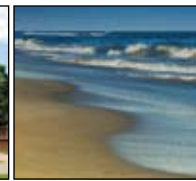
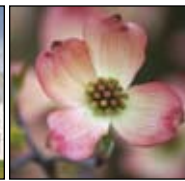


# VIRGINIA



# WORKFORCE CONNECTION

Virginia Workforce Council Winter 2010

## From the Chairman's Perspective



### Just like Olympics Council encounters trials and triumphs

By Dr. Robert P. Leber  
Chairman, Virginia Workforce Council

As I pen this column, our United States of America athletes lead in the number of medals (28) our country has achieved in the Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Whether it's gold, silver or bronze, those achievements come either as a team, as in ice hockey and Nordic track skiing, or individually in events such as skating or luge racing. Those accolades come as a result of great sacrifice, hard work, tenacity and, in many cases, very little financial resources. But clearly, in all cases, the athletes' faith and support of family, friends, community and their nation helped them succeed.

This winter issue of the *Virginia Workforce Connection* reflects many of those same Olympic trials and triumphs. In January, we celebrated the inauguration of the 71st governor of the Commonwealth, the Honorable Robert F. McDonnell. Like skiers maneuvering the moguls and sharp turns on an icy mountain, McDonnell and his cabinet face the daunting task of overcoming a budget shortfall, job losses and a struggling economy.

The governor has announced his intention to make economic development and job growth a top priority, and he has backed that plan by appointing Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling as the "jobs czar." The Virginia General Assembly is equally grappling with the budget challenges

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## Business and Economic Development Team will focus on job creation in 2010

Virginia's Business and Economic Development Team hit the ground running with its inception in spring 2009. With funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Virginia Employment Commission established statewide business and economic development specialists who provide employer resources and support economic development throughout the Commonwealth.

Job creation is the team's primary goal in 2010. VEC business and economic development specialists inform business of personnel costs savings if they use Virginia's "On-The-Job Training" opportunities offered through the Trade Act Program, Veterans Employment Program, the Workforce Investment Act and the Department of Business Assistance programs. Eligible employers save 50 percent of staff salaries when they hire via these OJT job-creation opportunities.

Business specialists collaborate with local chambers, economic development and local businesses to identify job opportunities in a difficult job market. They conduct business briefings to educate employers on workforce programs, recruitment resources and how to become self-sufficient in using the state's Virginia Workforce Connection (VWC) database.

### Virginia Workforce Connection

An advanced and comprehensive workforce information system, the VWC provides a full range of services via the Internet. It allows universal access to online services for individuals seeking jobs, training opportunities and program information. Conversely, it helps employers recruit talent by letting companies post open job positions and review current labor market information.

The system also is designed to serve as a tool for staff and one-stop operators so they can efficiently assist jobseekers, employers and providers. It offers access to staff reporting features to provide management with valuable information to improve service delivery and enhance performance.

One of the components of the system includes a step-by-step guide to help users select a career, analyze their skills, and match those skills to a suitable occupation and job. They also may review certain profiles of occupations and analyze labor market information in various regions or statewide. The system includes an easy-to-use tool to search for job listings from a variety of sources.

To access the VWC, go to [www.vawc.virginia.gov](http://www.vawc.virginia.gov).



### Specialists at work

Business specialists demonstrate how employers register their company, post a vacancy and recruit using one resource. A local chamber of commerce board member commented recently that the VWC system helped him find the perfect candidate for his job vacancy.

The Business and Economic Development Team also partners with the Virginia Department of Business Assistance as they promote their Business Information Services "Business One-Stop" and Entrepreneurial Express programs." Labor market information available in the VWC database is excellent information for employers and economic development agencies to use in recruiting companies to locate in Virginia, as well as for annual business planning.

ARRA-funded business and economic development specialists participated in employment activities across the state with media, workforce partners and other state agencies. Specialists participated in radio show question-and-answer sessions on VWC. They also demonstrated how to use the VWC site on a PBS television show that assists jobseekers.

Specialists in Richmond list jobs each Monday on NBC Channel 12's Business Report where the station announces vacancies during its morning show. For more information about VEC, visit [www.VaEmploy.Com](http://www.VaEmploy.Com).



# Strides have been made in Virginia's workforce development

By Hugh D. Keogh

The increased awareness among Virginia's policymakers of the critical role of workforce development in molding Virginia's economic competitiveness is a very welcome phenomenon.

As I have said many times to many audiences during



Keogh

the last decade and a half, the shortage of technically skilled workers is the chief inhibitor to Virginia's economic progress. That fact is still an eye-opener to many, especially in a down economy with lots of talent available. But gratifyingly, it has

sunk in with the state government's executive branch over consecutive administrations and, selectively, within the Virginia General Assembly.

In a few short months, I will be hanging up my spikes and retiring as president and CEO of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, and consequently from the Virginia Workforce Council, on which I have served as a statutory member since its creation in the Gilmore administration. In those days, more than a decade ago, the light bulb was just beginning to come on in the Commonwealth that much work needed to

be done to shore up Virginia's workforce posture.

The Council, then under the expert leadership of SAIC executive Mike Daniels, undertook that challenge and began to put the spotlight on the disparate workforce apparatus in Virginia, as well as the "demand-driven" nature of the system. Capital One executive Marge Connelly followed Daniels. She oversaw a streamlining of the Council and the establishment of its role of overseeing the WIA, as well as improving the performance of the local Workforce Investment Boards.

More recently, Dr. Bob Leber of Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding brought his enormous reservoir of experience and expertise to bear on the effectiveness of the Council and, more importantly, Virginia's workforce development capability in the global marketplace. Without question, the private sector leadership has been strong.

We also should note the importance of Senior Adviser Danny LeBlanc and his staff in their role of putting and keeping the focus on this function during the Kaine administration. They performed admirably.

So what's next? The McDonnell folks have stressed their awareness of the unmistakable role

of the quality of the workforce in attracting business investments. The recent decision by the ultra-sophisticated site-selection team of Rolls Royce underscores the importance of satisfying industry's requirements in the 21st century.

The Virginia Community College system has been given enormous responsibility in being the lead agency in managing the process. Personally, I hope another senior adviser also will be appointed to assist the governor in his role as the Commonwealth's chief workforce development officer. That person would keep workforce in the forefront on the third floor on a daily basis.

So there is much to be done but we are making progress. And the growing recognition by business and government of the inextricable importance of workforce development to Virginia's economic competitiveness should mean it will receive the attention it deserves at all levels. I am pleased to have been involved in this critical matter over the years and wish the current leadership nothing but the best for continued progress.

*(Hugh D. Keogh is president and CEO of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce.)*

## Chairman's Perspective

*(Continued from page 1)*

during a transfer of power within the government's executive branch.

In this issue, you'll read about numerous examples of how the Virginia Workforce Network is applying its resources and talent to help increase the skill level of our workforce to meet the demands of industry. The VCATS manufacturing technician program has certified hundreds of Virginians with the aid of statewide WIA funding. We learn of a determined LPN in Southwest Virginia who has earned her RN at a local community college. She not only doubled her salary but, in my view, secured a gold medal along her career pathway in the high-demand occupational field of health care, with an assist from WIA funding.

Using a WIRED grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, the SEVA-PORT team is working to match the skills needed in the disciplines of modeling and simulation, as well as transportation, warehousing and distribution, along the Hampton Roads-Petersburg corridor. This initiative could potentially provide a lifeline to dislocated workers from the International Paper plant closure in Franklin.



*Congressman Bobby Scott (front row, fourth from right) meets with the Virginia Workforce Council at its meeting Jan. 7 to discuss challenges and opportunities in workforce development over the next year.*

Resources in workforce range from ARRA-funded business and economic development specialists to nonprofit SNAPs in churches and libraries. All are striving to develop employment opportunities and staff the state's businesses with a highly skilled workforce.

Finally, the Commonwealth owes a debt of gratitude to the retiring members of our Olympic team, the Virginia Workforce Council. Danny LeBlanc, Hugh Keogh and members of former Gov. Tim

Kaine's cabinet were honored at our January Council meeting and are pictured with U.S. Congressman Bobby Scott. Scott is representing our interests in the nation's capitol to ensure that WIA reauthorization is more user-friendly for those of us who implement the law on the state and local level.

I thank you for your continued commitment to the workforce and business community. Together we will continue to "go for the gold" and maintain America as the most prosperous country in the world.



The Peninsula Worklink site bustles with jobseekers during a fair held Dec. 3.

## Career fair on the Peninsula attracts jobseekers and employers alike

**M**ore than 350 jobseekers and representatives from 32 businesses and organizations took part in the SEVA-PORT Career Fair Dec. 3 hosted by Peninsula Worklink, the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development's One-Stop Career Center.

Participating organizations included Walmart Distribution Center, ECPI College of Technology, Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding, Sumitomo Drive Technologies, Cubic Applications Inc. and Thomas Nelson Community College.

PCFWD staff helped recruit companies and related institutions involved with modeling and simulation; transportation, warehousing and distribution; and science, technology, engineering and mathematics to participate in the fair.

The event was promoted through newspaper articles, e-mails and flier distribution. In addition, individuals impacted by the recent announcement of the closing of the International Paper Mill in Franklin were invited to attend. 🌍

*Representatives of a nearby Walmart Distribution Center are ready to greet visitors at the job fair.*



## A story with a SNAP-py ending

**C**lient D had been unemployed for several months when he and his wife visited her family in Williamsburg and attended a service at New Zion Baptist Church.

Client D's in-laws told him about the New Zion SNAP, which is an acronym for SHARE Network Access Points. SNAPs are part of the SHARE network – Sharing How Access to Resources Empowers – which are designed to better help the unemployed get connected with job-search services that can get them back to work. SNAPs are housed in community gathering places such as churches, libraries and community organizations.

Client D asked if New Zion's services could assist him. The mother-in-law approached me and asked if I could help Client D develop a good resume and give him some tips on how to look for a job. Even though Client D lived in Maryland, I told her to have him call me. He did, and I gathered information about his objectives and asked him to send me the necessary information to update his resume.

I also researched the One-Stop centers near Glen Burnie, Md., and found some job opportunities in Client D's field of work, which was cooking and food service management.

By communicating with Client D several times via phone and e-mails, I was able to assist him in developing a resume that reflected his training and job experiences as a civilian and during the time he served in the military.

Client D had an associate's degree in the culinary arts and lots of experience in the culinary field which made him highly marketable.

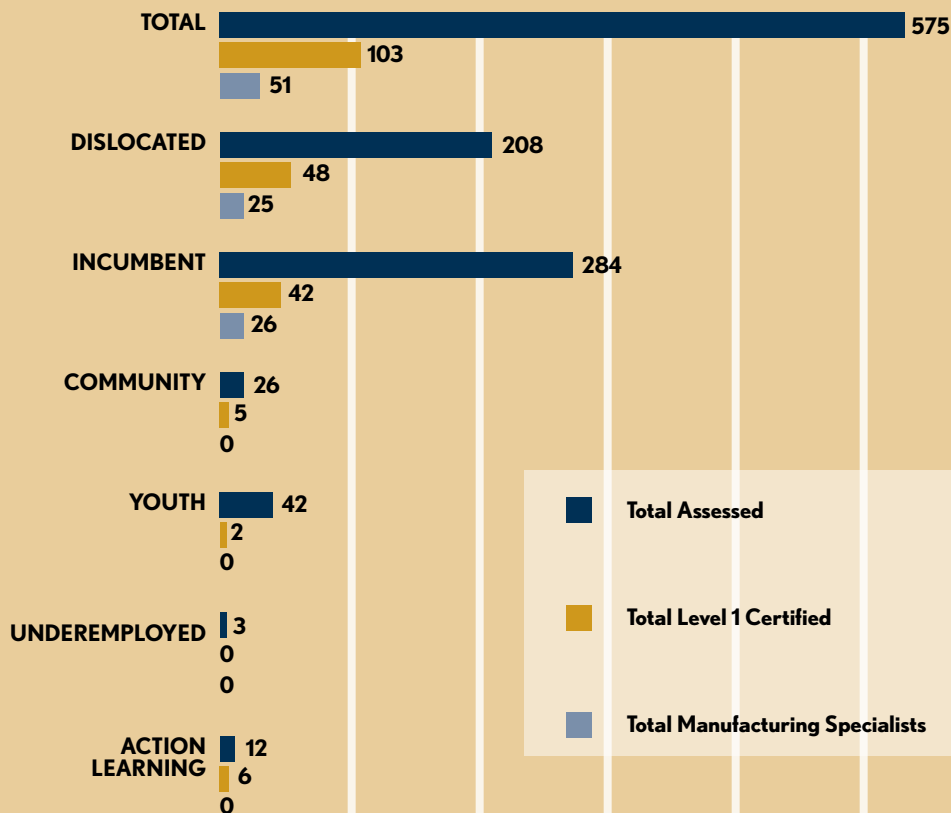
He just needed a resume and needed to learn interview techniques so he could present himself in a manner that reflected his qualifications. After being armed with an updated, professional resume and some leads on employment in his home area, Client D met with a job specialist at a One-Stop center near his home. He followed up on an ad for assistant manager of a fast food restaurant and was hired.

Next, please! 🌍

**SNAPs are housed in community gathering places such as churches, libraries and community organizations.**

# Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills efforts are felt statewide

## ASSESSED GROUPS



The Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills (VCATS) is making a difference in today's and tomorrow's workforce by not only working directly with employers in Virginia but also by working in partnership with post-secondary institutions across the state.

Incumbent, dislocated and underemployed workers have been assessed, as well as students enrolled in career and technical education programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels. To date, 575 Virginians have been assessed, with 103 having been certified as Manufacturing Technicians Level One and 51 recognized as Manufacturing Specialists through the VCATS certification system.

Micron Technology Inc., a founding VCATS sponsor company, has fully embraced the VCATS manufacturing technician program to certify existing Micron manufacturing technicians (MTs) as well as to identify potential candidates to fill MT openings at the company's Manassas facility.

"The VCATS core competencies align very well with the MT requirements at Micron. Taking part in the development of the program from the ground up has been very rewarding, and we look forward to our continued involvement in the initiative," says Amy Harris, university and academic relations manager for Micron Technology. To date, 24 Micron employees have achieved the VCATS Level I certification, with many more in the pipeline to be assessed, trained and certified.

In an effort to continue to expand the VCATS initiative across the Commonwealth, several grant proposals have been written in partnership between VCATS and other organizations, with many still under review.

Most recently, good news was received on Dec. 1 when the Virginia Community College System was awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Governor's Workforce Investment Act Discretionary Fund. The money will be used to provide workforce training to Virginians through various methods, including the VCATS certification system. A spokesperson said this will be instrumental in helping VCATS reach all areas of the state with its industry-developed credentials.

**The Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills is making a difference in today's and tomorrow's workforce.**

## Clinch Valley helps woman achieve her goal

Sandra Hale is one of the newest employees in the fast-growing health care field, thanks to the assistance of Clinch Valley Community Action Inc.'s WIA program in Tazewell.

With the increasing threat of a shortage of health care workers, Hale decided it was time to further her education and upgrade her skills from Licensed Practical Nurse to Registered Nurse. A single mother who worked full-time, she had been attending classes at Southwest Virginia Community College to complete the general education requirements for the RN program.

Although she was elated when she received a letter formally accepting her into the nursing program, she knew tuition would put further strain on her limited budget. So she contacted Clinch Valley Community Action Inc. WIA staff to see if they could help her financially obtain her goal of becoming an RN.

"I knew if I could get some assistance with the cost, I could put the time and effort needed into the program to succeed," she says. "I appreciate all the help I received from the WIA to help me gain the education I needed to obtain employment, become financially stable and provide for my family. Not only did they provide the financial assistance I needed, but I had a strong support system and encouragement along the way."

Hale worked part-time and attended SWCC full-time to accomplish her career goal. She is now working as a home health care nurse and has doubled her hourly wage. In the future, she plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in nursing but for now is focusing on acquiring experience as an RN.



Sandra Hale recently became an RN, thanks to Clinch Valley's WIA program.