



Alaska Workforce Investment Board Newsletter

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Important Dates

October 25- 26

[AWIB Committee meeting in Fairbanks](#)

October 31 - November 2

[Alaska Association for Career and Technical Education \(AACTE\) Professional Development Conference in Anchorage](#)

November 1

[Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium \(APICC\) Annual meeting in Anchorage](#)

November 3-6

Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) Annual Conference in Anchorage

Web Sites of Interest

[Apprenticeship](#)
[AVTEC](#)
[AWIB CTE](#)
[EED CTE](#)
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Dear Reader,

In this issue we have the following articles: Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) Update; First Alaska Performance Scholarship Awards Go to Alaska 2011 High School Graduates; Asset Building and the Disability Employment Initiative; Career-Planning Activities in Education and Workforce Development; AKCIS Offers New Content for Job Seekers; RTC Alliance to Ensure Smooth Transitions for Students; and MAPTS: Training Riggers Across Alaska.

The AWIB has developed this newsletter to connect schools, industry and stakeholders with the AWIB and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. We are publishing every other month and featuring opportunities, programs and information about State of Alaska initiatives aimed at helping youth and adults find meaningful employment and postsecondary training. Also, the newsletter will have articles from the Department of Education and Early Development related to Career and Technical Education.

Please let me know if you have ideas for future articles. The next newsletter will be published in December 2011.



Sincerely,

Jeff Selvey
 AWIB Career Technical Education Coordinator
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AWIB Update

Greg Cashen, Executive Director



The last year has been a busy one for the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB), and staff to the AWIB have been working on several initiatives, including implementation of the strategies of the Gasline Training Strategic Plan, publishing of a statewide Career and Technical Education (CTE) Plan, meeting with Regional Training Centers, and implementation of a Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency (RE/EE) Workforce Development Plan. The AWIB, in partnership with the Employment Security Division and partner agencies submitted four grant applications over the last year, and was awarded two grants including \$150,000 for a planning grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and a \$2,727,000 training grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to improve education, training and employment opportunities of youth and adults who are unemployed and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits. This report includes a detailed timeline and summary of work completed by the AWIB, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD), partner departments and agencies, and staff to the AWIB from August 1, 2010 to date.

In August of 2010, the Alaska CTE Plan was published and distributed to the AWIB, DOLWD, Department of Education & Early Development, University of Alaska, AVTEC, and school districts statewide. The AWIB, State Board of Education, and Board of Regents approved the Alaska CTE Plan and supported implementation of the strategies contained in the Plan. The plan identifies strategies, key action steps and a timeline for monitoring progress of the State CTE Plan, the mission of CTE within Alaska's education and workforce development systems, and the status of new and ongoing CTE initiatives and partnerships.

In August of 2010, the AWIB, in partnership with the Employment Security Division, submitted an application for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Health and Profession Opportunity Grants to Serve TANF Recipients and Other Low-Income Individuals in the amount of \$2,650,000. The application proposed to provide eligible individuals with the opportunity to obtain education and training for occupations in the health care field that pay well and are expected to either experience labor shortages or be in high demand. The training grant application proposed to prepare participants for employment and advancement in health care occupations and provide support services as needed utilizing career and technical education, on-the-job training, registered apprenticeship, technical and vocational training institutions, and four-year colleges and universities to meet the needs of Alaska's health care industry employers. On September 28, 2010 we were informed that we did not receive an award for this training grant. However, the Employment Security Division and AVTEC will be working with the Cook Inlet Tribal Council who received a training grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for TANF recipients.

[Click here to read the entire article.](#)

First Alaska Performance Scholarship Awards Go to Alaska 2011 High School Graduates

Stephanie Butler, Director of Operations, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education



In early September the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education issued the first ever Alaska Performance Scholarships to members of Alaska's 2011 high school graduating class. More than 800 students enrolled in qualifying education or training programs across Alaska will receive annual awards of up to \$4,755 to help pay program costs.

Proposed by the Parnell administration and approved by the Alaska Legislature in 2010, APS was created as an invitation to excellence, extended to Alaskan students and schools. As part of the invitation to excellence, APS goals include improving high school performance and better preparing Alaskans for postsecondary education and career success.

During the first institutional application window which included the 2011-2013 academic years the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) approved 23 regionally accredited institutions for APS participation. ACPE in conjunction with the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (Labor) also approved 13 career and technical educational institutions; including 76 programs offered through those institutions.

Year one APS use is primarily in collegiate programs. Career and technical education institutions had 12 APS recipients certified as enrolled in their programs. ACPE program administrators believe this number will increase year over year as eligible students become more aware of the diverse training options for postsecondary education in the future.

[Click here to read entire article.](#)

Asset Building and the Disability Employment Initiative

Rich Sanders, State Lead Disability Resource Coordinator, Disability Employment Initiative

One of the primary focus areas of the Alaska Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) is to develop asset building strategies and options for job seekers to enhance long term economic self-sufficiency. These include:



- implementation of financial literacy training for youth and adults; increased awareness and use of the Earned Income Tax Credit and other tax credits through free tax preparation at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites;
- increased availability of individual development accounts for homeownership, education and small business development; and
- increased use of Social Security work incentive programs that provide a safety net for job seekers receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) in their return to work.

Asset Building refers to strategies that increase financial and tangible assets, such as personal savings, owning a home, and starting businesses of all kinds. Asset-building policy focuses on long-term development of individuals, families, and communities. Development and integration of promising practices in asset building are possible through the One Stop Job Centers and community partnerships. Asset building activities can increase the financial stability of Alaskans and in turn, enhance the stability of their careers and long term employment.

Job center employees across the state have been participating in extensive training through the DEI since the spring of this year. Additionally, the State Lead Disability Resource Coordinator has been involved in community efforts in Anchorage through the Anchorage Financial Partnership. The Anchorage Financial Partnership is a collaborative coalition of representatives from financial institutions, consumer credit counseling providers, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the United Way of Anchorage, Ninestar Enterprises, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) through their VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program. Through this partnership, a yearly effort takes place in the Anchorage area to market and coordinate "Super Saturday" events that provide AARP tax volunteers with considerable experience and training in tax preparation so that individuals with low income can have their taxes prepared free and at the same time have the opportunity to meet with a variety of social service and financial service providers in one accessible location. These efforts helped foster three "Super Saturday" events in the Anchorage area. In the 2011 tax season, these events and other free tax sites around Anchorage had 3,810 tax returns prepared; 578 were for individuals with a

disability. From those indicating having a disability, over \$580,000 was realized in tax refunds with nearly \$130,000 coming from the Earned Income Tax Credit, one of the best ways for individuals and families with low income to recoup some funds toward asset building.

In terms of financial literacy, the One Stop Job Centers provide access to the online FDIC "Money Smart" curriculum. Other local Disability Resource Coordinators have collaborated with local banks and credit unions to provide ongoing classes at the job centers in topics including budgeting, managing credit, homeownership, and avoiding predatory lending programs. As it is recognized that Alaska's regions present some very unique economic conditions, partnering with local financial institutions is a strategy that will continue to be implemented in partnerships with One Stops across the state.

A State Asset Building Summit was held in Anchorage in July 2011 to discuss asset building strategies, strengthen the local Anchorage coalition and to identify representatives to develop an Alaska Asset Building Coalition. The purposes of the coalition are:

- to share programs and best practices that assist individuals escaping poverty;
- to collaborate and coordinate in developing, proposing and establishing policy and individual development (matched savings) account programs; and
- to offer job seekers a "hand up" in how to best use their finances to escape poverty through homeownership, financial education and accumulation of assets over time.

On September 27, 2011 the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, partner agency in the DEI grant was presented with one of four "City of the Year" awards in Boston, Massachusetts. This award recognizes the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and members of the DEI grant for their combined work with the Anchorage Financial Partnership in asset building activities.

For more information please contact the State Lead Disability Resource Coordinator, Rich Sanders at (907) 269-5703 or via email at richard.sanders@alaska.gov.

Career-Planning Activities in Education and Workforce Development

Don Levine, Education Specialist, DEED



Alaskan students statewide should be engaged in thinking about their futures early, to better understand the relevance of school and how it benefits them and their own plans for their lives. The process of career planning and goal-setting should be explored and developed in middle school, and then continued as a learner's education and career plan becomes more focused and defined. To be successful in the global workplace, Alaskans need these career-planning skills at all stages of their education as they prepare to enter and advance in the workforce. Building the skills and abilities to create and utilize a Personal Learning and Career Plan (PLCP) is a primary goal for all Alaskan students and workers according to the Alaska CTE Plan recently developed by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Department of Education and Early Development and the University of Alaska Board of Regents.

The Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS) is a career-planning program that is available to all Alaska residence at no cost. It houses a comprehensive set of activities that can be used in a variety of settings to build career goals and education plans, academic skills in the context of use in the workplace, and employability and job-seeking skills. In addition, essential documents like resumes, performance evaluations, test results and proof of certifications and accomplishments are stored in an electronic portfolio. The portfolio can be accessed by the user anywhere an internet connection is available. It is also easily viewable by educators, counselors, career guidance coaches and potential employers as the user transitions through the education system and into the workplace.

AKCIS has different sequences of activities that are geared to the needs and developmental levels of middle school, high school and adult users. These sequences can either be used independently or combined as participants progress through career development and their goals become more focused. In addition, AKCIS sites now have the ability to track checklists of specific activities and documentation requested of users. In the future, these sites will be able to customize checklists for their individual AKCIS site. There are a number of entities using AKCIS and listed below are figures that represent current activity:

- 269 total accounts, providing access for 50 Alaskan school districts;
- 324 active schools (23 elementary, 32 middle, 71 high, 198 K-12);
- 5 state agencies (23 job centers, 4 DVR locations, 3 correctional facilities);
- 11 college campuses;
- 27 businesses; and
- 9 tribal organizations.

For more information contact:

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AKCIS Offers New Content for Job Seekers

CJ Allison, Program Coordinator, ACPE



This fall the Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS) has integrated new information and content for adult job seekers throughout the system. AKCIS is a free online resource to Alaskans available through a partnership between the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The new features make it even easier for job seekers to form an action plan and track progress towards education and career goals.

AKCIS' My Career Plan section now guides adult users through AKCIS activities that culminate in a comprehensive career and education plan. There are two tracks - a Full Planner for in-depth exploration and planning; and, a Quick Planner for users interested in a shorter career planning route. Both versions are structured around the three questions 'Who Am I?', 'Where Am I Headed?', and 'How Do I Get There?'

A new Green Jobs module is now available and includes information about what makes a job "green". Six short videos provide excellent information on how green jobs and industries impact the environment and make a positive difference. Green characteristics are now included in occupation descriptions, task lists, Real World Interviews, and the new Industries section. Also, a new filter on the occupations list allows users to sort the entire list of occupations by: the education level required, median wage, and whether or not the occupation is an Alaska Top Job or a green job.

The Job Search section now allows users to browse through information about the job search process in a user-friendly format. The topics in Job Search include: Before Your Search, Start Your Search, Applications & Resumes, Job Interviews, Job Offers, and Labor Laws. Topics are covered through engaging content including videos, Quick Tips for differing populations, and links to additional sources of information. Job Search is now also fully integrated with the AKCIS portfolio. For example, when reading about previous work experience in resumes, users can quickly update their information and continue reading without navigating to a different part of AKCIS.

My Portfolio also has new tools for job seekers. Users can now provide customized access to their portfolio by establishing Visitor Accounts. For example, a job seeker can create a visitor account for a potential employer to view their uploaded resume and links to work samples or hiring documents. Visitors can communicate with the user via two-way messaging. Also, My Checklists provides lists of best practice steps for working towards education and career goals, and the checklists assist users in tracking their progress on AKCIS and non-AKCIS activities. Overall, these new additions make AKCIS a one-stop shop for Alaska's job seekers!

RTC Alliance to Ensure Smooth Transitions for Students

UA@Work Writer

One of the efforts that fall under the Alaska Career and Technical Education (CTE) Plan is the establishment of the Alaska Regional Training Center Alliance (ARTCA), which will bring together Alaska's regional training centers (RTCs). RTCs are public or nonprofit centers that provide coordinated workforce development, education and training in conjunction with local, statewide and federal partners to prepare citizens to enter into Alaska's workforce.

"Regional training centers find areas of need in the region and meet that need through training. Then, when jobs are here, there is a skilled local workforce ready to step in," explains Doug Walrath, director of Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center (NACTEC), the RTC located in Nome.



Duane Heyman,
Executive Director,
UA Corporate
Programs

The goal of the alliance is to have the RTCs work together as a strong, cohesive group in order to provide smooth transitions for students as they move through their education and then into the workforce, says Jeff Selvey, the CTE coordinator with the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD).

The effort has a direct positive impact on Alaska employers. "The greatest end benefit is preparing a local workforce," Walrath says. "That keeps dollars in the state rather than bringing people up from the Lower 48. The more dollars that stay in state and in the region, the more money circulating in the local economy, and the more the local lifestyle is improved."

There are currently 11 RTCs in the state, including NACTEC in Nome, the Alaska Technical Center in Kotzebue, AVTEC - Alaska's Institute of Technology in Seward, Delta Career Advancement Center in Delta Junction, Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center in Fairbanks, Galena Interior Learning Academy in Galena, Ilisagvik College and North Slope Training and Education Consortium in Barrow, Southwest Alaska Vocational and Education Center in King Salmon, Southeast Alaska Career Consortium in Sitka, UA Community Campuses, and Yuut Elitnaurviat - People's Learning Center in Bethel.

[Click here to read entire article.](#)

MAPTS: Training Riggers Across Alaska

UA@Work Writer

Imagine you're driving by a large truck carrying a stack of pipes. Before that truck got on the road, someone was in charge of lifting and securing those pipes so they could be safely transported. This is just one example of rigging - a skill required daily by industries all across Alaska.

"Nearly every industry in Alaska, from petrochemical and mining to government and marine, has a rigging component in their employees' job descriptions," says David Spann, the general industry training coordinator for the UA Mining and Petroleum Training Service (MAPTS). "Throughout the state, someone is performing rigging everyday continuously."

MAPTS has been providing rigging training for approximately 35 years. A range of classes are available, from introductory and refresher classes to certification through the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO). As the NCCCO is accredited and nationally recognized, "You can take your card anywhere in the nation and be acknowledged as having a certain level of knowledge," Spann says.

MAPTS students who want to pursue NCCCO certification can be certified as a rigger level I, rigger level II or signalperson. There are a couple of other providers in the state that offer rigging level I and signalperson training, but to Spann's knowledge, MAPTS is the only rigger level II training provider in the state.

MAPTS has two training facilities available - a rigging lab in Soldotna, complete with an indoor warehouse and an outdoor yard, and a classroom and small, indoor lab in Anchorage. In Soldotna, students use industrial-sized equipment and industry props, such as turbines, piping and pillars, to practice rigging and performing lifts. Training held in Anchorage is more classroom-based, although students do get hands-on practice using portable indoor cranes.

[Click here to read the entire article.](#)