



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 9, 2007

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Local Workforce Board Looks to the Future ***New Web site supports strategic direction for Centralina's workforce***

"We are into a time of incredible structural change in the world, as we know it, from which no one is exempt," said International Futurist Ed Barlow, at the 2007 Centralina Workforce Development Board (CWDB) Annual Retreat. The CWDB members are workforce leaders that make critical decisions on federal, state and local funding on behalf of the Centralina region, and partner with the Centralina JobLink Career Centers to deploy employment and training solutions. "The 2007 Retreat was an opportunity to take a serious look at future trends that impact our region's economic well being," said Bob VanGorden, CWDB Chair. "The insights that Mr. Barlow shared with our Board will shape our strategic direction and focus now and in the future."

According to Barlow, there are eight areas of structural change that will impact the Centralina region including economic; global; environmental; science/technology; demographics; organization; continuum of change; and human resources. Barlow states that approximately 70 percent of all wealth creation is attributed to human capital, a key focus of the CWDB. But growing local talent amongst the rapid changes within the eight areas of structural change is a daunting task that needs community involvement and support.

One of the hard hitting reports examined was "*Are They Really Ready to Work?*", a survey of 431 human resource officials that was conducted by The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management. The survey examined employers' views on the readiness of new entrants to the U.S. workforce, like recently hired graduates from high schools, two-year colleges or technical schools, and four-year colleges. Nearly three-quarters of survey participants (70 percent) cite deficiencies among incoming high school graduates in "applied" skills, such as professionalism and work ethic, defined as "demonstrating personal accountability, effective work habits, punctuality, working productively with others, time

and workload management." More than 40 percent of surveyed employers say that incoming high school graduates that are hired are deficiently prepared for the entry-level jobs they fill. "The report is not meant to point fingers at any entity," VanGorden emphasizes. "It simply means that we, as a nation, have to do a better job at looking objectively at the needs of our businesses, and preparing a globally competitive workforce."

"*The competitive force in our global economy*" is the new tagline for the CWDB that articulates their new strategic direction and commitment to engaging the community to find solutions for preparing the future workforce . With a majority of private sector members, the 23 CWDB community leaders are appointed by the county commission in each of the seven counties represented. The Board's partnerships and regional initiatives with the Charlotte Regional Partnership, chambers, community colleges and regional workforce boards are paving the way to keep the Centralina region competitive.

"Part of our strategy in looking at future trends and creating solutions for our community is engaging the many public/private workforce, economic and educational partners to the table," said David Hollars, Executive Director of the CWDB. "We've recently developed a new Web site that is highly interactive and provides a two-way communication mechanism for our community stakeholders to weigh-in on our funding, our strategies, and key initiatives.

The Web site, www.CentralinaWorks.com was developed in conjunction with Full Capacity Marketing, Inc.(FCM), a national marketing firm that specializes in workforce and economic development. "It is rare that we see workforce investment boards across the country attack workforce and economic development issues in the way that the CWDB is doing", said FCM President/CEO Celina Shands Gradijan. "Their Web site reflects their commitment to providing real-time data, and gathering continuously stakeholder feedback, so that they can respond according to the market demands within the region."

The new Web site boosts a blog where the community can post comments, suggestions and ideas; customer surveys; and downloadable podcasts that address workforce, economic and education issues and solutions. Additionally, visitors can explore employment and training solutions for businesses, youth, and job seekers provided through the Centralina JobLink Career Centers. The community can log on to www.CentralinaWorks.com for more information

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