with the Regional Office of Education (ROE) 30, Illinois Department of Employment Security, and Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, to organize a career fair for students from 10 area high schools. The event was held at the SIU Student Center on March 19, 2024.

Over 70 area employers participated in the career fair. Students were able to network with employers, learn about the various organizations, and receive information on potential future career opportunities.

Man-Tra-Con Corporation also participated in the ROE 21 Career Fair held on October 9, 2024, at the Pavilion in Marion. High schools from both the Regional Office of Education #21 (ROE 21) and Regional Office of Education #30 (ROE 30) participated in the October 9th event.

Over 1,000 high school students had an opportunity to speak with more than 80 local employers including representatives from manufacturing, education, and



*Man-Tra-Con Youth Program Coordinator Jo Dene Kern and Career Specialist Justin Dodd explain Man-Tra-Con services to students at the ROE Career Fair in Marion.*

healthcare industries. Students were excited to meet with employers, learn about career opportunities, and try out various simulation displays present at the event. ■

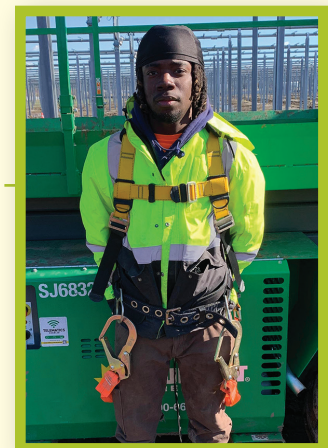
## Apprenticeship Program Proclamation & Signing Event: D & D Electric

*(Continued from page 10)*

As their business expanded over the years, D & D Electric realized the need for apprenticeship training. *“We need to train people, and give them a craft. You watch these guys work alongside the seasoned electricians in the field and it’s amazing what they can pick up. They do classroom work and leadership training as well and you can see it makes such a difference... the class time, plus the on-the-job training... they belong to something,”* co-founder Dave Martin says.

Apprenticeship participant Domarion Nunez, from Cairo, Illinois, is thankful for the training opportunity. *“When I graduated from high school, D & D hired me on with little to no experience, developed me, and now I can do anything on a home solar, everything on a solar farm, basically. It really means a lot. Being young and being from where I’m from, you really don’t have a lot of job opportunities. But, D & D offered me an opportunity to really make some good money and get some good experience,”* Domarion Nunez says.

Man-Tra-Con Employer Services Manager Emily Perks is happy to meet with employers. *“Apprenticeship is a proven model of developing a skilled workforce and we are here to help with that planning process and development,”* Emily Perks says. ■



*Apprentice Kevin Robinson at D & D Electric was named Apprenticeship Ambassador for the 2025 program year.*

# Workforce Summit: Employer-Driven Solutions

Man-Tra-Con Corporation, led by Employer Services Manager Emily Perks, collaborated with SIWDB Economic Development Committee members and local employers to host our third annual Workforce Summit: Employer-Driven Solutions.

The all-day summit was held at John A. Logan College in Carterville, Illinois, on Wednesday, October 2, 2024. The workforce summit featured national speakers, local employer panel discussions, plus representatives from education, healthcare, employment law, and manufacturing. Over 120 people attended the event. Photos illustrate highlights from the event.

The summit opened with introductions by Steven Mitchell, Economic Development Director, City of Carbondale and a Welcome Address from Dr. Kirk Overstreet, President, John A. Logan College.

Presentation topics included: **Embracing Artificial Intelligence** by Keynote Speaker Becky Gandillon, Data & Analytics Lead, Centric Consulting; **AI: Is it Really Ready for Small Business?** by Rob Craig, Professor, Electronics and Computer Technology, JALC; **Workplace Culture** by Paola Velasquez, Director of People, Culture & Equity, IMEC; **Illinois Employment Law Updates** by Scott Cruz, Partner, UB Greensfelder LLP;

**Advancing Southern Illinois Manufacturing: A Supply Chain Conversation** by Dr. Deb Barnett, Executive Director, SI NOW and Dr. David Boulay, President, IMEC; and **Talent Pipeline Management** by Kim Kuchenbrod, CWDP, TPM Fellow, Talent Management and Business Sector Administrator, Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies

Randy Prince, Senior Business Development Manager, IMA, moderated an employer panel discussion session. Panel members contributing to the discussion included Robbie Musoiu, HR Manager, Deaconess Illinois; Mani Daggula, Plant Manager, Penn Aluminum; Cheryl Endres, Executive Vice President, Silkworm; Cale Mifflin, Vice President of Human Resources and Relations, Silkworm; and Nick Wortman, Associate Vice Chancellor, HR, SIUC.

The event was made possible by contributions from the following sponsors: AES Solar, Carterville Chamber of Commerce, Deaconess Illinois, Illinois Manufacturers' Association (IMA), Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC), John A. Logan College, Penn Aluminum, Pepsi Mid-America, Prysmian, Silkworm, SI Now, Southern Illinois Healthcare, Southern Illinois University, and UB Greensfelder. ■

## COMMENTS

***“Innovative solutions to some of the most challenging issues employers and/or employees face.”***

***“Excellent program, lots of great information and an opportunity to network with area businesses.”***

***“Good updates on new Illinois employment laws.”***



## DCEO Deputy Director Julio Rodriguez Visits Man-Tra-Con and the American Job Center during Southern Illinois Workforce Development Tour

Man-Tra-Con Corporation was honored in August by a visit from Julio Rodriguez, Deputy Director, Office of Employment and Training from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

DCEO Downstate Workforce Development Regional Manager Bryan Ellis, Man-Tra-Con CEO Robyn Russell, Man-Tra-Con staff, Southern Illinois Corporate Board and Workforce Development Board (SIWDB) members, Perry County CLEO Bruce Morgenstern, and Erik Perks, General Manager from Prysmian Group, welcomed Director Rodriguez during a dinner meeting at “The W” in Du Quoin, Illinois, on Tuesday evening. Perks presented information on Prysmian’s \$63.8 million expansion project at their Du Quoin, Illinois, plant. The expansion project plans to boost cable manufacturing for renewable energy sectors, plus create 80 high-paying jobs for the region. Prysmian Group is currently working with Man-Tra-Con programs for maintenance apprenticeships and incumbent worker training.

Black Diamond Harley-Davidson Family of Businesses co-owner and Oasis Outdoors developer Rodney Cabaness and Marketing Director Herby Voss gave a presentation at Man-Tra-Con Corporation in Marion, Illinois, about economic development plans currently underway to create a \$30 million, multi-use Oasis Sports Complex, and other family-friendly destination attractions within Marion, Illinois. The developments, when complete, will create about 3,000 new jobs within Marion and the Southern Illinois region. After the presentation, Oasis owners gave Director Rodriguez a helicopter tour of business developments in Marion and Williamson County.

The afternoon included a tour of the Southern Illinois Multi-Module Station (SIMMS) currently under construction in Carbondale. The \$14 million multi-module station will replace the current train and bus station to provide a safe, convenient location for multiple modes of transportation serving residents within a 30-county area. The station will include office space for Amtrak, Carbondale Tourism, Carbondale Main Street, JAX Mass Transit, Man-Tra-Con, and a SIU Welcome Center.



**Julio Rodriguez tours the new SIMMS construction site.**  
Left to Right: Steven Mitchell, Economic Development Director, City of Carbondale; William Lo, Executive Director, Carbondale Chamber of Commerce & IWIB Member; Bryan Ellis, Downstate Workforce Development Regional Manager, DCEO; Julio Rodriguez, Deputy Director, Office of Employment & Training, DCEO; Jordan McBride, Program Manager, Man-Tra-Con; Emily Perks, Employer Services Manager, Man-Tra-Con; Mary Roe, Man-Tra-Con Corporate Board President & Southern Illinois Workforce Development Board Vice-Chair; Tamiko Mueller, Jackson County Chief Local Elected Official; Robyn Russell, CEO, Man-Tra-Con.

The SIMMS tour was followed by a tour of Crucial MRO in Murphysboro, currently participating in an Aviation Apprenticeship Program in partnership with Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and Man-Tra-Con.

Director Rodriguez talked about plans DCEO has for workforce areas throughout the state of Illinois. DCEO is looking at ways for the department to better serve workforce development partners and customers, and also to help frontline workforce development staff carve out more time to work with customers by exploring technology-based assistance. In working with difficult to serve customers, Julio advised, “We need to take challenges and turn them into opportunities.”

Man-Tra-Con enjoyed having Director Rodriguez visit, and showing him the many exciting projects happening in our area to promote economic and workforce development within southern Illinois. ■

# Man-Tra-Con Opens 2 New Offices for Perry & Jefferson County Residents

Man-Tra-Con Corporation opened two new office locations serving residents of Perry and Jefferson Counties. Both offices are equipped with computers utilizing Internet access to help job seekers find employment and/or additional training. A career specialist will also be available to provide “one-on-one” assistance to those who meet eligibility requirements.

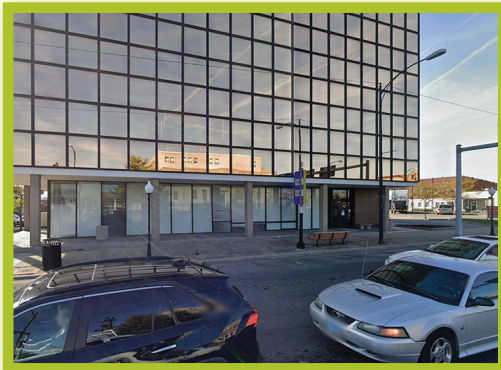
The Perry County office is located at the John A. Logan – Alongi Du Quoin Extension Center, 72 Southtowne Shopping Center in Du Quoin, Illinois.

*“I welcome the news of Man-Tra-Con opening a local office and I look forward to seeing how they can benefit our regional workforce. In this economy, it is critical that folks who are unemployed or underemployed take full advantage of the resources available to them and I have no doubt that the MTC team will be an asset to Du Quoin, as well as Perry County,”* says Josh Downs, Mayor of Du Quoin.

The Jefferson County office is located at The Innovation Hub, 123 South 10th Street, Suite 502, in Mount Vernon, Illinois.

*In an article from the The Sentinel in Mt. Vernon, Mayor John Lewis says, “Man-Tra-Con is a great organization. It has been a tremendous help in many areas of the city. And I thought [that] they were a perfect fit for The Innovation Hub so we are happy to have them.”*

Tony Iriti, Executive Director of the Jefferson County Economic Development Corporation says, *“Having Man-Tra-Con in the Innovation Hub is an integral part of our vision to getting people back into the workforce. The ‘no-cost’ services they provide individuals and businesses is the connection needed to fill vacant jobs in Jefferson County.”* ■



**Top row, left to right:**  
The Innovation Hub in Mt. Vernon, Illinois;  
Career Specialist Mady Senior works with a customer at the Du Quoin office.



**Bottom row, left to right:**  
Man-Tra-Con CEO Robyn Russell speaks with with JALC Director of Facility Services Chris Naegele at an Open House Event at the Du Quoin office;  
Employer Services Coordinator Abby Russell, Career Specialist Mady Senior, and Employer Services Manager Emily Perks welcome customers to Man-Tra-Con's Du Quoin office during the open house.

# Message from Our Chair

*Man-Tra-Con celebrates the remarkable achievements accomplished over the past year in serving a diverse range of individuals, from youth to dislocated workers. By providing tailored programs, innovative training opportunities, and dedicated support, we have empowered individuals to overcome challenges and have a successful career. These milestones reflect our commitment to the community that we serve in equipping people with the proper skills and resources needed to succeed in today's dynamic job market.*



*Together, we are building a workforce that reflects strength, adaptability, and excellence—a workforce that will not only make Workforce Area 25 proud but also serve as a beacon of progress for all of Illinois. Our shared commitment to collaboration, community growth, and continuous workforce improvements ensures a brighter future, where every individual has the chance to thrive, contributing to a better Illinois for all.*

Thank you,

Terance Henry  
SIWDB Chair

## Special Thanks

*Thanks to our chief local elected officials, board members, advisory members and partners who care enough to give of their time and talent to craft a strong workforce for southern Illinois.*

### Chief Local Elected Officials

Tim Atkisson  
Cliff Lindermann  
Bruce Morgenstern  
Tamiko Mueller  
Kevin Weston

### SIWDB Members

Jason Ashmore  
Wayne Bigham  
Christina Carroll  
Aaron Christ  
Rex Cusumano  
Matt Donkin  
Ron Ellis  
Laura Hammonds  
Terance Henry  
Steve Hughart  
Tony Iriti  
Joan Jablonski  
Debra Keelin  
Brenda Malone  
Jordan McBride  
Cary Minnis  
Steven Mitchell  
Tamiko Mueller

Rosie Naumovski  
Kirk Overstreet  
Jeremy Pinkston  
Shelley Pyle  
Troy Ray  
John Rendleman  
Mary M. Roe  
Sandy Snowden  
Jerry Womick

### Advisory Members

Ron Ferguson  
Kathy Lively  
Karl Maple  
Jim Marlo  
Robyn Russell  
Tyler Young, Jr.

### Staff to the Board

Robyn Russell  
Tammy Kirk

### One-Stop Operator

Crosswalk Community  
Action Agency

### Partner Agencies

Carbondale Community  
High School, Rebound  
Crosswalk Community  
Action Agency  
Illinois Department of  
Employment Security (IDES)  
Illinois Department of  
Human Services (IDHS)  
IDHS: Division of  
Rehabilitation Services  
Illinois workNet  
John A. Logan College,  
Adult Education Program  
Land of Lincoln, Legal Services  
Man-Tra-Con Corporation  
MERS/GOODWILL,  
Senior Community Service  
Rend Lake College,  
Adult Education Program  
Western Egyptian  
Opportunity Council (WEEOC)

## **In Memory of Milton Maxwell**

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**1944-2024**

*The Southern Illinois Workforce Development Board is saddened to report the recent passing of our beloved board member, Milton A. Maxwell.*

*Milton A. Maxwell was passionate about community service and workforce. Milton was devoted to making a difference within southern Illinois through his service to numerous organizations including Attucks Community Service Board, Jackson County Board, Greater Egypt Regional Planning and Development Commission, NAACP, Masonic Lodge #44, Planning Commission for the City of Carbondale, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. As a founding member of the Private Industry Council and Board Member since 1983 (becoming the Southern Illinois Workforce Development Board), Milton had served the SIWDB continuously for 41 years.*

*His presence within our community will be greatly missed.*