

New Innovators Professional Learning Network

November 16-17, 2005

Oxnard, California

Participants

Lisa Rice (Brevard County Florida); Peggy Herbertson and Paula Butcher (Pikes Peak, Colorado); Janie Bates and Marsha Lindsey (Texoma Texas); Mary Ross and Horace Dicks (West Central Texas); Rodney Bradshaw and Mike Temple (Gulf Coast Texas); Blair Schoeb (Oklahoma City); Elaine Crandall and Amy Fonzo (Ventura County California); Alex Paxton (City of Los Angeles); Theresa Reynolds (NW Piedmont, North Carolina)

Facilitators: Nina Babich and Donna Crudder (CSW)

Being Innovative, Responsive, Unique, and a Good Partner

The members were asked to describe their boards to the group by highlighting what they have done that is innovative, responsive, unique, or evidence of partnerships. They wrote one or two items for each category on colored paper, posted it to a “wow-wall” and then talked about their boards.

Innovation

- ◆ (Pike’s Peak) Hired an HR person out of business to develop fee-based services for business. Set up a separate 501(c)(3) to handle the income from Work Keys, profiling, and other services. The fees all through the incorporated entity and the county government never sees it. They consider this “unrestricted funds” that then gives them flexibility to use the money. **Peggy will send us their fee schedule.**
- ◆ (Texoma) Started an Enterprise Facilitation project in two places: a city at one end of their region, and the smallest/poorest county at the other end of the region. They are being assisted by Dr. Ernesto Sirolli. Sirolli teaches people and communities a bottom-up, responsive economic development approach called Enterprise Facilitation. **(check out <http://managingwholes.com/-community-enterprise-facilitation.htm> .** The 60 member, all volunteer board meets at the WIB office.
- ◆ (Texoma) Received \$200,000 from the state to develop an *interstate* regional plan with the neighboring region in Oklahoma. Economic developers worked with the board and put their own money into the project as well. The board of the project meets at the WIB office. This is not part of the COG and they are using Professional Employment Organization contracting services so they can procure larger contracts and use them for the HR part of their needs.

- ◆ (NW Piedmont) Started literacy initiative. Results of State of Workforce and State of Youth reports pointed to literacy as major issue. Put out an RFP for entity to develop a database of resources and be a neutral party to develop grants. The neutral party was needed because the various literacy organizations were competing for volunteers and the turf issues were a barrier. Board had wanted to raise awareness of literacy, not run literacy programs, so the neutral party took it over as a hand-off. An offshoot from this in much greater involvement with all the Faith based organizations in the area that are seeing huge implications for/to their congregations.
- ◆ (Brevard County) Offering profiling as a fee-based service, but this isn't like WorkKeys profiling. They are using Profiles International ([check out http://www.assessmentspecialists.com/](http://www.assessmentspecialists.com/)) "These integrated assessments employ cutting-edge technology and empirical data to assess the qualities of 'The Total Person.' In doing so, the individual qualities of candidates are compared to the qualities of employees who performing their duties in a superior manner. These 21st Century assessments successfully identify potentially excellent employees better than 75% of the time." They are also building a database of virtual video interviews.
- ◆ (Oklahoma City) Held a Senior Summit attended by over 300 people; senior employment was a key issue. Trying to get legislation passed to incentivize employers to hire older workers.
- ◆ (Ventura County) Well known for workforce intelligence products. State of Workforce Report was followed by two in-depth reports focused on specific issues (on self sufficiency and skills gap) in the SOW. WIB has full-time LMI person on staff to research and collaborate with postsecondary institutions. Working on common format to present career education to youth Will be developing a quarterly fact sheet designed by youth that will go to all schools. **Amy and Elaine will send us first edition of fact sheet.**
- ◆ (Ventura) Pursuing partnership with non-profit entities in order to have access to some discretionary monies that would be used for HR activities, stressing workforce innovation practices, tools and techniques.
- ◆ (West Central Texas) Participating in regional website designed by universities in conjunction with economic developers. Has all LMI for the region, county data, resource information, etc. Similar to a One Stop LMI shop. **Mary/Horace will send the link.** Talking about adding a blog feature. Also in a rural workforce network with 6 other WIBs, representing a total of 101 counties among them. The network is a portal for all services and linked to all 6 regions. The six boards meet periodically to do multi-regional planning.
- ◆ (West Central Texas) Board has an incumbent worker training fund which requires *cash* match by employers in order to access it (25%, but most put in more). A committee comprised of board and non-board members makes decisions on a quarterly basis for grants. It is very competitive. An economic

developer is trying to get other economic developers to put in money to increase the size of the fund. Application is web-based and simple.

- ◆ (West Central Texas) Have a distance learning lab in their building. Host brown bag lunches which are projected to the rural areas. Employers are the target audience and they pay a fee. Examples of past training: risk management, tax tips. They poll businesses to learn what they are interested in. Only charge \$10 for each session. They also rent the lab out for a fee.
- ◆ (Gulf Coast) Making programs disappear through the new performance measures. Contracts with operators are only for the *board's* measures, not the federal measures. Trackers in the "backroom" take care of the federal detail while the frontline staff take care of the customers.
- ◆ (City of LA) Shifting focus from supporting infrastructure of one-stops to developing training programs and partnerships. Worked with Metropolitan Alliance to develop health care training program. Brought labor and employees to the table to develop programs for both incumbent workers and job seekers. Program has 80% retention rate and very high placement rate. Using this as a model for other sectors.

Responsive and Partnerships

- ◆ (Pike's Peak) Created a model process for handling Katrina evacuees. The Red Cross, heads of various organizations, and Evacuee center leaders convene every two weeks at board office. State considers it a model for everyone else. **Peggy will send us their Disaster Recovery Agreement and their Economic Vitality Plan.**
- ◆ (Texoma) Formed a Literacy Council and developed a literacy project (software) in a county that has very low literacy. Developed a training center for incumbent workers. Community college runs it, but WIB wrote the grant to initially equip it. Economic developers put in money and so did the college, making it a full community effort.

Involved in many multi-board efforts. Little turfism among boards. They write grants for other people and the whole community benefits.
- ◆ (NW Piedmont) Created a place on their web page for applicants to apply for Dell when it moved into the area. Dell created 12 questions for screening (Dell accepts all liability for the process) that are on the web site. Job seekers also view a video about the work so they can self-screen themselves for interest. The board assists in scheduling assessments, but Dell hired a private contractor to actually do the assessments. People who don't pass the screening or assessment receive information about one-stop services.

Purchased a mobile unit for taking services on the road. This will be a fee-based activity. The board gave the operator an initial grant to get it started, but it must become self-sustaining. Ten churches want it in their parking lots on Sunday morning. Two high schools want it parked at their place for a week at a time. There is no charge for using the mobile unit for rapid response or at churches,

but schools will pay, as will other boards that want the mobile unit to come to their areas.

- ◆ (Brevard County) One-stop was a disaster recovery center. 22,000 people passed through their doors in 5 months. They placed 1,000 in jobs and have maintained a connection with the rest. Built a relationship with FEMA.

Hosting a workforce housing taskforce. Nurses, firefighters, etc. can't afford to live in the area. Concerned citizens got together to research and address the problem.

One-stop business services located in the one-stop are acting as a conduit for disabled individuals to get into businesses because the vocational rehabilitation staff can't get in the door.

Working with AARP to develop training in technology for mature workers. AARP staff are in the one-stop full time and they have placed more mature workers in employment in the past year than ever before.

- ◆ (OK City) Oklahoma City had its own Katrina response because FEMA never showed up. A one-stop was set up by the Red Cross and United Way, and they invited the workforce staff in. They are looking for external partnerships beyond typical workforce entities, like senior programs.
- ◆ (Ventura) Partnered with Santa Barbara nursing association to host a health care roundtable on nursing shortage. Looking at loan forgiveness program, scholarships, etc. One-stops offer many health care occupational training options. WIB was also a catalyst in starting up a new nursing teacher program in Oxnard.

Gave money to economic development to enhance their Business Enhancement Program (and improve partnership between board and economic development).

At recent WIB retreat, decided to stop being the bride and start being the marriage broker. Initiated a speaking tour to convince businesses to allocate a percentage of their HR and training budget to workforce investment. Want them to commit .5%. They want to create academies that are self-sustaining and free from government strings.

- ◆ (West Central TX) Developed a youth soft skills and dual college credit project with 8 rural communities. Employers lead the partnerships. They now have an adult version they are piloting with banks. This will done as a fee for service. They are also looking at a structure that would accommodate donation sponsorships. The training is done by School in Maine. Dr. Lisa Berglin did curriculum development. The project brings employers to the table with schools. They found the employers like to develop the strategy *first* and then bring in the school personnel rather than having them at the table as strategies are developed. Helping communities with visioning of their economic future using a standardized approach. **Mary will send us the roadmap of 10-mile markers that they use.**

They are setting up satellite one-stops with faith-based organizations in partnership with the chamber.

The one-stop is home to 211-line staff (information and referral service). The one-stop staff helped man the phone lines during Katrina.

The Board (WCTWDB) and Cisco Junior College in Abilene have combined efforts to create Mind Works, an entity that provides low cost, quality training opportunities for child care providers in the 19-county WCTWDB service delivery area. Each month, Mind Works offers training on basic skills required of child care providers such as CPR, First Aid, and brain development. Mind Works offers training on more advanced topics, including curriculum development, guidance, discipline, health and safety. Recognizing the needs of child care center directors, it offers training in management techniques, leadership, staff development and supervision, as well as business management. All training offered by Mind Works is designed to satisfy child care licensing requirements for professional development. In addition to training, Mind Works offers use of their resource library for caregivers to use in curriculum development. Available equipment includes die cuts and research materials.

- ◆ (Gulf Coast, TX) Oil fields were discovered in the Rockies, but where will the workers come from? Board staffing a workgroup that includes the board, oil company reps, and reps from Wyoming to develop the workforce. Additional states will be added. They will find a sector rep to pull the industry together, even if she/he is from outside the area. The board always hires from the industry to run sector groups. The model is to hire a liaison and let the industry group led them to the sector coordinator.

They have four industry groups now (one dormant, one just starting, 2 actively staffed). Their approach starts with a needs statement; get LMI, then look for a connector. The connector is then the convener, not the board. They get an industry “champion” to invite others to the table. Board promises to commit resources if the group is willing to stick together and work on solutions. The board acts as a catalyst and provides support; its role and funding decline over time.

Uniqueness

- ◆ (Texoma) Board is fiscal agent for the board and the contractor. They use professional employer method of contracting. Texas requires procurement of one-stop contractor. Texoma has too little money to procure an organization with big overhead, so they procured a “managing director” and then hired staff through an employee leasing firm. That way they can protect the staff if they have to change contractors (managing directors). **Janie will share the managing director contract.**
- ◆ (NW Piedmont) Doing offender outreach as “caring community” initiative. . Police identify someone as a “problem” and serve notification to the person; tell

them they can come into the system, clean up their act, or get assistance in turning their life around. Faith based organizations are also involved. Offenders are now voluntarily coming in. System is achieving an 86% placement rate and recidivism is low. The board is charging a fee to come to other areas and help them set up the model; the police come along with them. **Theresa will share this model with us.**

- ◆ (Brevard) Put a faith-based seat on the Board because of all the potential connections. The appointed member has connections with 11 churches and has already got lots of activity going.

Aerospace industry is shifting from Moon to Mars. 50% of aerospace workforce might be impact in next 6-12 months. Working with NASA contractors to get early jump on identifying skills needed in the community.

(OK City) Have a direct contract with Department of Corrections to do workshops for people coming out of prison. This is a fee-based activity. Also have a contract with Career Tech to be in the one-stop centers to work with youth offenders. **Blair will share the agreement they have for their offender program.**

- ◆ (Ventura) Board is sponsoring Work Life Initiative. Child care is the focus. The intent is to introduce new human resource approaches. They assess HR policies at companies and help them come up with feasible strategies.
- ◆ (West Central TX) Educational service center is their fiscal agent and employer of record. Makes it easy for them to get into the schools.
- ◆ (Gulf Coast) 63-member board; region gets \$170-190 Million per year in funds. Came about from a merger of several other boards. Struggled at first. Now that they share a vision, they are really moving.

Turned child care committee to employer committee so they can approach the problem from a different angle.

Lots of health care initiatives. Brought in \$18 million in health care training investments from the board's \$800K investment. Putting money into health care educator training along with community foundation money. Has resulted in 40% increase in numbers of nurses trained. **Rodney and Mike will send us their new power point on health care.**

Performance measures project is now implemented effective October 1. (Has been described in previous Innovator meeting summaries). Although the board's contracts with their contractors no longer have the federal measures in them, the contract between the state and the board still does. They are now on version 4.6 of the measures and targets have been set. **Mike will send us the latest version.** The main issue is data systems getting the right data. Some are lag measures, so there are daily production numbers being used as lead measures. "We can 'game' the federal measures, but we don't want to do that." DOL has actually been easier to work with on the alternative measures than the state has.

Invited all food stamp and TANF participants to the one-stops, not just the mandatory ones. The result was a huge pool. The rate for placements went down. But they don't want to do any creaming.

- ◆ (City of LA) Board is buried within city government and the one-stops are politically connected. There are a lot of power dynamics going on. The Board is re-examining their one-stop certification process, which had been very Baldrige-based. They are now trying to bring performance to bear on funding for each center, in addition to geography, usage, etc.

Workforce Housing

Bill Watkins from the University of California at Santa Barbara's Forecasting Project gave a presentation on the critical housing situation nationally and in California. California offers little or no opportunity for good employment to college educated people. House prices have quadrupled since 1999 in Ventura County. There are more crowded households, with more than 1 person on average per room in more than 30% of the houses in some communities.

Home prices are increasing because:

- ◆ Demographics: per capita consumption has doubled since 1970 even after adjusting for inflation
- ◆ Coastal California is not a "local" market
- ◆ Wealth accumulation. Baby boomers are impacting prices. They are at their peak in earnings, have accumulated wealth, and are buying 2nd homes.
- ◆ Interest rates - have fallen steadily since 1983.
- ◆ Taxes. You can now write off more in housing on your taxes than anything else.
- ◆ Supply. There is little housing construction going on in coastal CA.

There is an initiative in California that says "we want to keep our farmlands." You can't change farmland over unless you have the vote of the entire county. So, the population is getting more concentrated in the cities.

California's great migrations have included:

- ◆ Latinos coming in.
- ◆ Baby boomers coming in (retirees).
- ◆ Generation X - moving out because there are few opportunities and no little housing.
- ◆ Businesses leaving. Cost of doing business too high.

There is no proven response to the problem. There isn't enough infrastructure to expand transportation solutions. Telecommuting may help to alleviate some of the pressure.

In the next 5-10 years, the State of California and the Indian tribes may be the biggest developers because neither one has to follow the rules. Employer-based housing may be the wave of the future.

The role of WIBs should be to raise awareness, which may influence votes that would allow in more housing, more jobs.

Personal Re-employment Accounts (PRAs)

Janie and Marsha presented information on their PRA project. The official Texas explanation: "PRAs are additional resources provided to eligible UI recipients and do not replace Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. PRAs may be used to purchase intensive career, job training and supportive services, and products; therefore, unemployed workers may have more flexibility over access to training and services in order to help them return to work quickly and improve their economic outcomes. Under the demonstration, job seekers will be allowed to earn a cash bonus of up to \$3,000 if they return to work by their 10th UI benefit week. A smaller bonus of up to \$2,000 is available for those who return to work from between the 11th and the 13th UI benefit weeks. The reemployment bonus will be paid out of the PRA in two installments – 60 percent at employment and 40 percent after working six months. Funds already utilized for job-search activities will be subtracted from the bonus. Any funds remaining in the account can continue to be used to purchase training and services." [Texas set up its payment plan a little differently than the federal standard].

The Gulf Coast region is other one of two PRA demo projects in Texas. Other states participating in the PRA demonstration project are Florida, Idaho, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana and West Virginia.

DOL's expectations were that people would want the bonus and that they would purchase services through the one-stop. So Texoma developed an elaborate fee structure for anything other than core services. If an individual enrolls in the PRA project, he/she can't use WIA or TAA services for one year.

However, Texoma isn't seeing what DOL envisioned. They are getting requests for using the PRA for house payments, electrical bills, etc., not workforce services. The PRA project requires *lots* of case management and data tracking. They started out tracking 86 data elements per person, but are down to 68. DOL allows people to exhaust all their PRA for support services if they want to. The support services are not taxable. But if you accept the bonus, it is taxable, and at the bonus rate of 45%. People aren't stupid. Participants can use up their entire account while job hunting before ever getting a job at the 10th week. While DOL thought people would want to purchase training, Texoma has had only one request.

Federal guidance says the board has no option to limit how participants use the funds, while the state says the board does have options. Marsha is taking the middle road. She's letting people request support services, but they can only claim any given type of support once (e.g., can only request house payment once).

Many people aren't interested, so Texoma is falling short of its recruitment quota. Many dislocated workers are distrustful of government; they are suspicious about government wanting to give them money.

The board doesn't have control over the dollars. The profile scoring is done elsewhere and individuals who are eligible are referred to the board. Many are higher income folks.

A side benefit from being involved in the pilot as pricing out all their services. They'll be using that to sell services to employers.

Generational Issues in the Workforce

Lisa Rice presented her power point on generational issues with lively discussion (which everyone received via e-mail prior to coming to the meeting so it won't be repeated here.) [A website we were recommended to check out is www.generationwhy.com](http://www.generationwhy.com) For those of you not present who wonder what "ACOURN" stands for on one of the slides, it is:

Accommodate Employee Differences
Create Workplace choices
Operate from a sophisticated management style
Use situational leadership style
Respect competence and initiative
Nourish Retention differently (differently for different generations.)

Roles for WIBs:

- Connect employers to schools. New grads are needed to fill labor shortages.
- Encourage "stem skills." (The stem areas of education are math, science, engineering and we are losing them).
- Promote Junior Achievement.
- Include public education outcomes as indicators of success.
- Raise community awareness of the need to attract young professionals.
- Educate businesses - get them to look at their own practices and policies. It is not only what they say, but how they say it. Help businesses to have the right conversations.
- Be less judgmental about diversity in terms of tattoos, body piercing, gender orientation, disabilities.
- Assess young job seekers for their value systems. Act as a cultural translator.
- Offer "managing the generations" workshops. Employers will pay for this.

Elaine offered an alternative viewpoint: we need to ask Generation Y to learn proper workplace behaviors rather than coddle them. We won't be able to compete as a nation in the global marketplace if we cater to the younger generation's work and personal values.

Disaster Response and Planning

Rodney and Mike discussed how they handled the influx of Katrina evacuees. They got a site set up in the Houston Dome -- in a hallway. They called Interfaith and in 36 hours got a tent in the parking lot and generators to power equipment, but couldn't get phone lines to it. They had four mobile van units come in from around Texas and ran their satellite connections into the tent. Interfaith brought in cell phones. It cost them \$3500 to rent the tent and generators.

It is important to authorize people to make things happen. They were open 7 days a week at their three main centers. One-stop people really stepped up to the plate.

Mike said they had had a disaster plan for if a disaster happened to *them*, but didn't have a plan for when they had to absorb a disaster happening to *others*. The emergency grant money didn't come until after it was all over! A big question for them became, do we train people for jobs that exist here, or for jobs that do/will exist back where they came from? Lots of employers showed up to hire people. The employers were from Texas, California, Florida, elsewhere.

They held a giant job fair (postponed once due to Hurricane Rita). Hired a marketing firm to put it together. Required employers to have at least 100 actual current job openings in order to come into it. The board arranged for HR volunteers to help people with resumes and set up a child care facility on site. They saw 8,500 job seekers that day, although most were not evacuees. They got criticized for not determining first whether they employers were "real." The jobs offered ran the gamut from low skill to high skill.

Mary said Abilene did a focus group with people who were everything from welfare recipients to those with degrees. They were hostile; unhappy with all the attention being given to evacuees when they were looking for work themselves without anybody going to great efforts.

Homeless advocates were also unhappy. All this housing suddenly made an appearance for evacuees when they had been trying to get shelter for the homeless for years. The difference is that people felt like the evacuees were victims, while homeless people are in that condition because of their own decisions. You have to control the media to show both sides of the story. Also, you can use the fact that lots of shelter materialized in two weeks to help evacuees to demonstrate to legislators that homelessness can be handled quickly if people choose to do so.

Rodney said that one of the National Emergency Grant (NEG) activities was to hire teachers from Louisiana to be tutors in schools that had large numbers of evacuees. NEG funds could be used to hire case managers to contact every evacuee through FEMA to develop a personal plan, including mental health issues. There is concern about post-traumatic stress. Post traumatic stress screening is being done under NEG.

There were a substantial number of immigrant evacuees, including the undocumented. Many Vietnamese. There was a lot of "chatter" about what was being done for them, but the staff were not worrying about green cards in these circumstances.

The disaster process was similar to handling a massive rapid response. The advantage to the boards' existence is that they provide a conduit for money

Lisa said her disaster planning includes having a line for her staff to call in to, emergency numbers where any of them can be reached, and knowing in advance where they plan to evacuate to when they need to personally evacuate. They have a phone call tree to formalize communications in times of disaster. The WIB's 2nd in command handles all the staff communication, while the WIB director handles all the external communications with FEMA and city/county officials.

She said it pays to have contact people identified in the cities and county who would be providers of disaster type services, and to know in advance how many people they would need to provide the services, what kind of services, and when they would need them. Faith-based organizations are included. They now have a 5-year worksite agreement with FBOs, the city and county that outlines the kinds of jobs the WIB will help them with, what the things the board will be responsible for, and what the other entities will be responsible for. **Lisa will share a copy of the agreement.**

The Brevard board hired a catering manager from a hotel to help find his peers, and then they held a hospitality fair, since the hospitality business has a very high demand for workers in their area. Some of the employers paid workers full or part time just to commit to being there when the hotel or restaurant reopened after the hurricane.

Lisa noted that there has been a huge increase in domestic violence as result of traumatic stress. Disaster planning needs to include mental health services not only for the victims, but also for the staff. Lisa brought in a mental health provider to be on-site at the one-stops for *staff* to voluntarily visit, and the at every center the person was busy all day long. EAP went through the roof for those three months. They built-in relief time for staff so they could be free to deal with their own disasters at home. Before the storm hit, they were on the phone in conference calls to learn lessons, get ready, and get commitments for staff from other regions to come in to relieve their own local staff. The exchange of staff has really bonded their one-stop staff with staff from three other regions. The WIB paid their staff for personal time-off, and also paid the relief staff from the NEG grant.

The migrant workers were hard hit. The board had translators on site and put 250 migrants to work within two weeks doing debris pick-up, restoration of beaches, etc. They sent vans (rented with NEG money) to pick them up with a facilitator on board to coordinate taking them to worksites. They did English instruction on the van rides. Paid the migrants from time of pick up to time of drop-off, not just for time on the job since it was a long ride.

Elaine and Amy said that Ventura may not have hurricanes, but it has fires and winter rainstorms, mudslides, and earthquakes. Because they are part of county government, they can't operate as flexibly as an independent board can. While Gulf Coast and Brevard County were out spending money even prior to the NEG money coming in, Ventura has to wait until the money arrives before they can act. Additionally, money

spent on fires has be kept separate and documented separately from money spent on winter storms.

Next Meeting

The group discussed connecting the next meeting to NAWB, but some people said afterwards they really hadn't planned on attending NAWB itself and Washington DC is a pretty expensive town to meet in, so we'll look for alternatives.

One issue that was suggested as an agenda item was rapid response. We are also looking for somebody to volunteer to write the next white paper if there is an issue they are passionate about.