



Boone & Winnebago Counties Workforce Investment Board Annual Report PY2006

The mission of the **Boone and Winnebago Counties Workforce Investment Board** is to create a competitive, skilled and educated workforce by providing a system for the citizens of Boone and Winnebago Counties to gain meaningful employment responsive to the needs of business.

The **Workforce Investment Board** was created by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. **The Workforce Connection** partnership comprises 17 agencies and represents 18 employment and training programs providing various workforce development services. By law, the local WIB must include representatives from area businesses, local business organizations, business trade associations, local educational entities, community-based organizations, economic development agencies and each of the one-stop partners.

The Workforce Connection is a partnership of state and federally funded employment and training programs, economic development agencies and educational entities committed to providing a workforce that meets the needs of our business community, now and in the future.

Chairman– Richard Mowris, *Rockford Products Corporation*
Vice-Chair– Paul Callighan, *Commonwealth Edison*
Secretary, Shirley Walker, *Carson Pirie Scott Div. of BON-TON Stores*

Steve Anderson, *Rockford Housing Authority*
Allan Barsema, *The Carpenter's Place*
Dr. Jack Becherer, *Rock Valley College*
Karen C. Brown, *OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center*
Shirley Burks, *Illinois Department of Human Services*
Michele Caldwell, *Global Staffing*
Linda Campos, *Campos Construction*
Kevin Dulian, *UPS*
Janet Ellis, *NW Illinois Area Agency on Aging*
Pedro Enriquez, *Illinois Migrant Council*
Dr. Richard Fairgrievies, *Regional Office of Education*
James Fehlhaber, *Rockford School Dist. 205*
Steve Gibson, *Rockford Business College*
Lynn Godina, *Northwest Graphics*
Luanna Grimes, *The Home Depot*
Todd Kindred, *N. Ill. Joint Apprenticeship Training*
Harvey Lightbody, *Swedish American Health Systems*

Stephanie Lueder, *TDS Automotive*
Larry McKay, *Plumbers and Pipefitters Union*
David Morgan, *Illinois Machine Products*
Dan Parod, *Rockford Health Systems*
John Phelps, *Rockford Local Development Corp.*
Owen Phelps, *The Durand Corporation*
James Pirages, *Hinshaw and Culbertson*
Mark Podemski, *RAEDC*
Maureen Rosenberg, *Northern Illinois University*
James Ryan, *City of Rockford*
Gus Saros, *Lowes*
Mary Beth Scholten, *IDHS-Div. Rehab. Services*
Mark Stefanic, *First Rockford Group*
Nord Swanstrom, *IDES*
Elton Turner, *General Mills*
C. Mark Williams, *Growth Dimensions*
Steve Yagle, *Reliable Machine*

Chief Elected Officials

Lawrence J. Morrissey, Mayor of Rockford
Catherine Ward, Boone County Board Chairman
Scott Christiansen, Winnebago County Board Chairman



Job Fairs

More than 2500 jobseekers attended recruiting events sponsored by the Workforce Connection and its partners.

1300 people attended the Northern Illinois Job Expo, held March 7th at the Clock Tower. Job fairs highlighting local manufacturers were held in November, 2006 and April, 2007. A grant from IDES funded a Hire the Future event for high school and college students.

Specialized Recruiting & Training



The Business Services Team worked with several employers, including Rockford Products, UPS, Carsons and AirGuard, on their hiring and training needs.

Fourteen companies took advantage of available **Incumbent Worker Training** dollars. \$52,944 was spent to provide training programs through MARRV, TechWorks and Rock Valley College.

Pictured above is the first Rockford Products training class, held at TechWorks. The program was put together using training dollars and OJT funding and could be a model to help other manufacturers with their training and recruitment needs..



Employment and Business Services

During program year 2006 (ending 6/30/07), 235 businesses utilized the services provided by the Workforce Connection, resulting in 2461 job placements.

7995 individuals registered for employment services through Illinois Skills Match.

Total Job Orders Received: 2974 (368 employers)

Overall total active jobseekers:	25,050
Jobseekers provided service	14,787
Referred to training	258

UI Claims taken (10/2006-8/2007) 16,221

Reemployment Eligibility Assessment Program interviews completed: 750

Resource Room Job Seeker Visits

Rockford—23,239
Belvidere— 3735

WIA Programs

WIA program providers served 1821 individuals during PY2006, including

- 392 Youth
- 401 Adults
- 1028 Dislocated Workers

676 Adults and Dislocated Workers entered employment upon completion of program services.

The **RVC Refugee and Immigrant Program** was honored by ALERTA for its work with the Hispanic community in northern Illinois. The program, funded by six grants, including WIA Adult and Youth grants, assisted 926 immigrants and refugees from 52 countries, with 125 able to secure jobs as a result. Services offered by the program include educational assistance and citizenship application. The program anticipates serving the same number of clients in the current year and anticipates approximately 120 new arrivals from Burma, Burundi, Iraq and Cuba.



Initiatives and Accomplishments

- The WIB partnered with area economic development agencies to fund the Pathfinders “labor shed” study. The study concluded there are 65,500 potential employees in the area for new or expanding businesses.
- WIB staff members were involved in the Getting to Work in Greater Rockford committee. In its new role as the RATS Mobility Subcommittee, the group seeks to continue its work to make it easier for seniors, the disabled and low-income workers to find transportation to their jobs.
- Rock River Training Corporation had its first ICDL (International Computer Driving License) graduate. The program prepares students for success in a world where proficient use of information technology is critically important.
- The Health Care Critical Skills Shortage Initiative (CSSI) continues in the Northern Stateline region. As a result of the partnership with educational institutions and health care providers, 42 incumbent workers began nursing education programs.
- The coming year will bring long-needed improvements to the Workforce Connection website.

Top 10 Companies Hiring Through the Workforce Connection in PY2006

- TDS/US Automotive
- Android Industries
- NCO
- UPS
- West Corporation
- Airguard Industries
- Bremner
- Swiss Colony
- Assured Staffing
- Product Action

Looking Ahead



Much of the past year was spent considering plans to move the Workforce Connection Rockford One-Stop to a new location downtown. All signs point to a move to the SupplyCore building at 303 North Main within the next six months.

The Belvidere office will also be moving to a new location at 998 Belvidere Road in the near future.

Financial Report Program Year 2006 Expenditures

WIA Expenditures

Admin	\$336,984.90
Adult	\$1,122,825.56
Dislocated Worker	\$1,337,346.73
Youth	\$1,059,405.99

Other Grants and Funding

Incentive Grant	\$74,871.00
State Reserve (1S)	\$217,439.15
High Speed Internet Access	\$11,305.40
TAA	\$367,053.32
Disability Navigator	\$66,664.12
CSSI	\$249,878.67
Staffing Grant	\$74,244.00
Technical Assistance Grants	\$44,639.97

Total: \$4,992,658.81

Success Story

Ramon Gomez, our Individual Achievement Award winner for this year, came into the Rock Valley College Dislocated Worker Program after working eight years with a local manufacturer. He was motivated to return to the workforce but had several barriers to overcome, including lack of a high school diploma, vocational training and English skills. Ramon successfully completed his GED and obtained his certification in HVAC, using both TAA and WIA financial assistance. He also used the services offered at the Workforce Connection and found employment at Wesley Willows in Rockford, earning a wage on which he can support his family.

Remembering Jon Lundin

The entire community was shocked and saddened by the passing this last spring of our friend, Jon Lundin.

Jon was a historian, and, as we all know, he wrote several books about Rockford's past and he was the person you called if you had a question about local history. But, as a member of the Boone and Winnebago Counties Workforce Investment Board and President of the Abilities Center, he did not dwell on the past. In fact, he used his knowledge of history, in particular, his knowledge of Rockford's manufacturing history, to look toward the future.

As an active member of the WIB, Jon understood and supported the One-Stop Center concept and worked to strengthen the organization and the services it offers.

Jon left behind a myriad of projects, all designed to make the community a better place and its workforce a little stronger.

It is with this in mind that we dedicate our annual meeting to Jon's memory.



Community Outreach

Last November, the team from the Workforce Connection was the winner in the annual Belvidere Chamber of Commerce Chili Competition. The team is looking forward to defending its crown this fall.

Fashion Show



A group of about 20 women attended an April session discussing job search issues from a woman's perspective—including a fashion show to show you don't have to spend a lot of money to look good at a job interview.



Congratulations to Rock River Training Corporation on its twenty-five years of service to the local community.

Formed in 1983 as a non-profit agency, RRTC has a successful history of serving Boone and Winnebago Counties, with a commitment to helping people find substantial employment through job training and employment assistance programs.

RRTC
Rock River Training Corporation

Youth Council

Carrie Buchen, *Job Corps*
Richard Fairgrievies, *Regional Office of Education*
Lynn Gibson, *Hononegah High School*
Lynn Godina, *Northwest Graphics*
Judge Patrick Heaslip, *17th Circuit Court*
Richard Hunt, *RAMP*

Steve Anderson, *Rockford Housing Authority*
Kerry Knodle, *CCS-YouthBuild Rockford*
Connie Schlupp, *IDES*
Mary Beth Scholten, *DHS-DRS*
David Valenti, *Retired*

Partner Agencies

Boone and Winnebago Counties Workforce Investment Board
Illinois Department of Employment Security
Rock River Training Corporation
Rock Valley College
Belvidere Chamber of Commerce
City of Rockford
Experience Works, Incorporated
Growth Dimensions for Belvidere and Boone Cnty.
Illinois Department of Human Services

Illinois Migrant Council
Northwest Illinois Area Agency on Aging
Rockford Area Economic Development Council
Rockford Business College
Rockford Housing Authority
Rockford Public Schools
Rockford Chamber of Commerce
The Literacy Council
Winnebago County