

# Kootenai Job Service Employers' Committee

Wednesday - December 20, 2011  
Venture Motor Inn

## Attending

- Barb Swanson – Western News, Jan Meadows – Lincoln County Campus, Johnette Watkins – Kootenai Job Service, Fiona Walker – Kootenai Job Service, Mark Clark – Flathead Valley Chemical Dependence Center, Kindra Hageness – Youth Court Services, Peggy Rayome, Kootenai Valley Head Start, Maria Clemmons– NW CHC, Naomi Leifson-REO

## Treasurer's Report:

- **Naomi Leifson, REO** - After 4 years in her position she is seeing demographics of participants changing. Please keep referring individuals to her program.
- **Kindra Hageness, Youth Court Services** – Business as usual
- **Barb Swenson, The Western News** - They are now fully staffed. Barb mentioned how helpful Job Service, and Fiona in particular, was during their hiring process and how much she appreciated her assistance and excellent communication.
- **Peggy Rayome, KVHS** – They are extremely busy! A team of 7 people just completed 5 weeks of preparation for a grant request to the Montana Striving Reader's Project (MSRP). Peggy is confident of the competitiveness of their grant request, especially since they have a 100% staff buy-in for the program but there is competition for the \$'s. The grant would be awarded over a period of 3 years, with the first year's award focusing on school readiness tracking from ages 3 up to 12 and would fund significant technology for tracking and teaching (iPads for teaching and tracking). The goal is for currently established benchmarks to be reached by the time children are starting kindergarten. Head Start will know approximately 2/1/12 if their grant will be funded.
- **Mark Clark, FVCDC** - They still need to hire 2 Licensed Addiction Counselors, and the emphasis is on taking the time to find the right people for the jobs, even though in the short term that increases workload for all existing staff since they are busy and their groups are very full. They are seeing an new increase in Meth use in the County and there are health warnings about an outbreak of hepatitis C among IV drug users in our area. Attendees expressed concern with the County Health Department being closed in light of this new and serious health crisis.
- **Fiona Walker, Kootenai Job Service** - Job Orders are down this time of year, and there are an increased number of Job Seekers with diverse and extensive experience seeking jobs locally. She reminded all in attendance to please consider posting job orders with Job Service for their hiring needs, regardless of the skill level involved. Job Service Staff is successfully placing workers in On-the-Job Training where the employer is reimbursed for 50-90% of wages for up to 6 months, depending on the job and the program funding. Johnette added that 10 people had been successfully placed at 6 employers in recent months.
- **Maria Clemmons, NW CHC** - Hiring successes this past year. All Physician (3), Physician's Assistants (2), Dentist (3) and Hygienist (2) positions are filled and they have also hired 7 Medical Assistants this year but still need 1 more. Maria asked Job Service to please continue to send qualified applicants for the position. Maria indicated that the 1 year mark is often difficult for new employees who move to Libby due to the unique culture of the area, but that if they get over the 2 year mark, it is much easier for them. Attendees asked about the impact of the Public Health Department closing in terms of NW CHC. Maria highlighted the areas where NW CHC is already providing some services (such as childhood immunizations) and discussed areas that are beyond the scope of their service area (such as adult immunizations for overseas travel).

- **Johnette Watkins, Kootenai Job Service** - Increased traffic – in excess of 100 people most days. Johnette asked for employer input on the possibility of a multiple employer job fair in February. Are there enough employers in JSEC with available positions to participate? No immediate feedback was provided and Job Service will keep JSEC posted about Job Fair details. Barb offered to put an article in the Western News. Johnette presented information on the Brownfield’s Grant that Kari Martell of Job Service has spent considerable time researching. In order for the grant to be successfully written, there need to be strong community partnerships in place.

This month’s Myth Buster was concerning the Federal Bonding Program and how it can help reduce risk for employers. There was discussion regarding background checks. Fiona will provide Maria with an employer reference guide Job Service has available concerning background checks.

- **Jan Meadows, FVCC/LCC** – This month’s facilitator – presented information on several of FVCC’s recent successes and future plans. 18 more classes have been added to the latest catalog with many outdoor, one-day classes, which have been particularly popular with people signing up for Spring. There is interest in cooking classes and Jan encourages referrals to FVCC of persons who have a talent or skill to share with the community to think about teaching a classes in the continuing education program. Teachers are paid \$20 per hour. Hazwoper and other work related classes are on the schedule and for the first time in a while, a class in Fire Ecology will be offered. At present 800 of the 2,200 students at both campuses are attending online classes, with participants from across the US and throughout the world. FVCC now offers a completely online AA degree “All American Transfer Degree.”
- Beginning in 2013, the GED testing program will be administered by Pearson, a for-profit business. There is concern that the testing will be online only (though still in a proctored setting at FVCC) and the cost will go up from \$55 to approximately \$300, with retesting to be approximately \$125. This is anticipated to be a huge barrier to the low-income population who need GED’s. Next GED test is January 30<sup>th</sup>. Please let people know about the upcoming fee increase and encourage them to test this year.
- FVCC’s Running Start program, which provides high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to take college credit courses; including On-Line classes. This year they will be offering 6 FREE credits to eligible participants. Home schooled juniors and seniors are also eligible for this program, but may have a few more hoops to jump through to qualify.

#### Financial Report

- No change from previous month: Checking \$284.93 Savings: \$747.00

#### New Officer Nomination

- Barb Swenson accepted the nomination as Chair. Judy Marshall has stated that she will accept the nomination for Co-Chair if Jan Meadows declines.

**Next Meeting(s)**

- **January 17, 2012 – Facilitator: Dusty Thompson, Chamber of Commerce**
- **February 21, 2012 – Facilitator: Barb Swenson, The Western News**
- **March 20, 2012 – Facilitator: Naomi Leifson, Lake County Community Development**
- **April 17, 2012 – Facilitator: Mark Clark, FVCDC**
- **May 15, 2012 – Facilitator: Jessica Conrad, Montanore Minerals Corp**
- **June – August: No Meetings**
- **September 18, 2012 – Facilitator: Kindra Hageness, Youth Court Services**
- **October 16, 2012 – Facilitator: available \_\_\_\_\_**
- **November 20, 2012 – Facilitator: available \_\_\_\_\_**
- **December 18, 2012 – Facilitator: available \_\_\_\_\_**