

**Members Present:** Alan Summers, Joan Jablonski-Baxter, Angela Holmes-Young and Kendra Humphreys (both via conference call), Debra Jackanicz, Kathy Lively, Robert Mees, and Michele Rheinecker (via conference call)

**Members Absent:** Victor Harris and June Hickey

**Others Present:** Roxanne Brewer-Coffey, Stephanie Castellano, Michelle Cerutti, Cary Minnis, Penny Valentine, and Cindy Webb

**I. Call to Order**

Chairperson Alan Summers called the meeting to order at 8:11 a.m.

**II. Welcome and Introductions**

Alan Summers welcomed the group to the meeting. Introductions were forgone as no new attendees were present.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Alan Summers requested approval of the minutes from the February 3, 2009, meeting. The group agreed to approve the minutes.

**IV. Orders of the Day**

*A. One-Stop Center Reports*

**1. Traffic Reports**

Cindy Webb distributed the *Resource Center Visitors Report*. Cindy stated the One-Stop Centers remained extremely busy in the month of February. She indicated the numbers on the report reflect this and invited any questions regarding the report.

**2. Marion One-Stop Business and Employment Center**

Cindy Webb reported the Marion office has focused on assisting customers with job search activities as well as accessing the Illinois workNet website.

**3. Mt. Vernon One-Stop Business and Employment Center**

Penny Valentine reported the Mt. Vernon office has focused on the impact of the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) regulations on the former Joy Technologies workers. Kathy Lively indicated of the approximately 180 workers laid off four years ago, 100 of them have been served. Karen Laws and Jamie Galli will continue to perform individual assessments.

*B. Illinois workNet*

Cindy Webb distributed the *Illinois workNet Report* for February. Cindy reported there were 114 registrations for the month, resulting in a ninth place ranking state-wide. The "Job Boards" and "Find the Right Job for You" pages were among the most utilized pages on the Web site for the month. Cindy informed the committee about a new section on Illinois workNet devoted to laid-off workers. She will forward additional information about the new section to the committee following the meeting.

*C. Industry Cluster Studies*

Cary Minnis informed the committee of the industry cluster studies performed by ConnectSI. The study shows our region has a competitive advantage in the industry sectors of energy and transportation, distribution and logistics (TDL). The main focus of the studies has been, through analysis, finding niche markets. Some examples of the energy niche markets include converting algae into bio-fuels, converting

waste to energy, and wind energy. Some examples of the TDL niche markets include truck-to-rail/rail-to-truck distribution centers and moving freight via barge. The study would then attempt to link indigenous resources together with an eye toward job creation. The final product will be a complete research and analysis down to a business plan designed to make it easy for entrepreneurs to obtain financial backing. The next Energy Cluster meeting will be March 24 at the Williamson County Pavilion in Marion, and March 25 in McLeansboro. Cary will forward exact times to anyone interested in attending.

#### *D. Update on Closures and Layoffs*

Michelle Cerutti informed the committee about a recent workshop held for laid-off Circuit City workers; approximately 53 people attended. A workshop will be held on March 20 for Southern Pride workers; approximately 20 people are scheduled to attend. Fifteen former employees from Spartan Light Metals have completed *Dislocated Worker Surveys*. Michelle informed the group Man-Tra-Con has been encouraging dislocated workers to attend training while drawing unemployment benefits.

Cary Minnis informed the group about a project utilizing GIS mapping software to reflect those businesses that have experienced dislocation events. The numbers have grown in the past few months and are more evenly distributed throughout the southern Illinois region.

#### *E. Weatherization Project*

Debra Jackanicz informed the committee about the upcoming Weatherization Project. Beginning July 1, 2009, \$1 million will be allotted for weatherizing homes in Franklin, Williamson, and Jefferson counties. On July 1, 2010 the funding amount will be increased to \$4 million. The project will allow \$6,500.00 per household and will focus on replacing and/or upgrading furnaces, insulation, doors and windows for homes to become more energy efficient. Work will be performed by independent contractors. Individuals who have received weatherizing assistance beginning in 1994 and forward are not eligible to receive assistance from the new funds. Income guidelines are 200% of poverty level. Crosswalk began enrolling applicants yesterday; applicants began assembling the previous evening to secure a place in line.

#### *F. Stimulus Legislation Discussion*

Debra Jackanicz informed the committee about stimulus dollars Crosswalk received to fund an upcoming summer employment program. The program will focus on unemployed adults. The goal is to secure summer employment for approximately 25 – 35 individuals per county coordinating with private employers.

Kathy Lively discussed Man-Tra-Con's Summer Youth program with the group. The stimulus package allowed for approximately \$1.5 million allocated toward funding the program. The stimulus dollars will allow approximately 400 youth to be enrolled in summer jobs with private employers and the public sector, lasting for six to eight weeks.

Alan Summers informed the group about \$9 million in stimulus funds the Department of Human Services (DHS) received to fund the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as "food stamps." Individuals enrolled in SNAP will receive an increase beginning April 1, by approximately \$21.00 per person. Throughout the entire state, DHS is adding approximately 22,000 cases per month; each caseworker has a caseload of over 800.

#### *G. Other*

Kathy Lively informed the committee ConnectSI is one of three finalists selected for a final review on March 31 to receive possible broadband expansion funding. Kathy also reminded the representatives from the business sector about Man-Tra-Con's Incumbent Worker Training program currently available.

#### *H. Next Meeting Date and Time*

The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 14, 2009**, at 8:00 a.m.

## **VI. Matters from the Floor**

There were no matters from the floor.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Chairperson Alan Summers adjourned the meeting at 9:11 a.m.