

Jobs: Ohio's Future



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"We need more involvement from two-year colleges to help with worker training. [They should provide] whatever the community, the customer needs," he continued.

Since Ohio's unemployment rate is at its lowest in more than 20 years, the Governor proposed that communities look at high-risk groups, such as inhabitants of inner cities, rural areas and other low-income areas. Organizations should get together and become a "marriage bureau" to match those in need of jobs to employers, he suggested.

As an example, the Governor mentioned an employer who thought he had to locate outside of Ohio because of the low unemployment rate, when Ohio still has people needing jobs. The Governor stated that Ohio needs to draw multinational corporations who have moved out of the U.S. due to lower pay scales.

In planning for the future, Voinovich stated, "The minority population will become the majority of the workforce. We

have to make businesses understand this." He also noted that the programs, Children and Family First and School-to-Work are the future of the state.

After the Governor's eloquent comments, Lt. Governor-elect Nancy Hollister enthusiastically informed council members that the GHRIC will be a special project of hers. As a person with an Appalachian background, she has insight into the unique employment and education needs of residents of the Appalachia area.

The Governor's Human Resources Investment Council

George V. Voinovich
Governor

Patricia L. Clonch
Chair

Governor inspires council

In his annual address to members of the Governor's Human Resources Investment Council, Governor George V. Voinovich discussed his plans for the future of Ohio's workforce development efforts at the council meeting on December 14. The Governor was accompanied by then Lieutenant Governor-Elect Nancy Hollister.



"I appreciate your devoted service," the Governor told the council members. "You have to have a real sense of urgency if you expect to get the job done."

It is the Governor's wish that the people of Ohio be able to "use their talents fully, to take care of themselves and their families, and to make contributions to society."

"The greatest thing you can do for a person is to create an opportunity for him to flourish," the Governor told GHRIC members. Recognizing the importance of an "enlightened" labor-management relationship, advanced labor technology, and the partnership between government and the private sector, the Governor said, "You are good and caring citizens. You're making a difference."

Addressing the topic of education, the Governor said, "Higher education is within 30 minutes of every person in the state."

Eyes of the nation turn to Ohio once again

Once again, Ohio is attracting national attention in the Employment and Training industry. Norton Manufacturing Company, Fostoria, is the first company in the nation to begin implementing national metalworking skill standards. In October, the Ohio Industrial Training Program (OITP) awarded a \$47,000 grant to Norton to test and certify workers to national metalworking skill standards.

See story on page 3.

Johnson named Chair of the Barriers to Employment Task Force



Than Johnson is the new Barriers to Employment Task Force Chair and has been recently appointed Vice Chair of the Employment and Training Committee.

Members of the Barriers to Employment Task Force include Thane Griffin, United Way of Franklin County; John Hahn, Ohio Human Services Directors Association; Keith Hyde, Private Industry Council, SDA 17; and J. Kevin Sellards, Ohio Job Service Employer Committee.

Johnson, who is Executive Director of Champaign Residential Service Inc. (CRSI), believes that the six barriers identified in *Jobs: Ohio's Future*, are a "major starting point" to guide the task force. Members will "brainstorm" to identify any other barriers and will seek ways to surmount each one.

The six barriers are child care, health care, child support enforcement, the utility arrearage problem, transportation services and discrimination to employment. According to Johnson, a major problem is that most of the barriers are expensive to remove and, therefore, are disincentives for going off welfare or initiating welfare reform.

"We are going to search for solutions for individuals who can work but are not able to purchase some type of child care," Johnson promised.

He believes that health care is "entwined in all the other barriers." He sees the relation to child care in that Medicaid may cover the recipient and children better than private insurance an employer might offer. Even if the coverage is adequate, the amount taken out of one's earnings may be prohibitive. One may receive more money and benefits on welfare.

The child support law is "fairly strong," Johnson says. The extent of enforcement will be examined by the task force.

In addition, the task force will address the problem of utility arrearage. Utility bills accrue for welfare recipients, who then have a backlog of bills that they can't pay when they go off welfare.

"Transportation services are less of a problem in an urban area, but many available jobs are not in the urban area," Johnson noted. "County-wide forms of transportation are often unavailable. Relocating people becomes another expense. Transportation challenges and welfare reform go hand-in-hand."

To end discrimination, "We will look at the strengths and weaknesses of the EEO," Johnson said. "Citizens with disabilities are capable and want to be full members of Ohio's workforce. We will look at areas that will enhance their participation."

CRSI is a nonprofit corporation in Urbana for citizens with disabilities. CRSI provides transportation, residential, programming and management services to 12 counties in the surrounding area. CRSI has more than 300 employees providing services to approximately 300 citizens. Johnson is also a Trustee for Clark State Community College and Past President and current board member of the Urbana/Champaign Chamber of Commerce.

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The Newsletter

Kathy Kildow, Editor
Teddi Lewis, OBES Publications Chief

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All inquiries, comments, story ideas or
photographs should be sent to:

The Ohio Bureau of Employment Services
Office of Workforce Development
c/o: Kathy Kildow
PO Box 1618
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1618

Phone: (614) 466-0582
FAX: (614) 466-5025

Norton Manufacturing is first in nation to implement skill standards program

Norton Manufacturing Company, which employs 260 workers, produces heavy-duty, high-performance crankshafts for Chrysler, Ford, and Navistar. On December 12, the Ohio Department of Development Regional Administrator Thomas O'Leary presented Norton with the OITP grant to test and certify employees to the national metalworking skill standards.

Representatives from the National Tool and Machining Association (NTMA) and the Council of Great Lakes Governors (CGLG) have met with Norton and formally endorsed Norton's implementation program. NTMA, in cooperation with CGLG, is using federal funds as seed money for implementing the first half of a four-year work plan to establish a national skill standards system for all major skilled occupations in the metalworking industry.

The process of conducting task analyses of Norton employees to correlate their work to the national standards has begun. This month, Norton employees will begin training to ensure that they meet the standards. In addition, NTMA and CGLG representatives are working with Norton and its educational partners (Terra Community College and Vanguard-Sentinel Joint Vocational School) to develop and pilot a national assessment process that includes written exams and performance tests. NTMA hopes to begin certifying Norton employees in late summer.

According to NTMA Vice President William E. Ruxton, "If you've been like many other people who have been acquiring your skills and crafts for a period of years without the benefit of a formal scheme of instruction, you now have the opportunity to get certified and recognized for the skills that you have. You can also use a system of skill standards to identify things that you may need to learn or need to become proficient in, in order to advance yourself."

When the Governor volunteered Ohio as a lead state for the metalworking standards, he assigned responsibility for coordinating the project to the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services' Office of Workforce Development. The impact of the Norton project is travelling far beyond Fostoria. In response to Ohio's efforts, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan are beginning initiatives to implement the standards. In Ohio, at least three other metalworking companies have voiced their desire to participate in the Norton project. Discussions also have begun in other areas of the state that will bring the metalworking standards to the Akron, Dayton and Cincinnati areas.



Pictured above are Norton Manufacturing project members Dave Reynolds (standing), and seated clockwise: Mark Foster, Kris Perry, Gabe Gonzalez, Gary Gray, Len Proper, Randy Toscano Jr. and Jim Scranton.

Ohio awarded \$7 million grant

The U.S. Department of Labor recently awarded Ohio a \$7 million grant to assist in the development of one-stop employment and training centers.

"Ohio has already made great strides in modernizing our approach to job training and placement services," the Governor said after the award was announced. "This grant will allow us to go even further in bringing together the various agencies that provide service for the unemployed and underemployed. The end result will be a system that provides better workers for Ohio industry and better jobs for Ohio workers."

The \$7 million grant is for the first year of a three year project. OBES is the lead agency in the grant. The key to the grant proposal is that the money was requested jointly by a cross section of state and local agencies that deal with employment-related problems. Fourteen local communities have committed their readiness to implement one-stop systems in the first year of the grant.

The one-stop systems may differ from community to community. In all cases they must include: unemployment compensation services, employment placement services, Job Training Partnership Act services, labor market information and services to older workers and veterans. In addition, each system must include three of the four following: Job Opportunities and Basic Skills, vocational education, adult literacy and/or two year colleges.