

State Workforce Investment Board

Sector Strategies Committee

May 5, 2010

Best Western Heritage Inn
1700 Fox Farm Rd
Great Falls, Montana

Council Members Present: Michael Grove, Chair; Pat Wise (*Designee for Evan Barrett*); Connie Eissing; Jacquie Helt; Mike McGinley; Rodney Miller; Keith Kelly, and Alan Skari

Council Members Absent: John DeMichie; Henry Dykema; and Major Robinson

Guests: Marty Copps; Dave Morey; Mary Berg; Linda Moodry; Mel Lehman; and Lisa Newman

Staff: Leisa Smith and Dan Bernhardt

I. Welcome & Introduction

Chair Michael Grove called the meeting to order at 5:55 p.m. He welcomed staff, committee members, and guests. He reminded members that the committee conducts business under Roberts Rules of Order. Members of the committee and members of the public introduced themselves and identified their affiliation.

Roll Call

Dan Bernhardt conducted roll call and confirmed a quorum was present.

II. State Sector Overview and Discussion

Pat Wise, Economic Development Specialist, Governor's Office of Economic Development, briefed the committee on a previous meeting with the Governor's Office of Economic Development and staff from the 21 Century Bureau regarding sectors that have both promise and priority. Based on data from Research and Analysis, Ms. Wise informed the committee there are many sectors that can be focused on. While the governor's priorities are diverse, they all include high wages and jobs. Two primary sectors are energy and healthcare. Ms. Wise indicated much of the state is underserved and there are healthcare shortages in primary, dental, and mental health services; however, much of what is required to enter these professions is already provided for in higher education. Higher education does not have a good focus on nursing homes and home care though. Ms. Wise concluded that healthcare is a growing and continued need, but the state has tapped into a complex and deep training process inside higher education that can provide training, and has the capacity to train. There is a current infrastructure available for healthcare needs.

There was general discussion regarding the federal health care bill and the previous SWIB health care task force.

Ms. Smith informed the committee that she will be attending a National Governors Association health care learning exchange in New York City. She will report to the committee relevant information upon her return.

Ms. Wise continued by informing the committee on the second priority, energy. She pointed out that energy has ties in all parts of growth and high wages in Montana. She briefed the committee on the following energy sectors: Wind, Transmission Lines, Geothermal, Coal, Biomass and Biofuels. She informed the committee that there is already a wind consortium in place and there is not an issue finding workers at this time. She also indicated there are already workers available for the transmission lines, and that geothermal will not need assistance in the development of a workforce for approximately five more years.

Ms. Wise went into more detail regarding clean coal and biomass/biofuels. She informed the committee on the opportunities through the colleges of technologies regarding mining, gasification, and liquidation, etc. If all the future plans for the mines come into production, there will be a need for a skilled workforce. She informed the committee on the following employee needs:

- Signal Peak – 185 employees
- Colstrip – 373 employees
- Decker – 158 employees
- Kinsey – 200 – 300 employees
- Otter Creek – 250 construction workers; 500 peak employees; 150-200 employees

There was general discussion regarding the coal severance tax.

III. RIG Sector Planning Grant Process

Kay Strayer, Administrative Officer with the Department of Labor's Job Service Operations Bureau, gave a presentation to the committee on the process of the Western Montana Regional Innovation Grant (RIG). The RIG was awarded in February of 2008 with the intent of strategic planning activities that would result in a completed regional implementation plan. The RIG placed special emphasis on the changing wood products industry and plan for the budding restoration economy. Additionally, the RIG's intent was to revitalize and grow western Montana's economy by aligning, building and strengthening existing partnerships and plans, and develop the talent pool which can support current new and emerging initiatives.

Subcommittees created region specific white papers on:

- Energy
- Forest Stewardship
- Healthcare
- Restoration Remediation

- Technology

Mel Lehman, Project Manager, spoke to the committee on the Montana Wind Project at the MSU Great Falls – College of Technology. He informed the committee that the Wind Montana Advisory Board is charged with capacity building for technology training. They have reached out nationally, internationally, and within Montana in both conventional and renewable energy. Mr. Lehman spoke to the importance of looking at industry as a whole (globally), instead of just here in Montana. He cautioned if Montana doesn't build the workforce from within, industry will go elsewhere to get the training. They will be approaching the Board of Regents anticipating the start of programs this fall.

IV. Industry Skills Panel Discussion

Ms. Smith reminded the committee of the purpose of Industry Skills Panels. She informed the committee that the panel should bring together many key stakeholders with workforce needs they may have.

V. Vision/Mission/Next Steps

Mr. Grove informed both the committee and staff that prior to the next meeting, he would like staff to identify key players in the Montana coal industry and meet with the people to create some skill panel suggestions. He would like a roadmap established prior to the next meeting. After this meeting, education should then be brought in to the discussion.

Ms. Wise pointed out that Human Resources at each of the ten mines, plus advisors (labor unions, construction trades, miners, employee representatives if no union representatives) should be at the meeting.

Mr. Grove informed both the committee and staff that prior to the next meeting, identify the key players and identify where to next go with Biofuels. Ms. Wise suggested contacting the already established biomass group. Mr. Grove would like staff to gather recommendations on what the committee can assist with.

Mr. Grove requested a presentation from long term and home health care experts to the committee on barriers that the committee may be able to assist with.

VI. Adjourn

With no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.