



Geared Toward The Future

NORTHWEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS

WORKS

Spring 2016

**The Workforce Board covering Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee,
Ogle, Putnam, and Whiteside Counties.**

Streator Unlimited Receives Statewide Business Leadership Award from the Illinois Workforce Partnership

Streator Unlimited, Inc. was recently honored with a Business Leadership Award by the Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) in Springfield, IL.

Streator Unlimited, Inc. provides vocational training and residential services in six locations within the Streator Area for adults with disabilities as well as 24 hour/day support for the 28 adults with developmental disabilities living in group home settings.

Over the years, Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. (BEST, Inc.) and Streator Unlimited have developed an outstanding working relationship, both as a referral source for services, and especially as a work site for Youth Work Experience. Over the past 2 years, Streator Unlimited has provided work opportunities for over 10 in-school and out-of-school youth, mainly in providing direct services to developmentally disabled adults.

The Work Experience relationship between Streator Unlimited and BEST, Inc. has been mutually beneficial. Youth clients have received valuable and meaningful work experience, working with Streator Unlimited staff, and with the developmentally disabled clients who truly appreciate them. Considering the challenges in working with this group, the fact that we haven't had any work experience clients ask to quit or go somewhere else is a reflection on the positive influence of their supervisors and other staff.

Given the budget challenges faced by all social service agencies, the additional help provided by the work experience clients has been a great benefit for Streator Unlimited. Whenever we call to ask if they might have a spot for a client, they are always willing to have us send them for an interview, as they are always willing to take on someone who they believe can contribute and will come in with a positive attitude. In addition to being a source of additional assistance, the Work Experience program has also served as tryout employment for several clients, as, upon concluding their training plans, they have been hired either full-time or part-time. This speaks both to the positive experience that the youth have had in working with the staff and clients of Streator Unlimited, as well as an appreciation of the work ethic and skills that the youths have developed during their work experience.



Gary Gibson, IWP Vice-President; Deb Ragusa, Streator Unlimited Office Manager/HR Director; Julie Courtney, IWP President; Jim Schultz, DCEO Director

Over the years, this partnership has been a positive for both agencies, and we anticipate that it will continue to benefit both the clients of BEST and the staff and clients of Streator Unlimited.



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Also in This Issue:

- NCI Works Partners Host Manufacturing Forum
 - BEST, Inc.'s Spring Graduates
- Mary Boogemans speaks to LaSalle County Safe School
- Summary of Workforce Area 4's Industry Employment

NCI Works Partners Host Manufacturing Employer Forums At IVCC and SVCC

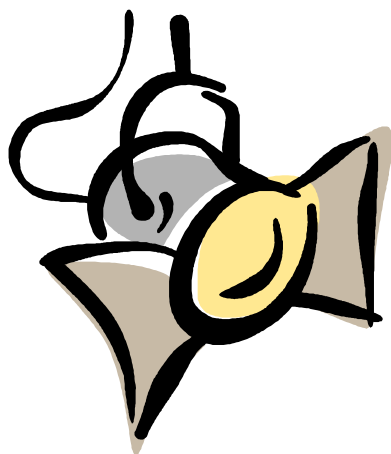
On April 6th and May 19th the partners of NCI Works hosted manufacturing employer forums at Illinois Valley Community College and Sauk Valley Community College respectively. The forums were designed to give area manufacturers an update on the services available to them through the WIOA funded one-stop system, identify skills need in today's manufacturing setting, the challenges manufacturing is facing in finding a qualified workforce, and to engage secondary education in the conversation on what needs to be done to address those challenges.



Highlights from the discussions that took place at both events include:

- The retiring and aging workforce continues to be a major concern for most companies.
- Shop/Technical Math was identified as the minimum level of math necessary for entry level manufacturing positions.
- Machinists, engineers, manufacturing technicians, tool and die, machine operators, and electrical technicians were identified as the toughest positions to find qualified applicants for.
- Lack of problem solving and other essential skills are seen as missing from the current applicant pool across the two areas.
- Overcoming a negative perception of manufacturing and parental knowledge/support for manufacturing occupations continues to be seen as a major obstacle in attracting the emerging workforce.
- Area educators identified silos in curriculum and smaller schools being at a financial disadvantage in the ability to offer a wider selection of courses as obstacles that need to be overcome.
- At IVCC the question of how veterans could be better identified for employment opportunities was discussed at great length. Tory Davis (IDES) stated that his agency is trying to address the difficulty in reaching the younger veterans but that this group of veterans are much different from previous generations. They tend to have more options for training than previous veterans and they also tend to only seek out information from IDES Veterans Representatives rather than an array of services.

Next steps that focus on keeping the conversation going between workforce, manufacturing, and post-secondary education were identified at each event. In the IVCC district, a group of educators, workforce representatives, and industry have discussed the formation of a volunteer steering committee, IWORC (Illinois Workforce Opportunity Readiness Coalition), to continue the dialogue through the district, sharing ideas, and cooperating to address the needs of manufacturing. For more information about IWORC, interested individuals may contact Dianna Schuler, Business Relations Manager at BEST, Inc. at 815-433-4550. In the SVCC district, it was suggested that all the efforts that are being done independently be combined with the manufacturing day committee (led by Anita Carney at SVCC) and that workforce be represented on that committee.



Member Spotlight

Kevin Lindeman North Central Illinois Council of Governments



What is your professional background?

I work for the North Central Illinois Council of Governments. I am the Economic Development District Director for the EDA designated Economic Development District that includes Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, Putnam and Stark Counties. I am a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. I received my Bachelor's Degree in Community and Regional Planning from Iowa State University.

What made you decide to volunteer to serve on a workforce board?

I agreed to serve on the workforce board because having a well trained workforce plays such an important role in economic development.

How long have you been a board member? (including pre-consolidation)

Since 2006

As you have served and learned more and more about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (and maybe even its predecessors) what do you see as the main value of our federal program?

Having a properly trained workforce that meets the needs of the employers in our region and provides training to improve the employability of the workers in the region.



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Congratulations Graduates!!!!

NCI Works joins BEST, Inc. in congratulating their recent graduates. Congratulations and BEST of luck to each of them.

2016 BEST, Inc. Graduates

At Illinois Valley Community College: 8 Truck Drivers, 6 CNAs, 1 IT/Networking, 9 RNs, 1 LPN, 1 Certified Production Technician

At St. Francis School of Nursing: 1 RN

At Midwest Technical Institute: 2 Medical Assistants

At ATS Institute of Technology: 1 LPN

At Black Hawk College: 1 CNC

At Trinity School of Nursing: 2 RNs

At Hamilton Tech: 2 Medical Assistants

At Scott Community College: 1 Diagnostic Medical Sonography

At Kishwaukee College: 1 Auto Mechanic, 1 CDL, 1RN, 1 Radiology Technician

At Aurora University: 1 RN

At Sauk Valley Community College: 8 RNs, 2 Accounting, 3 Radiology Technicians, 2 Office Admin, 2 Welding, 1 PC Technician, 1 Multicraft, 1 CNA, 1 Business Management

At Highland Community College: 1 Information Technology, 1 CNA, 1 Welding, 1 RN





Mary Boogemans, HR Manager at Advantage Logistics and NCI Works Board Member, spoke to a class at the LaSalle County Safe School on March 18. She took questions from the class about what it is like to work in a distribution center, and how she decided on her career. Mary spoke about the hiring process from the employer's point of view, and what they expect from applicants and employees. She emphasized the importance of attendance, as poor attendance is the number one reason why people lose their job.

Core Partners OF NCI WORKS

- ◆ Business Employment Skills, Inc.
- ◆ Illinois Department of Employment Security
- ◆ IDHS-Office of Rehabilitation Services
- ◆ Adult Education

Access to the services provided by each of these agencies is available at:

Southtowne Mall	2323 E Lincolnway
1550 First Avenue	Sterling, IL 61081
Ottawa, IL 61356	815-625-9648
815-434-3111	TTY: 800-526-0844

February 201 Unemployment Rate Most Recent Available:

National 5.2%
State of IL 7.0%
LWIA 4 7.5%
Bureau Co 8.1%
Carroll Co. 7.6%
Jo Daviess Co. 7.9 %
LaSalle Co 8.6%
Lee Co 6.5%
Ogle Co 7.7%
Putnam Co 7.7%
Whiteside Co. 7.3%

Northwest Central Illinois Works (NCI Works) is a locally appointed workforce board that oversees workforce development programs that are funded by millions of federal tax dollars for a eight-county area (Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam and Whiteside Counties).

Workforce Area 4 Industry Employment Data (source: Illinois DCEO)		Percentage of Total
Industry	Current Month Mar-16	
LABOR FORCE DATA (*)		
Civ. Lab. Force	170,373	
Employment	157,545	
Unemployment	12,828	
Percentage	7.5 %	
Total Non-Ag Employment	117,400	100%
Construction-Mining	4,700	4%
Manufacturing	19,400	17%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	29,000	25%
Information	1,000	1%
Financial Activities	5,200	4%
Professional and Business Services	7,400	6%
Educational and Health Services	13,200	11%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,600	9%
Other Services	5,000	4%
Government	22,000	19%

Additional Labor Market Information is available at the NCI Works website at www.nciwork.org

NCI Works meets on the 4th Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September & November at 5:30 p.m. at the following locations:

Highland Community College
 Illinois Valley Community College
 Kishwaukee Community College
 Sauk Valley Community College

Meetings are open to the public