

## **Workforce Talent Imperative in Downturn Economy**

***Peninsula Council for Workforce Development offer businesses cost-effective options***

**Newport News, VA** - - There's no doubt that unemployment numbers are still a concern across the country; the state of Virginia reported a 7.1% unemployment rate for May, 2009. But, even amidst downsizing, businesses are looking for ways to remain competitive in these economic downturns. The answer may lie within the Peninsula's workforce development system and the services that businesses can tap during these tough times.

President/CEO Matthew James, Peninsula Council for Workforce Development (PCFWD), said, "Businesses need to understand how they can access our services to save valuable time, energy and money for their employment and training needs. Even in a downsizing situation, those employees left behind are under major pressure to perform at higher levels to keep businesses competitive. Our ability to leverage resources and provide training dollars, assessment tools and recruitment is a major asset to businesses, now more than ever." Through the PCFWD's Peninsula Worklink, employment and training services are delivered to Greater Peninsula jobseekers, dislocated workers, and businesses.

Peninsula Worklink's business services range across the board from finding employees all the way to highly specialized sector-based strategies. A case in point is Canon Virginia Incorporated (CVI) who announced a major expansion last year, beating other sites in the USA, France and Japan. One of the factors contributing to the success of CVI was the ability of the Worklink's partners to identify, place and train the new workforce skill sets identified by the company.

The Peninsula Worklink partners included Thomas Nelson Community College, the Virginia Employment Commission and the One-stop Career Center. The team's goals were two-fold: 1) the identification, assessment and placement of potential employees, and 2) the design and development of the necessary courses and curriculum to train the new workforce. Only after conducting recruitment, assessments, delivering information sessions and testing, were successful candidates allowed to apply officially to CVI.

- more -

The Peninsula Worklink team screened over 1,881 potential candidates (and eventually 181 were hired by Canon). The only candidates that CVI touched in this process were those that completed applications [589 candidates]. Dr. Ned Carr, executive director for Peninsula Worklink and a member of the Virginia Workforce Network, said, “The ‘application to hire’ ratio for this customer was a little over 3:1, providing considerable savings for the company when compared to the ‘initial inquiry to hire’ ratio of almost 10:1.”

Businesses can tap the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development for a multitude of employment and training strategies to stay competitive. For more information, go to [http://www.pcfwd.org/worklink\\_business.asp](http://www.pcfwd.org/worklink_business.asp)

**- end -**