

# the Workforce Quarterly

A Quarterly Update for the Central Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board

Volume 7, Winter 2012

## Board Chair Message

**Jamie Aurand, Immediate Past Chair**

Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation

As my term as WIB chair has come to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to share some of the things I've learned about CPWDC and envision for the Board's future.

- 1. Never underestimate the importance of relationships between the private sector and workforce development.** These relationships not only help the PA CareerLink® system connect the right people to the right jobs, but also have allowed for successful projects beyond the PA CareerLink® system. Working together, we have created partnerships to prepare youth for the job market and offered networking opportunities for businesses to learn from each other.
- 2. Communication with the public, particularly of our successes, is essential.** It is our responsibility to ensure that the public understands who we are, what we do and how we do it.

- 3. Strategic recruitment of new members based on key businesses and industries across the region results in a strong, diversified Board.** We need to continue to encourage and develop members' interest and desire to serve.
- 4. Continue adapting to the use of technology.** Many of us have already experienced how virtual meeting technology reduces or eliminates travel and time costs and we need to explore more ways that technology can help us be more informed and involved Board members.
- 5. Innovations in how we provide access to our services, for as many people as possible, is critical.** Resource sharing "arrangements" such as mini-service sites at libraries and leased space at colleges for training, should be explored as a way to provide a wider customer base with access to our services.

I look forward to continuing my membership on the Board, welcome the new leadership and encourage CPWDC to continue to think innovatively and in non-traditional ways in order to best continue providing our valuable services. ●

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## News Flash...

### CPWDC Has A New Location

CPWDC has a new location at 130 Kelly Square, Suite 1, Lewisburg, PA, 17837, which is less than 3 miles south of the I-80 and US-15 interchange. You can reach us by phone at 570.568.6868 or fax at 570.568.6867 or visit us on-line at [www.cpwdc.org](http://www.cpwdc.org).

For 2012, CPWDC has not only a new location, but also, new leadership. CPWDC staff would like to recognize **Jamie Aurand** for a year of strong service as the WIB Chair in 2011 and **Kevin Varano** for his service as Treasurer since 2007. At the November 18 WIB Meeting, the Board confirmed the new leaders who will transition into their respective roles on January 1, 2012. **Teri MacBride** will serve as CPWDC Chair, **Dave Zartman** will transition into the Board's Vice Chair role and **Harry VanSickle** will serve as Treasurer. CPWDC would also like to thank **Commissioner Tom Bossert** (Clinton County) for his years of service as the Chair of the Local Elected Officials (LEO) Board. **Commissioner John Mathias** (Union County) will serve as interim LEO chair until this Board reorganizes in early 2012. ●

## Guest Article...

### PA CareerLink® Veteran Programs

To meet the needs of a diverse local community, each PA CareerLink® office is staffed by a consortium of local partners, including Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Representatives (DVOP). Roy Cowfer is a LVER at the PA CareerLink® Clinton County. According to Cowfer, veterans seeking employment services often also have urgent needs such as homelessness and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Therefore it is imperative that staff ask the right questions and know the proper referral network in order to provide seamless service. All PA CareerLink® partners, including the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, (OVR) can contribute towards helping veterans adjust to civilian life.

Tom Moore, an LVER in Mifflin and Centre Counties, maintains contact with agencies such as the “Coalition of Hope” in Mifflin County that assists veterans in getting housing and food. He also networks with business leaders and local Chambers in order to encourage hiring of veterans. ●

## Partnerships

With funding from the Pennsylvania Departments of Labor & Industry and Community & Economic Development, a partnership has formed between CPWDC, Tuscarora Intermediate Unit (TIU) and SEDA-COG to develop and deliver a consumer education curriculum to support 43 agencies administering the Commonwealth’s Weatherization Assistance Program. A weatherization priority list is used to determine what measures are the most cost effective and save the most energy. Often the biggest factor on energy savings is not something that can be installed or repaired; rather, it is the actions of the home owners. Encouraging energy efficiency awareness and behaviors in homeowners is the best way to make sure that weatherization efforts have a lasting effect.

CPWDC facilitated the partnership by bringing together the curriculum expertise of TIU staff and the weatherization experience of SEDA-COG into the design of an interactive workshop that introduced 100 weatherization workers to communication, adult education and behavioral change techniques applicable to a continuum of interactions with homeowners. ●

● related tax credit information...

## Legislative Update

Two new tax credits that provide incentives for businesses to hire unemployed veterans were signed into federal law on November 21, 2011. The **Returning Heroes Tax Credit** offers employers a 40% credit (up to \$2,400) of the first \$6,000 of wages for veterans who have been unemployed at least four weeks and a 40% credit (up to \$5,600) of the first \$14,000 in wages for veterans who have been unemployed longer than six months.

The **Wounded Warrior Tax Credit** doubles the existing tax credit for employers who hire long-term unemployed veterans who have service-connected disabilities. The new credit totals 40% (up to \$9,600) of the first \$24,000 in wages. For more information please visit [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov). ●

## PA CareerLink® Reopenings

The PA CareerLink® Columbia/Montour Counties re-opened to the public on November 7 after sustaining substantial damage as a result of flooding caused by Tropical Storm Lee on September 8.

Thanks to the fast response of the property owner, work crews were on-site within days to gut and restore walls, and replace carpeting. The PA CareerLink® staff worked hard to get the site operational again. CPWDC thanks the following organizations for their overwhelming support with access to temporary office space so that staff could continue providing service to customers and with furniture donations that resulted in the site re-opening within two months:

[Bloomsburg University](#)

[Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit](#)

[Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Columbia Montour AVTS](#)

[HandUp Foundation](#)

[Lancaster Workforce Investment Board](#)

[PA CareerLink® Lycoming County](#)

[PA CareerLink® Northumberland/  
Snyder/Union Counties](#)

[Southern Alleghenies Workforce  
Investment Board](#)

[Tuscarora Intermediate Unit](#)

Following the September flooding that devastated so many communities through the State, PA CareerLink® staff provided assistance to those in need at FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers in our Region. ●



## Board Member Profile

**Russ Reitz**

### Agent, State Farm Insurance Company

An Agent with 50 years of experience, Russ Reitz holds several important industry-recognized designations: Chartered Life Underwriter, Chartered Financial Consultant and Life Underwriter Training Council Fellow. He began his career as an Agent after studying at the London Bible Institute in London, Ontario and working as a foreman in an earth moving construction business where he worked on major flood containment and highway projects. In addition to being an Agent, Russ and his wife of 51 years live on a 100-acre farm in Williamsport, where they operate a breeding and meat operation raising Black Angus cattle and Boer goats. He has served on the PA Farm Bureau State and Local Boards. Russ became associated with the WIB as a result of his 1996-2000 tenure as Lycoming County Commissioner and is one of three WIB members who have served since the inception of CPWDC. He was involved with the initial chartering of PA CareerLink® sites in the Central Region and serves on the CPWDC Executive Committee. Russ continues to serve because he enjoys the opportunity to provide guidance and direction in developing policy centered on workforce development. ●

## Staff Members

Rachel V. Smith  
Acting Executive Director

Erica Mulberger  
Finance Manager

Kristy Anderson  
Associate WorkKeys® Coordinator

William Berry  
Research Coordinator

Sandie Fairman  
Senior Quality Assurance Coordinator

Tracy Hower  
Research Coordinator

Stacey Kifolo  
Fiscal Coordinator

Korrie Lucas  
Workforce Coordinator

Cheryl Reish  
Senior Fiscal Coordinator

## • Grants •

CPWDC has been awarded \$3,045,533 through a US Department of Labor H-1B grant. Funded through fees paid by employers to bring foreign workers into the United States, the grant is intended to raise the technical skill levels of American workers. CPWDC is one of 36 awardees across the nation. Using H-1B grant monies, CPWDC will identify needs of local employers and provide access to training that will ensure regional workers have the expertise needed to fill high growth positions that companies may otherwise have needed to fill with foreign workers.

Over \$2 million of the grant will be used for scholarships that will help advance participants in 3 key Central PA industries: Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care and Natural Gas in areas like Nursing, Allied Health, Engineering, Information Technology and Management. Over the course of four years, CPWDC will focus on using the grant in three strategic ways:

- Tuition assistance to 200 individuals, 75% of whom are long-term unemployed, who have some college and/or degree but want to advance along STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) career pathways.
- Aid local companies in identifying talent risks and identify 30 incumbent workers to participate in training that will help them move into critical positions.
- Grow talent in critical occupations by recruiting, assessing and providing scholarships to 170 long-term unemployed and adult participants who will receive advanced degrees or credentials.

Grant activities are expected to begin in early 2012. ●

### Change of Address?

We want to be certain that you do not miss an issue, so please send address changes to [thower@cpwdc.org](mailto:thower@cpwdc.org) so that we can move with you.

### Prefer the Electronic Version?

If you would rather receive the electronic version, please send your email address to [thower@cpwdc.org](mailto:thower@cpwdc.org). Thank you for helping us use our resources wisely.

### Did You Know?

Did you know there are over 30,000 Veterans of working age (18-64) living in the Central Region? PA CareerLink® complies with the Jobs for Veterans Act by providing priority services to Veterans. Staff at the PA CareerLink® include Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) who provide intensive services to Veterans to improve their employability, and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) who focus primarily on individualized job development for Veterans, including employer outreach. *Please contact your local Veterans Representative at PA CareerLink® to learn more.* ●

## Labor Market Facts

Did you know that one of the fastest growing cities in the United States is located in Central Pennsylvania? According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Williamsport's real gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 7.8% during 2010, the 7th fastest rate in the entire nation and the fastest in Pennsylvania. Natural resources and mining, fueled by the advances in drilling for natural gas within Marcellus Shale, is the single largest contributor to the GDP growth in Williamsport.

Over 28,000 people in 12,000 households call Williamsport home, with the average household earning \$45,000 in income. Over 2,700 employers are located here, with 8% employing 10 or more workers for a total workforce of 22,000 mainly in Health Care, Manufacturing, and Educational Services. Approximately 30% of Williamsport residents over the age of 24 have a college degree.

The unemployment rate for this Metropolitan Area, synonymous with Lycoming County, is currently 7.6%, with 4,500 people looking for employment which is higher than the regional average, but equal to the statewide value.

The CPWDC Research Department continuously monitors local labor market and demographic information. Please visit [www.cpwdc.org](http://www.cpwdc.org) for updated reports and analysis. ●

**Note:** Unemployment rates are based on November 2011 data, CWIA.

## Spotlight

Jordan S. Olson, SGT E-5, US Army 6/12/2007 – 6/4/2010 moved to Pennsylvania in August 2010. In search of assistance with obtaining a family sustaining wage in a civilian job, Olson called on the services offered at the PA CareerLink® Clinton County and received individual assistance from Roy Cowfer, a Local Veterans Employment representative (LVER). With the help of Cowfer, Olson obtained employment with a security company contracted by the natural gas industry.

A few months later, Olson decided to explore other career options. He attended a PA CareerLink® career fair that featured hiring employers in the natural gas industry. Olson was hired by one of the employers and continues to grow in his position; he has accepted several promotions since starting with the company and has increased his salary by 50%. ●

## Calendar

### FEBRUARY

- 2 – CareerLink Operations and WorkKeys® Committee
- 24 – WIB/LEO Joint Board Meeting
- 28 – Local Management Committee

### MARCH

- 7 – Youth Council
- 14 – Workforce Trends and Strategy Committee
- 23 – Executive Committee
- 27 – Local Management Committee



**Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation**

130 Kelly Square, Suite 1 • Lewisburg, PA 17837

Counties Served: Centre • Clinton • Columbia • Lycoming  
Mifflin • Montour • Northumberland • Snyder • Union

## Central Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board Members and Affiliations

Teri MacBride, Chairperson  
PPL Corporation

Dave Zartman, Vice Chairperson  
Zartman Construction

Harry VanSickle, Treasurer  
Havsho, Inc

Jamie Aurand, Immediate Past  
Chairperson  
Premier Healthcare Resources

Harry Adrian  
Union-Snyder Community Action Agency

Marc Baranouski  
Cherokee Pharmaceuticals

James Beamer  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Dave Capperella  
Capperella Furniture

David Frey  
Williamsport Regional Airport

Fred Gaffney  
Columbia Montour Chamber/Columbia Alliance

Davie Jane Gilmour  
Pennsylvania College of Technology

Dean Girton  
Girton Manufacturing Company

Dennis Greenaway  
Greenaway Certified Appraisals

Eric Hussar  
Mid-Penn Energy, LLC

Robyn Long  
Conestoga Wood Specialties

Harry Mathias  
Central Columbia School District

Michele McCardle  
GE Energy

Rich Merkle  
Geisinger Health System

Chris Minnich  
Northumberland County MH/MR Homekeepers  
Program

William "Bill" Moulfair  
Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership

Jim Nemeth  
Autoneum

Rob Postal  
Mifflin County Industrial Development  
Corporation

Russ Reitz  
State Farm Insurance Company

Pete Rickert  
Five County Central Labor Council

Billy Robinson  
Kreamer Feed, Inc.

Dennis Robinson  
SEDA-COG

Carol Shefrin  
Tuscarora Intermediate Unit #11

Susan Swartz  
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Kevin Varano  
Varano's Warehouse

Ted Wurfel  
Chief Gathering

### Local Elected Official Board & Affiliations

Commissioner Steve Dershem  
Centre County

Commissioner Robert "Pete" Smeltz  
Clinton County

Commissioner Dave Kovach  
Columbia County

Commissioner Tony Mussare  
Lycoming County

Commissioner Otis Riden  
Mifflin County

Commissioner Trevor Finn  
Montour County

Commissioner Richard Shoch  
Northumberland County

Commissioner Malcolm Derk  
Snyder County

Commissioner John Mathias  
Union County

### PA CAREERLINK® Offices

Centre County at State College  
Administrator: Jessica Bilger

Columbia/Montour Counties at  
Bloomsburg  
Administrator: Penny Hess

Clinton County at Lock Haven  
Administrator: Bruce Jones

Lycoming County at Williamsport  
Administrator: Linda Van Der Pool

Mifflin County at Lewistown  
Administrator: Margie Eby

Northumberland/Snyder/Union  
Counties at Sunbury  
Administrator: Sue Snyder