

**High Country
Workforce Development Board Meeting
August 11, 2011, 3:00 PM**



**Building an adaptive workforce system to meet the needs of a globally
competitive economy**



Meeting Agenda

Thursday, August 11, 2011, 3:00 PM
468 New Market Blvd., Boone, NC 28607

Reminder: Board Books are now accessible on the Board website, www.highcountrywdb.com. Select “**Publications**” from the menu on the right. Click on the new “**Board Books**” category.

Call to Order

Public Comment Period (5 minutes)

Consideration of Minutes (pp. 2-3)

Administration of Oath to New Member (pp. 4-6)

Committee Reports

- ❖ **Executive** - Bryan Peterson (pp. 7-8)
- ❖ **Youth Council** - Marie Gwyn (p. 9)
- ❖ **Adult Services/JobLink Committee Report** - Dwayne Howell

Information

- ❖ **Workforce Update** (pp. 10-11) - Adrian Tait, Workforce Development Director
- ❖ **Construction Industry Report** (pp. 12-15) - Heather Kersey, WD Intern
- ❖ **Energy Sector Partnership Grant Update** (pp. 16-17) - Jacob Clark, Energy Sector Specialist
- ❖ **JobLink Report Overview** - Rebecca Bloomquist, Special Projects Coordinator

Member Industry Sector Discussion

Chair/Member Comments

General Announcements

Adjournment

Resources

High Country Labor Market Information, August 2011

Letter to Rocky Minton, participating adult winner of the 2011 Governor’s Award for Excellence in Workforce Development.

Press Releases: “Congratulations to Southern Industrial Constructors”, 8/1/2011.

“Landing a job (or employee) in a tight market: OJT grants help both workers and employers”, 8/1/2011.

DRAFT High Country Workforce Development Board Meeting DRAFT

June 9, 2011

MINUTES

Call to Order: by Chairman Peterson at 3:05 PM.

Members Present: Barbara Barlow, Mike Birkmire, Anne Bowlin, Skip Greene, Marie Gwyn, Jim Halsey, Jenny Harpold, Dwayne Howell, Clark Hunter, Carl Jenkins, Joallen Lowder, Carolyn McKinney, Charley Nash, Bryan Peterson, Jayne Phipps-Boger, Wanda Proffitt, Sam Ray, Sandy Reese, Truman Robbins, Julia Rowland, Stacy Sears, Earl Tipton, Sallie Woodring

Staff: Misty Bishop-Price, Rebecca Bloomquist, Jacob Clark, Carole Coates, Heather Kersey, Don Sherrill, Adrian Tait, MaryAnn Urka

Guests: David Cox, Sherri Dees, Drew Edwards, John Greene, Rick Herndon, April Jones, Donna Kelly, Anita Lowe, Jim McMahan, Patrick McKemie, Scott Moncrief, Doug Pratt, Ginger Shaffer, Chris Silvers, Carrie Stewart, Pam Wilson, Ron Wynn

Consideration of Minutes: The minutes of the April 14, 2011 meeting were approved as submitted.

Information

Executive Committee Report: Chairman Peterson presented retiring WDB Director Carole Coates with an engraved crystal plaque in appreciation for 21 years of creative and innovative leadership. Mr. Peterson introduced new part-time Board staff member Jacob Clark, who was hired as “green energy” sector specialist. He also reported that the NC Division of Workforce Development had recently completed its PY 2010 program monitoring, to be followed by a visit by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of the Inspector General; and encouraged members to visit the newly redesigned WDB website.

Youth Council: Marie Gwyn reported that John Boyd, Mayland Community College President; and Carolyn McKinney, Mitchell County Schools Career Development Coordinator, are new members of the Youth Council. Get REAL Youth Program staff members Sherri Dees and Drew Edwards presented on their recent three day experience as participants in a leadership series that brought together youth from Alleghany, Ashe, and Wilkes counties. Youth Council members will begin the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for Program Year 2012 WIA youth services in Fall 2011.

Adult Services/JobLink: Skip Greene reported for committee Chair Dwayne Howell. Third quarter reports were reviewed and found to be consistent with enrollment goals. 28 customers are currently enrolled in On-the-Job Training, with a target goal of 62. An Incumbent Worker Grant application was recently submitted to the NC Division of Workforce Development on behalf of Southern Industrial Constructors. The committee will continue to monitor new and emerging high-growth occupations.

Workforce Update: Carole Coates reviewed the current status of WIA re-authorization. The PY 2011 WIA Annual Plan has been approved by the NC DWD. The COG 2011 Annual Banquet will be held in September. Heather Kersey, an ASU Technology student, joined the Board staff as a temporary intern.

Industry Profiles: Dwayne Howell of the Gates Corporation (Ashe County); and Clark Hunter, Blue Ridge Business Development Center (Alleghany County) presented information on history, products, and initiatives of their respective businesses.

Presentation of JobLink Career Center Charters to Alleghany, Avery and Mitchell Counties: Bryan Peterson

Ten Years of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA): Director Coates recounted the local area impact of ten years of WIA (Workforce Investment Act).

Nominating Committee Report: Marie Gwyn, hearing no nominations presented from the floor, moved that the High Country Workforce Development Board accept the nominations of Bryan Peterson for WDB Chair, and Fonda Harris for WDB Vice-Chair, and called for a voice vote of approval. Motion was carried unanimously.

Introduction of New Workforce Development Board Director Adrian Tait: Carole Coates

Chairman’s Comments: Mr. Peterson reaffirmed the Board’s appreciation for the accomplishments of outgoing (June 30, 2011) Director Carole Coates, and extended an invitation to all to enjoy a reception in her honor, immediately following adjournment.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was seconded at 4:06 PM.

The next meeting of the High Country Workforce Development Board will be held Thursday, August 11th, 2011, at 3:00 PM in the HCCOG Board Room, 468 New Market Blvd., Boone NC

Meeting Attendance - June 9, 2011

%	Name	Jun. 2010	Aug. 2010	Oct. 2010	Dec. 2010	Feb. 2011	Apr. 2011	Jun. 2011
67%	Barbara Barlow							
67%	Mike Birkmire							
67%	Anne Bowlin							
67%	David Edwards							
67%	Skip Greene							
83%	Marie Gwyn							
50%	Jim Halsey							
84%	Fonda Harris							
50%	Dwayne Howell							
100%	Clark Hunter (11/10-) Scott Moncrief (6/06-9/10)							
33%	Joallen Lowder							
100%	Charley Nash							
100%	Bryan Peterson							
50%	Jamie Phillips (6/10 -)							
88%	Jayne Phipps-Boger							
50%	Wanda Proffitt (11/10-) Jake Blood (2008-9/10)							
84%	Sam Ray							
50%	Sandra Reese							
67%	Truman Robbins							
67%	Stacy Sears							
100%	Earl Tipton							
75%	Don Williams (6/10-)							
84%	Sallie Woodring							
		62%	78%	58%	83%	69%	52%	83%

Youth Council Members Present:

Jennie Harpold
 Carl Jenkins
 Carolyn McKinney
 Julia Rowland

LEGEND

Present
Absent
Vacant



HIGH COUNTRY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

OATH OF OFFICE (Adopted October 2005)

I hereby affirm to faithfully execute my responsibilities as a member of the High Country Workforce Development Board, and to abide by the Board's philosophy and values statement.

I will uphold the Board's standards by representing the Board in the community-at-large, and by avoiding conflicts of interest both within and outside of Workforce Development Board meetings.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Verified by Board Clerk: _____

High Country Workforce Development Board

CODE OF CONDUCT

In an effort to maintain the high standard of conduct expected in the management of its affairs, the Region D Workforce Development Board adopts the following Code of Conduct applicable to all members:

No Board member shall:

1. Use the name, endorsement, or services of the Local area for the benefit of any person, or authorize such use, except in conformance with WDB policy;
2. Accept or seek for oneself or any other person any financial advantage or gain of other than nominal value offered as a result of Board affiliation;
3. Disclose any confidential Workforce Development Board information to any person not authorized to receive such information or use such information to the disadvantage of the Local area;
4. Take part in any religious, anti-religious, or partisan political activities in the discharge of Board duties;
5. Take any action which results in a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest in accordance with the Federal Uniform Administrative Requirements.
 - A. Conflict of Interest arises when any of the following may be positively or negatively affected by an action under consideration by the WDB:
 - (1) the business in which the member or one of the immediate family of the member has a financial interest,
 - (2) the public or non-profit agency which employs the member or one of the immediate family of the member, or
 - (3) the public or non-profit agency on whose Board the member or one of the immediate family of the member sits.
 - B. Members must declare any potential conflict of interest on the WDB Information Sheet completed upon joining the Board and thereafter at the first meeting of each Program Year. When a potential conflict of interest arises during the year, the member will immediately notify the Chairman and the Workforce Development Administrator in writing.
 - C. The Conflict of Interest provision applies equally to Board meetings, or personal contact with members outside of meetings for the purpose of influencing or affecting the member's thinking or decision-making.
 - D. WDB members must make a conflict declaration upon the introduction of any agenda item that raises a real or apparent conflict of interest and must abstain from discussion and voting after declaring the conflict. Meeting minutes must show all conflict declarations and abstentions.

- E. Where there is a real or apparent conflict of interest, WDB members must refrain from participating in all stages of the procurement process, including:
- (1) participating in the planning process to the extent of advocating that a certain type of service be included or excluded;
 - (2) participating in the development, review, or approval of the procurement method and instrument which the member, one of the immediate family of the member, or the entity the member represents intends to respond to by submitting a proposal;
 - (3) participating in the provider selection process including discussing or voting on one's own or a rival proposal (one which competes for funding from the same source);
 - (4) attempting to influence a planning or funding decision by lobbying or advocating for or against a plan or proposal.
- F. No member who has a conflict of interest may serve as a WDB officer or committee chair.

NOTE: For purposes of this document, immediate family shall be defined as a member's spouse, parents, children, and siblings.

It is the responsibility of each member and alternate of the Workforce Development Board to govern the actions of all Board members in compliance with the Code of Conduct. If a member thinks there is a possibility of a conflict of interest, *real or apparent*, on the part of another member, it is his or her affirmative responsibility to immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Board or committee.

Upon the assertion of a possible violation of this policy, the Chairman will appoint an ad-hoc committee to review the circumstances; to report their findings to the Board for discussion and vote; and to recommend a course of action in the event a member is found to be in violation. Action may include, but is not limited to, a declaration that the member's seat is vacant and a request to the Chief Elected Official of the affected county to make a new appointment. In addition, civil penalties may be sought in the event the WDB incurs disallowed cost or damages due to violation of this Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct, which conforms to the Federal Uniform Administrative Requirements (Common Rule), becomes effective on January 23, 1992 and shall be referenced in the WDB By-Laws and other appropriate documents.

High Country Workforce Development Board
Executive Committee Teleconference Notes

June 2, 2011

Present: Marie Gwyn, Fonda Harris, Dwayne Howell, Charley Nash, Bryan Peterson

Staff: Carole Coates, Adrian Tait, MaryAnn Urka

Key Subjects Under Consideration:

- Youth Council and Adult Services/JobLink Committee reports
- Workforce Update

Background: The Executive Committee is composed of officers, committee chairs, and other members designated by the Chair. It is empowered to act on the Board's behalf between board meetings, subject to the Board's guidance.

Current Situation:

- Youth Council will meet on June 2nd at 2:00 PM. There are two new Youth Council members; John Boyd, Mayland Community College President, and Carolyn McKinney, Mitchell County Schools Career Development Coordinator
- Get REAL staff members Sherri Dees and Drew Edwards recently participated in a Youth Leadership training.
- Youth Council will soon begin work on drafting a Request for Proposal for PY 2012 Get REAL service providers.
- Third quarter: WIA Adult/Dislocated Worker service providers have nearly met or exceeded planned enrollment goals. The Connectinc. contract to provide follow-up services has been terminated, due to its internal financial issues.
- Alleghany, Avery, and Mitchell County JobLink Centers have successfully completed the chartering process, and a new Survey Monkey customer tool has been implemented.
- WIA funding cuts for PY 2011/2012 are not as severe as expected, and includes an increase in the allocation for Youth services.
- Jacob Clark has been hired as energy sector specialist on a part-time basis.
- Local Area WIA program monitoring by the NC Division of Workforce Development is currently in progress, to be followed by a visit from the Office of the Inspector General.
- Marie Gwyn will deliver the nominating committee report at the June 9th WDB meeting.
- Theme for the June 9th WDB meeting is CHANGE.

Next Steps: Election of WDB Chair and Vice-Chair for Program Year 2011-2012

Succession of Adrian Tait as Workforce Development Director, upon retirement of Director Carole Coates on June 30, 2011.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Thursday, August 11th, prior to the full Board meeting at 3:00 PM.

Program Year 2010 3rd Quarter Report - June 2, 2011
Workforce Investment Act - Common Measures Outcomes Through 3rd. Quarter

Performance Measure	Program Group	Actual	2010 Goals	% of Goal achieved through 3rd Qtr.
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	64.57%	75.4%	85.66%
	Dislocated Workers	77.90%	83.4%	93.37%
Retention Rate	Adults	87.50%	82.2%	106.40%
	Dislocated Workers	86.43%	90.0%	96.01%
Adult/DW Average Earnings	Adults	\$11,352.44	\$10,159.13	111.75%
	Dislocated Workers	\$12,784.77	\$11,320.00	112.94%
Youth (14-21) Common Measures				
Placement in Employment or Education	Youth 14-21	41.38%	62.16%	66.57%
Attainment of a Degree or Certificate	Youth 14-21	32.79%	49.77%	65.88%
Numeracy/Literacy	Youth 14-21	29.41%	32.88%	89.45%

Total WIA Customers Served in Program Year 2010

Service Provider	Adults	Dislocated Workers	Youth	Total Served by Service Provider
High Country COG Youth Services			147	147
Mayland Community College	207	149	89	445
Wilkes Community College	222	285		507
Total Customers Served	429	434	236	1099

Service Provider	% of AD/DW customers trained in targeted sectors	% of AD/DW customers entered training-related employment	Goal
Mayland Community College	92.50%	83.40%	65.00%
Wilkes Community College	97.00%	69.80%	60.00%

Special Grants at a Glance:

On-the-Job Training National Emergency Grant

Our goal is to serve 62 prolonged, unemployed dislocated workers displaced since Jan. 1, 2008. To date, 34 dislocated workers meeting this criteria have been placed into on-the-job training activities. 21 businesses have participated to date. Hourly wages range from \$9.50/hour to \$24.04/hour.

State Energy Sector Partnership (SESP) Grant

This grant is intended to provide training opportunities to build a skilled workforce to support energy efficiency, energy conservation, and support the renewable energy sector of our economy. To date, over 40 businesses have participated. 92 incumbent workers have participated in training to enhance their skills. 115 individuals from our local communities have participated in classroom training and 20 individuals have participated in on-the-job training activities or paid work experiences.



Youth Council Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2011, 2:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: Marie Gwyn, Anne Bowlin, Sallie Woodring, Jennie Harpold, Julia Rowland, Stacy Sears, Jayne Phipps-Boger, Joallen Lowder, Sandy Reese, Carl Jenkins, Carolyn McKinney; staff Misty Bishop-Price and Adrian Tait; guests Drew Edwards, Sherri Dees, April Jones.

KEY SUBJECTS UNDER CONSIDERATION: Review of February 10, 2011 minutes; HCCOG youth service provider presentation; youth program updates; upcoming goals and meetings discussion.

BACKGROUND: Youth Council continues to oversee and review youth services across the region. Youth Service Provider presentations provide the Youth Council on program activities of High Country Council of Governments and Mayland Community College.

CURRENT SITUATION: Members reviewed the February 10th, 2011 meeting minutes, which were approved as submitted. It was noted the scheduled meeting for May 12 was postponed to today.

High Country Council of Governments youth staff Drew Edwards and Sherri Dees reported on a recent leadership series that participants from Wilkes, Ashe and Alleghany Counties participated in. The series incorporated group team building and hands on activities and explored emotional intelligence. The three day event was held at the Alleghany Challenge Course.

Members received and reviewed provider quarterly reports of current WIA youth enrollments and activities for January-March, 2011 with no concerns noted.

Annual monitoring of programs has been occurring by Board staff and by the Division. There have been no significant findings.

Contracts for youth services will continue with current providers, High Country Council of Governments and Mayland Community College, for the PY2011. The Request for Proposal (RFP) process will be held with all programs (youth, adult, dislocated worker) for WIA services for PY2012. It was noted the planning and development process would begin in the fall of 2011.

Staff discussed with the committee to consider goals and preferred meeting schedule for the upcoming year and send recommendations to staff.

NEXT STEPS: Committee is to provide suggestions for future meeting format and goals. Committee will begin work on youth RFP process for PY2012.

The Changing Workforce Development Environment: Next 3-5 Years

The modern era of "workforce development" can trace its roots back to the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) of the 1960s and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of the 1970s. Notable legislative milestones that followed included the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of the 1980s that established a stronger role for employers via "private industry councils", and then the Workforce Investment Act in the 1990s that emphasized service/funding coordination via "one stop centers." It seems apparent that we are about to enter another transition and the work of professionals in the system will be shaped by multiple factors:

1. **Agility** in rapidly responding to changing situations must be at the foundation of our work in the system. We expect the upcoming 3 years to be the most volatile period faced by the workforce development system in its history. It will be marked by economic restructuring, continuing high unemployment, political unrest, and severe constraints on public spending. Successful state and regional leaders must be prepared to navigate this environment skillfully and will need new models of employer and community engagement to do so. Traditional models of strategic planning resulting in changes at the margins will not suffice in this environment. We will need to act with speed in "acting our way to a new plan" instead of "planning for new ways of acting."
2. **WIA will change.** The Workforce Investment Act will either be modified substantially through re-authorization or will be replaced. This is long overdue, and we are currently seeing an escalation of attacks on the system we have known since 1998 (originally a 5-year law). While legislation, program approaches, and funding flows may change, the core issues faced by employers and job seekers will remain to be dealt with by states, regions, and communities across the nation. In fact, they are likely to become more acute in the short term, as lack of skills beyond high school translates to lack of earnings to reach the middle class. Successful state and regional leaders must demonstrate the ability to prepare workforce development staffs and business leadership groups for major transitions requiring new partnerships, new political alliances, and the use of new technology. Doing more with less will be the rule of the day.
3. **Skill certifications will drive the system.** We are currently seeing the convergence of three major trends that lead to skill certifications being the currency for both hiring by employers and advancement in progressive levels of education. First, employers are placing much higher value on proof of specific skills than on general degrees. They care what an applicant can prove as skills either through work experience or specialized training. Second, education systems are rapidly developing and deploying "stackable certificates" to define articulation agreements and to accelerate students' degree attainment. Added to this is the increased ability of colleges to provide vehicles for "testing out" of courses where adult students already have competencies achieved on the job or via industry specific training. Third, the escalating cost of college is leading many students to obtain initial credits at lower cost via industry-defined certifications and community colleges and then transfer them to higher-cost institutions. Successful workforce development programs will need to be adept at managing a certification-driven system with stronger partnerships among employers, community colleges/ technical schools, and traditional transitional guidance for workers who are laid off and receiving unemployment compensation.
4. **Technology** will continue to change the way we find jobs and acquire training. Employers report that they are increasingly using a variety of job boards and social media sites to search for talent, and states are working to have relevance to employers in a crowded field of sites. Improvements in state platforms provide the opportunity for numerous applications that are customer-friendly and cost

effective at a time when customers increasingly expect 24/7 service access with high functionality. One area of application will almost certainly be an increase in on-line training and education offerings. This, combined with more emphasis on technical certificates noted above, will enable workforce development staffs to offer more creative and attractive options to laid-off workers and to the employers who hire them. Community colleges and technical schools are already working on strategies in most states to increase on-line access for Trade Adjustment Act impacted workers and to use improved technology to attract, retain, track, and ultimately place candidates. Workforce development staffs will need to be well-versed in the use of new tools and technologies and must be able to assist staff and system customers in applying them in ways that connect seamlessly to staff-assisted services in the one-stop center network.

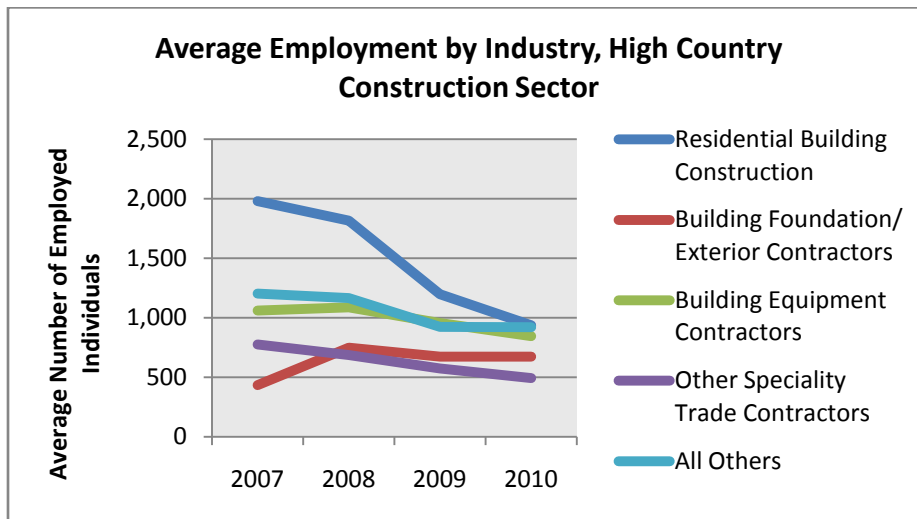
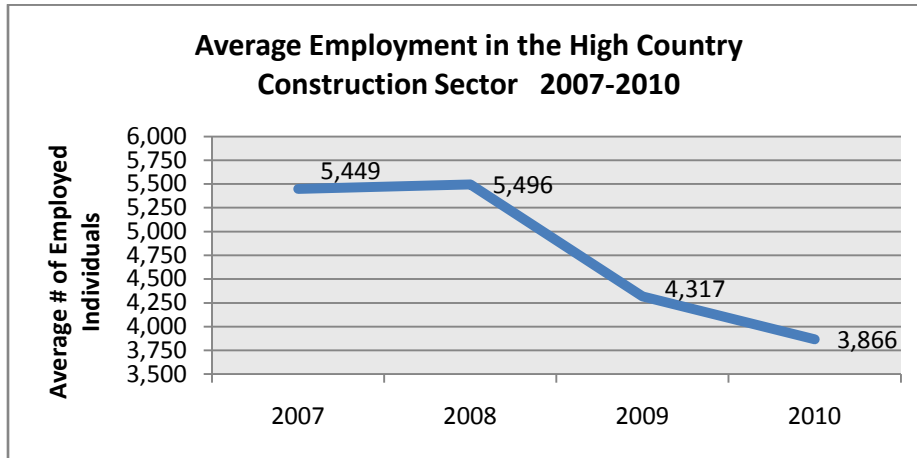
5. **Regional sector-based leadership** will be the hallmark of strategic-level work of the workforce investment boards and their partners in economic development and education. Regional workforce boards must be able to lead regional strategy creation for talent development and retention as a primary asset for regional economic growth. This will require new leadership skills in many cases to be able to develop joint planning processes aimed at partnership building with economic development and education leadership in each region of a state. From the base of strategic partnerships at both state and regional levels, it will be essential to engage employers on a sector-by-sector basis in new and creative ways that demonstrate a clear menu of value-added services, customer-friendly access points, and joint solutions involving multiple agencies and funding sources. Business contact programs will need to be refined and re-invented to provide a new level of efficiency in providing information to employers and in coordinated responsiveness for solutions to their needs.

The current environment is a source of anxiety for both workers and employers, as the future opportunities and timelines for good jobs and business growth in areas such as "green jobs" are not clearly seen from our current vantage point. It is also a time of anxiety for workforce development and education staffs as anticipated funding cutbacks threaten both their jobs and their resources for serving their customers at a time when customer demands are increasing, making the work environment an increasingly high-stress one. We cannot allow the current uncertainty to lead to paralysis. Rather, it is a time when new ideas and new partnerships need to flourish in the environment that is described above. The issues related to skills and education deficits, along with related barriers of drug abuse and deteriorating family support structures, will not go away. A high school dropout is likely to enter a life of poverty, and a high school graduate lacking a post-secondary credential is increasingly unlikely to enter the middle class as we have known it. Leadership at the state and local levels to craft solutions and communicate key messages to employers and to the public has never been more important than it is now.

High Country Workforce Development Board Industry Report: Potential Impacts of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy on a Declining Construction Industry

Employment

The unemployment rate in the High Country construction sector rose to 14.4 percent in March of 2011. Residential construction, which represents 38 percent of the total construction industry in this region, lost more jobs (1,000+) from 2007-2010 than any of the nine other main construction industries.



Energy Expenditures & Sources

In 2009, residences in the High Country spent more than \$170 million in energy expenditures, not including transportation, and over \$116.4 million of the total expenditures went to the purchase of electricity.

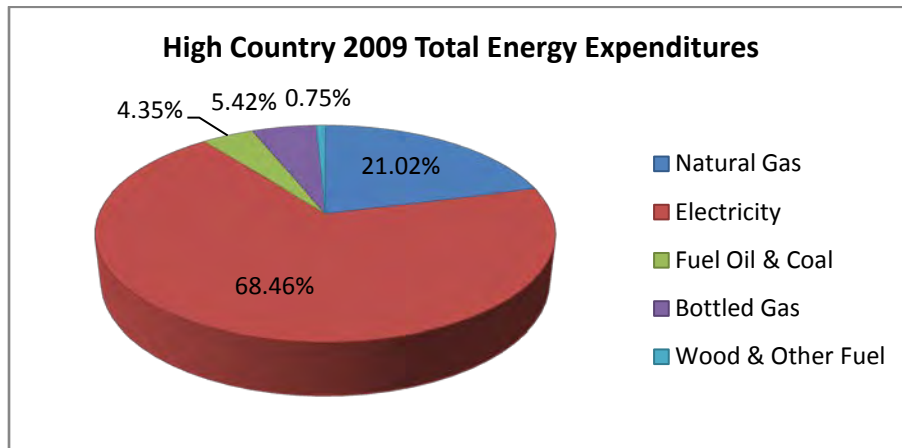
Major Energy Sources in Region D:

- ~60% coal
- ~30% nuclear
- ~6% natural gas

Renewable Energy Production in Region D:

- **758 kW** of capacity (not including thermal applications from biomass, solar, and geothermal)

- **900 kW** of additional photovoltaic (PV) capacity once the solar farm in Avery County is completed
- **3.5 million kWh** (4.4 million with the Avery County solar farm) of estimated electricity generated per year, which provides power for **256** homes (340 with the Avery County solar farm), or **0.228%** (0.284% with solar farm) of the total number of occupied and vacation homes in Region D



Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency measures including weatherization, home energy retrofits, and green building can significantly reduce a home's total energy consumption.

- **20%-30%**, degree by which a typical Energy Star certified home is more efficient than a standard home
- **32%**, the average reduction in energy consumption of homes weatherized by the U.S. DOE Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
- **13,741 kWh**, the average annual electricity use in NC homes served by electric membership corporations, or EMCs
- **\$0.090929/kWh**, the average residential electric rate for Region D
- **\$375**, first-year savings if a NC home (using the average amount of electricity at the average retail rate) cut its energy usage by 30 percent

Housing Stock

Prior to 1975, the North Carolina Building Code did not require homes to have insulation, meaning that these homes could use significantly more energy than insulated homes built after the new code took effect.

- **37,231**, number of homes built prior to 1970 in Region D
- **358 million kWh/\$32.5 million**, energy and money that could be saved the first year if all homes built prior to 1970 were retrofitted to be 30% more efficient

Manufactured homes, although often much smaller than single-family detached homes, consume approximately 67 percent more energy per square foot.

- **21,411**, number of manufactured homes in Region D
- **205 million kWh/\$18.7 million**, energy and money that could be saved the first year if all manufactured homes were retrofitted to be 30% more efficient

Renewable Energy

The High Country has a wide variety of renewable energy resources that could be exploited:

- **Biomass** (electric and thermal)
 - Watauga County: landfill gas (LFG) to energy facility under construction in Boone
 - Yancey County: LFG facility at the EnergyXchange in Burnsville
- **Geothermal** (ground source heat pumps)
- **Hydroelectric** (impoundment and run-of-river)
- **Solar** (electric/PV and thermal)
 - 4-5 kWh/m²/day, average amount of solar energy striking our area at any one point in time, higher than the national and global average
- **Wind**
 - Ashe, Avery, and Watauga are 3 of the top 5 wind resources in WNC
 - 35, number of viable utility-scale wind sites identified in WNC (accounts for exclusion zones)

Green Construction Survey

Recently, Jacob Clark conducted a survey (see Appendix of full report for survey methodology, questions, and results) of builders and contractors who are members of the Home Builders Associations in Region D. Individuals were contacted via telephone and/or email to collect current opinions on the existing demand for green construction in the area. The purpose of the survey was to determine what type of training offerings and schedules would be most helpful to these individuals and their businesses in regards to developing their knowledge and skills in the green construction industry.

- **227** businesses/individuals were contacted
 - 29 responses received
 - 12.7% response rate
- **96%** of the responding businesses focus primarily on Custom Residential construction
- **81%** of the businesses consist of 1-5 employees
- **34%** possess the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Certified Green Professional (CGP) certification
- **26 %** hold either the Building Performance Institute (BPI) Building Analyst certification or some other BPI certification
- **~50%** of the businesses that replied offer some combination of weatherization, energy retrofit, and energy efficient/green construction services.
- **48 %** “somewhat” believe that the construction industry is moving toward green building as a standard
- **36%** “somewhat” believe that consumers are demanding greener homes now than in the past
- **44 %** said that workshops would serve as an important resource toward increasing awareness of green construction products and services throughout the region; the most valuable topics listed were:
 - green building basics (**52.2%**),
 - renewable energy introduction (**30.4%**), and
 - building science (**26.1%**).

Several companies cited reasons why they feel green construction practices are not requested more despite rising energy prices and concerns over national energy security and global climate change:

- customers’ perceived higher cost of green building vs. standard building practices,

- customers' lack of green building knowledge and its benefits,
- current and future legislation, and
- lack of stricter NC Building Code requirements for energy efficiency and sustainable materials.

Conclusion

Although the High Country construction sector no doubt has suffered, and continues to suffer, from the economic recession and the bursting of the housing bubble, the large potential for energy efficiency projects and renewable energy installations in this area could put more construction workers and contractors back to work. Although both types of projects could yield significant economic benefits, energy efficiency initiatives are typically more simple and cost-effective and have shorter payback periods than renewable energy systems. There is an expressed interest and need for both of these services in the High Country, and a combination of contractor/builder trainings and public awareness would be beneficial in increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy construction projects. A stricter state Building Code, along with training the real estate market to consider the added value of green construction when appraising homes would also serve to boost the prevalence of these systems, while adding more money to the local economy through energy savings and increased construction job opportunities.

Strategic Energy Sector Partnership (SESP) Grant Update

SESP Grant funding has provided valuable services and training to our rapidly adapting economy. The High Country Workforce Development Board has actively been seeking to assist the hardest hit demographics of the construction market in adapting to new and developing markets. In the past, we have partnered with the Association of Home Builders to provide training for contractors. We have recently begun working with realtors to assist in selling the homes that the contractors are now trained to build. Through the SESP grant, 32 realtors have obtained the National Association of Realtors "Green Designation". An additional 40 will obtain the designation by the end of August. Eleven appraisers and property valuation specialists will be attending a Green Valuation Specialist Program, to obtain their green Valuation Specialist Designation. This is a critical step in connecting builders and consumers to lending agencies that will have an adequate understanding of "green" home valuation.

To further assist our contractors, we are working on creating a network of sub-contractors trained in building to higher energy efficient standards. Thunderhill Plumbing has recently received training through the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO), and will soon begin training local plumbers in water conservation and efficiency standards. With the new North Carolina Energy Code taking effect in January of 2012, this is going to provide a wealth of knowledge for contractors within our region, generating opportunities for water audits and energy efficiency audits to businesses and homes within our communities.

Regionally, the Future Forward Workforce Alliance has been working towards providing a Green Energy fair with a primary focus towards consumer education. This has been brought about through our quarterly meetings with the Champions of Green attendees. Champions of Green consist of a group of local business owners who desire to promote Energy efficiency and Environmental responsibility in their local communities.

The Future Forward Workforce Alliance has met to collaborate on job creation within the renewable energy markets. Each of the three workforce development boards met to discuss the future job creation and training with solar installations through a North Carolina Solar installation company by the name of STRATA Solar. STRATA is installing several Photovoltaic Panel sites in the range of 1 Megawatt to 4 Megawatts across North Carolina, and is training and employing personnel from within each region of each project. The training which STRATA offers to its employees is preparation for the Nationally recognized North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP). Currently, HCWDB has partnered with STRATA to provide jobs and job training for 16 individuals in Avery County. Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board is interested in partnering on the next project in Mt. Airy. The Future Forward Workforce Alliance has dramatically streamlined the collaboration process between businesses and workforce development boards across the 15 county region.

Did You Know?

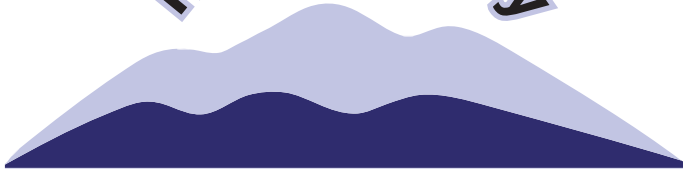
Our seven-county region contains a total of 109,024 registered dwellings, with 37,231 homes built prior to 1970. 34% of our housing market is in need of Energy Retrofitting and/or remodeling. By training the vast resource of contractors to meet this need, we have an opportunity to generate new jobs in a growth market, and reduce the loads on our local utilities through energy savings.

(Source: North Carolina Sustainable Energy Assn. [2011 NC Clean Energy Data Book.](#))



Future Forward Workforce Alliance members from three regions discuss training and job creation with STRATA Solar.

High Country



Workforce Development Board

Labor Market Information Update

August 2011

Civilian Labor Force Estimates* (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

		June 2011	May 2011	June 2010
Alleghany	Labor Force	4,636	4,689	4,733
	Employed	4,098	4,180	4,240
	Unemployed	538	509	493
	Rate %	11.6	10.9	10.4
Ashe	Labor Force	12,354	12,409	12,490
	Employed	11,009	11,110	11,074
	Unemployed	1,345	1,299	1,416
	Rate %	10.9	10.5	11.3
Avery	Labor Force	8,129	7,985	7,989
	Employed	7,282	7,166	7,180
	Unemployed	847	819	809
	Rate %	10.4	10.3	10.1
Mitchell	Labor Force	6,779	6,872	6,969
	Employed	6,018	6,135	6,209
	Unemployed	761	737	760
	Rate %	11.2	10.7	10.9
Watauga	Labor Force	24,353	24,225	23,667
	Employed	22,354	22,425	21,794
	Unemployed	1,999	1,800	1,873
	Rate %	8.2	7.4	7.9
Wilkes	Labor Force	29,074	29,359	29,318
	Employed	25,437	25,954	25,297
	Unemployed	3,637	3,405	4,021
	Rate %	12.5	11.6	13.7
Yancey	Labor Force	7,510	7,678	7,615
	Employed	6,644	6,856	6,748
	Unemployed	866	822	867
	Rate %	11.5	10.7	11.4
High Country	Labor Force	92,835	93,217	92,781
	Employed	82,842	83,826	82,542
	Unemployed	9,993	9,391	10,239
	Rate %	10.8	10.1	11.0
Statewide	Labor Force	4,528,216	4,518,380	4,547,323
	Employed	4,058,744	4,078,947	4,065,179
	Unemployed	469,472	439,433	482,144
	Rate %	10.4	9.7	10.6

Quick Facts:

North Carolina Unemployment Rates June 2011

Seasonally Adjusted:	9.9
Not Seasonally Adjusted:	10.4

Source: LAUS, LMID

NC UI Average Weekly Benefit June 2011: \$282.50

NC Maximum Weekly Benefit Amount June 2011: \$506

Source: WRER, LMID

Gender of Initial Claims High Country WDB* June 2011

Male:	64%
Female:	36%

Source: WRER, LMID

*May not sum due to rounding and unreported category.

Age Ranges of Initial Claimants High Country WDB* June 2011

16-19	—	1%
20-24	—	8%
25-34	—	22%
35-44	—	22%
45-54	—	25%
55-64	—	20%
65+	—	4%

Source: WRER, LMID

*May not sum due to rounding and unreported category.

Individuals Receiving Benefits

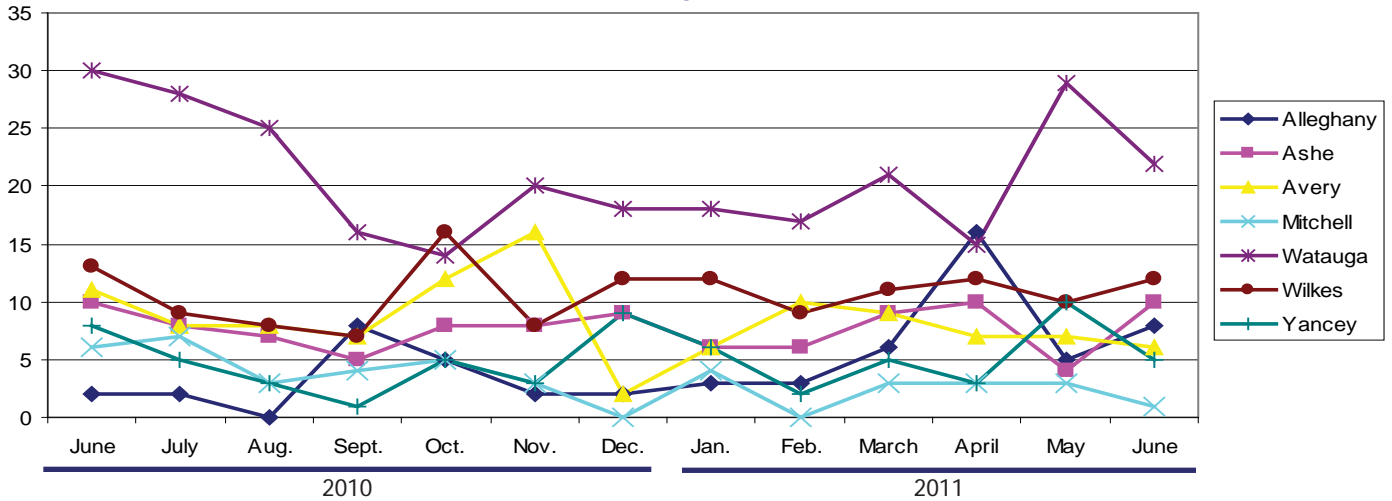
	June 2011	June 2010
Alleghany	152	169
Ashe	388	593
Avery	203	297
Mitchell	172	252
Watauga	341	499
Wilkes	885	1,584
Yancey	271	259
Statewide	108,354	158,493

Source: WRER, LMID

Source: LAUS, LMID

*June 2011 data are preliminary, while May 2011 data are revised and June 2010 data are benchmarked.

New Corporations



Source: Department of the NC Secretary of State

Duration of Benefits By County 12-Month Period Ending*

	June 30, 2011	June 30, 2010
Alleghany	15.4	15.9
Ashe	16.0	17.9
Avery	15.1	16.8
Mitchell	14.9	17.0
Watauga	16.9	17.8
Wilkes	14.6	18.3
Yancey	13.7	14.8
Statewide	17.1	18.4

*Duration is the number of weeks compensated for the year divided by the number of first payments.

Unemployment Insurance Claims June 2011

	Initial Claims	Benefits Paid
Alleghany	78	\$87,217
Ashe	230	\$267,128
Avery	99	\$132,038
Mitchell	113	\$135,008
Watauga	163	\$302,699
Wilkes	564	\$692,530
Yancey	229	\$161,393
Statewide	55,973	\$104,371,069

Source: WRER, LMID

High Country WDB Occupations With the Most Ads*, June 2011

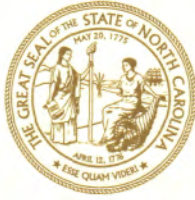
Occupation	Volume
Customer Service Representatives	56
Registered Nurses	47
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Retail Sales Workers	44
Physical Therapists	37
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Food Preparation & Serving Workers	33
Retail Salespersons	32
Occupational Therapists	30
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	28
Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants	27
Insurance Sales Agents	24
Home Health Aides	22
Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	21
Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing, Except Technical & Scientific Products	19

Source: The Conference Board Help Wanted OnLine

*Data represents labor demand, measured by online advertised vacancies. Data is revised.

Labor Market Information Division
Employment Security Commission of North Carolina
P.O. Box 25903 Raleigh, 27611
Phone: (919) 733-2936 Fax: (919) 733-8662
Email: esc.lmi.inquiries@ncesc.gov Website: www.ncesc.com





STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
20301 MAIL SERVICE CENTER • RALEIGH, NC 27699-0301

BEVERLY EAVES PERDUE
GOVERNOR

August 1, 2011

Mr. Rocky Minton
922 Mt. Sinai Road
Wilkesboro, North Carolina 28697

Dear Mr. Minton:

It is my pleasure to inform you that you have been selected to receive the *2011 Governor's Award for Excellence in Workforce Development* as an **"Outstanding Adult."** I commend you for your strong commitment to education.

You were nominated for this award by the Wilkes Community College WIA Program for your outstanding accomplishments. You were selected from many deserving individuals from across the state.

Education is the key to success in the global economy. North Carolina's competitive edge requires the continued hard work of people like you who seek to keep their skill levels high.

Once again, I congratulate you and wish you success in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beverly Eaves Perdue".

Beverly Eaves Perdue

- c: Dr. Gordon Burns, President, Wilkes Community College
- Ms. Kimberly Bell, WIA Case Manager, Wilkes Community College
- Mr. Bryan Peterson, Chairman, High Country Workforce Development Board
- Mr. Adrian Tait, Director, High Country Workforce Development Board



Press Release

Contact: Adrian Tait, Workforce Development Director
828-265-5434, ext. 130
atait@regiond.org

For Immediate Release
August 1, 2011

Congratulations to Southern Industrial Constructors

The High Country Workforce Development Board is pleased to announce that Southern Industrial Constructors (SIC) located in West Jefferson has been awarded the North Carolina Incumbent Worker Training Grant. The company will use the \$7,080 of funding to train 12 full-time employees. This training will help Southern Industrial Constructors employees learn to service new equipment purchased by GE Aviation, a client to whom SIC provides primary maintenance services.

SIC has previously been awarded the same grant for upgrading their employees' skill level for servicing computer numerical control (CNC) machines and other industrial equipment, which helped strengthen the company. However, GE Aviation has since purchased new equipment, and if SIC does not learn the ins-and-outs of servicing the new machinery, the company will lose their maintenance contract and have to lay off workers.

In addition to Southern Industrial Constructors, other Ashe County businesses that have received the Incumbent Worker Training Grant include United Chemi-Con, Gates Corporation, American Emergency Vehicles, General Assembly Corporation, and Phillips Appraisals, Inc.

The North Carolina Incumbent Worker Training Grant offers funding to established North Carolina businesses to provide educational and skills training for current workers. It is designed to benefit businesses by enhancing the skills of employees, thereby increasing employee productivity and the potential for company growth.

In the past seven years, more than \$1 million has been funneled into High Country businesses to upgrade the skills of their workforces, thanks to federal workforce development funding. Across the seven-county region, more than 2,200 employees have received training that has led to increased productivity and has made the 54 businesses they work for more competitive.

Incumbent worker training grants are managed by the High Country Workforce Development Board, a regional, business-led policy board that oversees workforce development issues. For more information, contact Adrian Tait, Workforce Development Director at (828) 265-5434 ext. 130, atait@regiond.org, or visit on-line at www.highcountrywdb.com.



A Southern Industrial employee works on advanced manufacturing robotic equipment.

Press Release

Contact: Adrian Tait, Workforce Development Director
828-265-5434, ext. 130
atait@regiond.org

For Immediate Release
August 1, 2011

Landing a job (or employee) in a tight market: On-the-Job Training grants help both workers and employers. Add in community resources, and job creation happens.

It's incredibly hard to lose your job to the recession. It's even harder when you're sole breadwinner for two little girls.

So when Billy Lowery was laid off in 2009, he grabbed every temporary job he could find—even when that meant hours of commuting. Still, work was sporadic and Lowery's bank account was running dry. Job-seekers can take heart from his experience, because Lowery now has a full-time, permanent job again, and his story is a perfect example of how the local and larger community should work.

His own efforts were crucial. What made all the difference, though, was an On-the-Job Training (OJT) grant, a determined JobLink crew, a community college that opens doors, an employer willing to teach, and an innovative 'green' company. Job creation at its finest, in other words.

"I'm very thankful," said Lowery, now working with Davis Godwin Associates in Spruce Pine, NC.

"I couldn't have found a better situation."

Godwin is equally thankful. He had been preparing for a large project with Highland Craftsmen, a local company that has thoroughly modernized a century-old chestnut bark shingling technique. The resulting ultimate 'green' product, poplar bark shingles, is used nationwide, but greater production efficiency was important. Godwin had previously designed a system for kiln-drying shingles in half the time - "We never thought he could do it," said co-owner Chris McCurry, "but our new kilns work fabulously!" - and now needed to renovate three older kilns for the company.

"I'd have had to hire temporary unskilled labor," said Godwin, "so when John Greene asked if I'd be interested in an apprenticeship program, with most of Billy's salary paid by the program while he was training, I jumped at it."

He hasn't been sorry. "Well done is better than well said, and Billy's quality of work is excellent."

Lowery was inexperienced but far from unskilled. He had previously worked installing gas piping, so he'd enrolled in electrical and welding classes at Mayland Community College. A decade or two of watching local furniture industry jobs get outsourced to China has taught Mayland to adapt to changing students and a changing job market.

"We take students wherever they are, and help them get wherever they want to go," said Dr. John Gossett, Vice President of Student Development. That can entail being sensitive to the diverse scheduling, career



Billy Lowery (left) and Davis Godwin look over equipment inventories.

development, and tutoring needs of students returning to school. Mature students often need to refresh and update skills like math, so the college has beefed up its core classes while keeping an eye on job market demands. Healthcare is huge, and so are remodeling industry skills like those learned by Lowery.

Meanwhile, JobLink case manager Carrie Stewart had been impressed by Lowery's determination to find work. She referred him to John Greene, JobLink's Business Services representative, as a candidate for On-the-Job Training (OJT). OJT is a learn-and-earn program for long-term unemployed workers and it's funded through a grant to the High Country Workforce Development Board by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Training is a tremendously expensive proposition for most employers, who are often reluctant to take on new workers. The OJT grant subsidizes this expense by as much as 90 percent so that companies can hire now instead of waiting, and Greene, once he knows what work interests a program candidate, pitches likely employers. There are strict rules.

"I had to tell them what I would teach Billy and stick to it. John checked in on us frequently and there was quite a bit of paperwork and follow-up," said Godwin, who was impressed by the dedication of everyone involved in Lowery's new career.

Lowery is happy in a job he clearly loves and is good at. "I'm learning a lot of new trades," he said, reeling off information about hydronic systems and the new kilns.

And, according to Greene, there's still OJT money out there, just waiting for strong candidates.

Interested in OJT Grants?

On-the Job Training grants reimburse employers for 50-90 percent of wages for eligible workers during up to six months of training. The wage and benefit package must be the same as that of other employees in the same position, and reimbursement is capped at 90 percent of the state average wage (\$18.95 in NC). Training should be expected to lead to a permanent job.

Eligible workers are those who have been unemployed for more than 19 weeks because of plant closures, natural disasters or general economic conditions in the community. The program is 'learn and earn'. Participants should want, and expect, to learn marketable skills.

For more information contact John Greene, JobLink's Business Services Representative, at john.l.greene@averycountync.gov, (828) 737-5419; or your local JobLink Career Center.

Job seeker Billy Lowery (left), found a permanent job with Davis Godwin, through an On-the-Job training grant awarded through the High Country Workforce Development Board.



Visit the High Country Workforce Development Board Website

Visit www.highcountrywdb.com and select **“About the HC WDB”** to access more information on the High Country Workforce Development Board and Consortium. Be sure to Check the **“Calendar of Events”** for current meeting/ events information, and **“Headlines”** for local area workforce development news articles.

For more information on local area JobLink Centers, click on www.highcountrywdb.com and select **“JobLink Career Centers”** from the menu at the left of the web page.

Contact information for **Staff to the Board** can be found on the **“About the HC WDB”** web page at www.highcountrywdb.com.

The High Country WDB now has a **Facebook** page:
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/High-Country-Workforce-Development-Board/325705946320?ref=ts>.