



**Business and Economic
Development Committee**
Southern Illinois Workforce Investment Board
Jan 15, 2009 4:30 p.m.
MAN-TRA-CON, Corp.
Teleconference

Minutes

Members Present: William Armstrong, Leo Childers, Robert Mees, Rodney Cabaness, John Rendleman, Richard Morris and Janice McConnaughy.

Members Absent: Jim McPhail, John Alongi, John Hammack and Mary Ellen Bechtel.

MAN-TRA-CON Staff Present: Rosie Robinson, Jamie Galli and Cary Minnis

Additional SIWIB Member Present: Rex Cusumano

Call to Order

Chairman William Armstrong called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Roll call was given and a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Armstrong requested a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on Oct 7, 2008. Dr. Robert Mees made the motion to accept the minutes for which Janice McConnaughy provided the second. All members were in favor.

Orders of the Day

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. General discussion was made by members regarding the news they are hearing in their areas as far as business slow down.

Cary Minnis added that Connect SI is creating industry groups to develop action plans for niche markets. He explained that 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. Mr. Minnis urged anyone with ideas or ties to these clusters to participate in the ongoing research and planning activities. The events 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.

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

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

Interested individuals should contact Cary Minnis, Industry Cluster Coordinator, at caryminnis@mantracon.org or 618-998-0970 x211.

Chairman Armstrong noted there were no matters from the floor or public comments. A motion to adjourn was offered by Chairman Armstrong. A motion made by John Rendleman and seconded by Janice McConnaughy. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.