



CareerSource Okaloosa Walton
 Business Competitiveness Committee
March 10, 2022 * 9:00 a.m.
 Microsoft TEAMS

Michelle Crocker	Wyndy Crozier	Caralee Gibson
Nathan Sparks	Jon Williams	Al Smith
Dennis Braun	Donna Cox	Megan Veach
Allan Baggett	Scarlett Phaneuf	
CSOW Staff: Michele Burns	Will Miles	

Ms. Michelle Crocker, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the meeting on December 9, 2021. Michelle requested a motion to approve the minutes. Wyndy Crozier made the motion and was seconded by Al Smith; all in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Will Miles provided a presentation to the Committee on Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL). The presentation included the following topics:

- BCC Action Item.
- Applied Technology Academy (ATA) Application and Programs.
- Eligible Training Providers Programs List (ETPL) and Regional Demand Occupations List (RDOL) Projected Timeline.
- Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act.
- ETPL Performance Criteria for PY 2021-2022 (Out for public comments).
- Minimum Performance Levels Starting in PY 2023-2024.
- Continued Eligibility and Recertification for the ETPL; And,
- Annual Performance Reporting.

Will Miles provided the list of occupations that had been requested by ATA to be added to the Eligible Training Provider List. Following a staff review of the programs, the following programs were recommended to be added to the ETPL for 2021-2022.

- **15-1141 CompTIA Data***
- **15-1141 Data Analyst**

- **15-1131 Python Developer**

Will informed the Committee that the programs met the requirements to be added to the ETPL. Michelle Crocker requested a motion for approval to add the three programs to the ETPL for PY 2021-2022:

Action Item 1: *A motion by Nathan Sparks to approve adding the ATA programs to the ETPL, seconded by Al Smith.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Nathan Sparks, One Okaloosa Economic Development Council (EDC)

The 1st quarter of each year Enterprise Florida issues its average wage data for our county and region. That information is used to determine eligibility for various state incentive programs. Typically, our regional partners like Triumph Gulf Coast and University of West Florida through their Industry Resilience and Diversification Fund subscribe to using their funds for the creation of higher wage jobs by applying for these incentive funds.

Our MSA (Ft Walton-Crestview-Destin), including both Okaloosa County and Walton County is a positive picture of a growing economy.

Our MSA average annual wage is \$48,336, hourly wage \$23.24; and 115% of \$48,336 is \$55,586, hourly wage \$26.72. This is the amount needed to apply for the incentive programs.

In terms of the Okaloosa County, its average wage is \$49,622, hourly wage \$23.86; 115% of \$49,622 is \$57,065. The average wage represents an 11% wage growth over last year. Okaloosa County now has the highest average wage in Northwest Florida. Previously it was Escambia County, but we have now surpassed them. By comparison, Escambia County's average wage is \$48,278 or \$23.21/hour; Bay County's average wage is \$44,209; Santa Rosa County's average wage is \$40,481.

The EDC is in the final six weeks of preparation for our 5th Annual **TeCMEN Industry Day** taking place at the Destin-Ft Walton Beach Convention Center on April 26, 2022. We have sold more booths than we have ever sold before. We have sold 50 booths so far. We have more sponsors than we have ever had. We would be very honored if anyone on this committee would attend. The deadline for registration is April 15, 2022.

We have several panels. One panel I am very excited about is the **Industry Newcomers to The Great Northwest**.

Scarlett Phanueff, PowerSouth Company, a member of this committee will be the moderator for the panel. The panel members include:

- Chris Hart, CEO Central Moloney, Inc., a transformer manufacturer out of Arkansas, expanding to Bay County.
- Dennis Wikoff, President & COO, Vertex Solutions, out of Illinois, a simulation technology company, relocated to Niceville last spring.
- Mike Mullen, President and CEO of Circulogene, a Bio Med company out of Birmingham, recently announced they are expanding in Pensacola.
- Michael Litton, CEO, American Metal Bearing, out of Garden Grove, California, recently announced they are relocating to Freeport.

EDUCATION

Jon Williams, Okaloosa Technical College (OTC)

Ms. Hayes is retiring in the next couple of weeks. OTC is preparing for an open house on March 31, 2022. OTC is conducting recruitment visits at the high schools and it's going very well. The students are showing a high interest level, so we anticipate a good event. OTC is planning to have a trade day event in the month of May for students interested in coming to the college and want to know more about the school to make a decision.

Dennis Braun, Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC)

I will provide an update on the workforce development programs under me.

Apprenticeship programs – NWFSC is running programs in Culinary, Carpentry, CNC Machining, HVAC, IT Support, and Network Support (rolling out this spring); Maintenance Technician, and Plumbing. We have had good outreach with students and businesses that will continue to participate with NWFSC.

NWFSC is working on a Pathways to Career Opportunity Grant to supplement the IT apprenticeship grant. We will hold a Boot Camp starting in May 2022. We are hoping to have a group of 20 students to be A+ certified through that program and placed in apprenticeship roles.

NWFSC is operating a Construction Trades program in Defuniak Springs. It is a 21-credit certification program as well with our noncredit certification program in the apprenticeship program. We are hoping to grow that program in Defuniak Springs next year with some additional outreach.

The NWFSC Commercial Driving License (CDL) program is going well. The staff has been busy since last October trying to get the certification completed for the testing. We are transitioning the program from 8 weeks to 5 weeks starting April 4, 2022.

The college is running a correction program at Correction Institute on Construction Trades as well as Heavy Equipment Operations. And at Walton County jail where we have a Welding Certification program going there. The first class was completed last week.

Continue to offer a customized training program for local employers; programs such as Leadership, Customer Services, Safety, and Technical Training. We are looking for additional partners.

The Okaloosa Leadership class will finish in about two months. The next class will start next Fall and we will be getting the word out soon.

Wyndy Crozier, Emeralds Coast Technical College (ECTC)

We have been very busy. We are on the downhill slide getting our Welding and HVAC building completed. They should be completed by June 26, 2022, and we will be looking to have a Grand opening, more information is to be announced. In June, we will begin to build down at Watersound to renovate three portables that the St Joe Company has given our school district. We opened classes Watersound on January 10, 2022. We have an IT program going there now that is doing very well. We anticipate starting a Patient Care Tech program in the Fall. In January, we will start to build on our Health Science building on the campus here in Defuniak Springs.

INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS UPDATES

Michele Crocker, First Nation Group, Committee Chair

Informed the Committee about the Panhandle Job Fair is next Friday, March 18, 2022. We are still registering employers to attend the job fair. If anyone is interested, please go to pahhandlejobfair.com to register.

Carolee Gibson, GSC Systems Inc.

There is an open house at the Hsu Foundation in Crestview, today at 4:00 p.m. GSC in conjunction with Bit Wizard will showcase their electronic access control video surveillance network. An impressive facility where children are able to practice remote control, learn to code, practice drone flying, and have Lego competitions. I am sure that everyone here would be welcome to attend.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled on May 12, 2022.