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**A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR POSTSECONDARY ADULT
CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING**

Creating Employment Training and Economic Development
Opportunities for
Columbia and Boone County, Missouri

Presented by
Jerry Wade
Arden Boyer-Stephens
Bernie Andrews
Kristi Ray
Greg Steinhoff
Terry Barnes

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FORWARD

In order for the city of Columbia, and Boone County Missouri to grow and prosper, the level and extent of career and technical training and development of its adults must be raised. Columbia and Boone County must create and nurture a vibrant system of postsecondary adult career and technical education that allows citizens to:

- earn the skills and competencies that lead to better jobs and higher incomes,
- that attract new businesses to the area,
- create opportunities for those currently employed workers to receive up-graded training to further flourish.

For this reason, the goal of this Columbia ad hoc taskforce is to raise the educational and technical skill attainment of our immediate region's workforce, and to close the labor supply/demand gap of high skill/ high wage jobs and workforce compared to other geographic and economic regions across the state and in similar population and demographic circumstances across the nation.

Achieving this goal of providing resources, training programs, and a delivery system will require that we mobilize Columbia's extensive network of four-year public and private colleges and universities, two-year community college, two-year state technical college, and secondary area career school. It will demand that all of our institutions of higher education—including those that specialize in meeting the needs of adult learners in the career and technical fields to—

- fundamentally change the ways we operate,
- become more responsive to the multiple ways students learn,
- help adults address their academic and employment preparation and survival,
- form partnerships with business and industry leaders, and
- examine existing and the need for new workforce training capabilities and capacities.

The task force reached consensus on a vision for the future and established the following core priorities:

Priority #1: Partnerships with Industry and Regional Economic Development Organizations

The proposed workforce development and training plan for Columbia and Boone County, Missouri must adopt an industry cluster approach to workforce development and training. This approach will be characterized by regional industry/employer—specific advisory councils that include a broad array of economic and educational stakeholders. All partners must share their data with each other and add their respective knowledge of regional events and workforce demands to transform numbers into true “workforce intelligence” that accurately and reliably forecast emerging jobs and training opportunities.

Priority #2: Re-examine Adult Workforce Training Capabilities and Capacities (Resources)

The Columbia area, through the existing set of public and private two-year and four-year colleges and universities must be able to respond more flexibly to the demands of local employers, industries, labor supply and demand for workforce preparation, and economic development incentives, including the attraction of new industries to the area.

Additional priorities (in no particular order)

- The education partners must operate as a single system to support economic development, resulting in uniform high quality, virtually seamless transitions for high school graduates from the local area career schools to intentionally selected post-secondary career and technical programs for adults, and the elimination of duplication of effort in curriculum development, while avoidance of duplicated programs through shared resources.
- Barriers to participation in adult career and technical education must be overcome for low-skilled adults, resulting in an increase in credentialed skill sets, and a more qualified labor pool for the Columbia and Boone County employers.
- There must be an active and on-going agenda for enhancing and promoting adult workforce development and training. Constituent groups must share the roles and responsibilities for workforce lobbying efforts and representations with the legislature, governor, Department of Economic Development and DED Workforce Development Division, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Career and Technical Education, and the Missouri Department of Higher Education (Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education.) The Columbia and Boone County Missouri organizational structure that delivers these requirements for adult career and technical education must share a common understanding of the role of workforce development and training for adults, and must promote consistent quality service to the employers, economic development drivers, and the trainees.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Challenges That Must be Met

The Columbia higher education community and the economic development community have historically respected the work of the Columbia Public School's Career Center as one of the top secondary career exploratory and preparatory facilities in the State of Missouri. The spark for initiating this post-secondary adult strategic plan was the recognition by many Columbia employers, city manager, regional economic development authority, chamber of commerce, county commissioners, and representatives from the local four-year higher education sector that there is a need to broaden and deepen the role and scope for career and technical education adult training in the immediate region. The local employers need a steady supply pool of trained applicants to fulfill their normal annual turn-over in moderate to high wage trade, craft, and industry jobs (yet to be defined). Further, an underlying organizational entity must provide a quick response to training needs requested by potential employers re-locating to the Columbia area.

At least *three* cumulatively converging trends reinforced the need for stronger partnerships between Columbia's economic developers and the higher education community. The *first* is the emphatic demand by regional employers for additional education and training for employees above the high school level, in which the Columbia Public School's Area Career Center is not resourced or programmed to provide. The future economy of the Columbia/Boone County Missouri region is increasingly requiring higher levels of career and technical training but not necessarily at the bachelor's degree level. It is generally accepted among higher education circles that institutions such as community colleges, state technical colleges, and area career schools are often the most cost effective and responsive provider for this adult postsecondary career and technical education and training.

Second, the reinforcing trend is that economic development services have become increasingly regional in character. This is largely due to the fact that the quality of a labor force is largely determined by a regional adult education and training organizational structure, and that there is a distance limit the local workforce is willing to travel for training and jobs.

Three, surveys among national site consultants, and the literature indicate that the primary factor for producing economic stability and job growth are labor availability and the quality of their respective skill sets.

Economic and Workforce Development Requires Flexible Delivery

When Columbia and Boone County Missouri businesses and industry prosper, working individuals and surrounding communities also prosper. Notwithstanding the primary significance of financial and human capital invested by business leaders in the Mid-Missouri region, the State's two- and four-year public and private colleges and universities are also at the core of creating this wealth. All degree and certificate programs *are* workforce development. They prepare people to be productive contributors to the economy, whether as entrepreneurs, working for existing firms, or continuing their education to prepare for jobs requiring authorized:

- short-term training certificates (less than 6 months)
- one-year certificates,
- two-year certificates
- two-year associate degrees,
- four-year bachelor's degrees.

While all degree and certificate programs are workforce development, workforce development is more than that. It must also include;

- non-credit contracted training with one or more businesses
- non-credit customized training with one specific business
- apprenticeships (union or non-union)
- industry certifications and licensure
- many professional continuing education courses
- English as a second language for non-English speakers (ESL)
- Non-credit adult literacy skills in reading, writing, and mathematics (pre-GED/ABE)
- High school completion (GED)
- Life and employment survival skills
- Collaboration with research and strategic advantages of the University of Missouri in Columbia, and partner with Discovery Ridge and Monsanto Incubator.
- Pre-employment application screening

- Pre-employment training for new businesses and industries recruited to the area

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Postsecondary Adult Education

Any education and training beyond the high school level, regardless of where courses are taken and credits or units of learning are earned.

Adult Career and Technical Education

A cluster of programs of varying length (usually that do not exceed two-years or less) that provide training in the skill sets necessary for profitable employment.

For the purposes of this strategic plan, occupational programs should be (but not necessarily limited to) generally categorized in the high-skill/high wage areas ranging from \$15.00 to \$35.00 per hour.

Career and Technical Programs

The Task Force suggests some training programs that Columbia could use, depending on employer demand and support. Some programs could be offered as labor supplies shifts, strategic employer recruiting initiatives change, and others programs should offered on a regular on-going annual basis, including:

- Supervisory/leadership/ mid-level management
- Customer service and interpersonal communications training
- Office administration and information
- Computer information technology and networking systems
- Electronic repair and maintenance
- Industrial & Manufacturing
 - automated manufacturing, hydraulics and pneumatics
 - industrial maintenance and repair,
 - industrial electronics, vector drives and motors
 - welding,
 - computer numerically controlled machining and milling,
 - computer assisted drafting, and design
- Construction Trades:
 - residential and commercial construction including carpentry
 - weatherization and energy efficiency installation and maintenance,
 - heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems installation and maintenance,
 - electrician,
 - plumbing,
 - concrete technology,
 - masonry and bricklaying,
 - landscape and turf management and design,
 - small engine repair and maintenance
 - civil engineering technology
 - construction estimating and management
- Health occupations usually in state licensed and certified programs such as
 - respiratory therapy assistant
 - radiologic assistant
 - sonography assistant

- medical lab assistant
- medical assistant
- occupational therapy assistant
- physical therapy assistant
- dental assistant
- Licensed Practical Nurse
- RN (associate degree nurse)
- pharmacy technician
- medical records coder
- phlebotomist
- Transportation: including auto and medium to heavy truck/equipment technician, and auto body repair
- Bio and life sciences and research technicians and technologists: including
 - nano-science & technology,
 - bio-engineering technology,
 - nuclear technology,
 - genetic based foods and feeds technology,
 - genetic-based animal/human medical and health care research,
 - safe water, waste water, and land-fill technology
- Alternative energy technologies and sustainability
- Green technology applications

Local Adult Workforce and Training System

The network of local contracted educational providers and institutions that serve the training and education needs of the regions employers and the adult populations—particularly non-traditional students (aged 22 and above). Adult students may have left high school without a diploma, and/or without the knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes required for gain employment in existing and new moderate to high skill jobs.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS & CORE VALUES

The Task Force recommends that the following key characteristics or core values be ever-present in the establishment of a regional adult postsecondary career and technical training organizational structure, including:

- **Demand Driven:** Responsive to both employer needs and the career advancement requirements of workers, and focused on regional economic development needs and strategic advantages. Each major program of study must include an employers’ advisory committee to recommend curricular sequencing and course competency decisions.
- **Adult Friendly:** Offering career training and development that are easy to understand and navigate, emphasizing adult-focused learning and teaching methods with applied “real world” applications, integrating job-related content and providing specific job skill sets.
- **Accessible Pathways:** Offering career training and development at times convenient to the employer and equally to adult student. This may include evenings, weekends, before or after work shifts, year around, etc. Students have the ability to stop-in and stop-out on their pathway to success. Students should be able to link and transfer entry and

intermediate skill sets to the next more complex career ladder or lattice, including for example certificate programs to associate degrees and possibly to bachelor's degrees.

- **Learner Centered with Support Services:** Equipped and committed to helping the adult student address academic and non-academic challenges and deficiencies, and to providing support services that enable all learners to reach their potential, such as ABE/GED, career advising, tutoring, individualized learning plans, academic learning centers, computer-based remedial/developmental literacy improvement, financial aid, and vocational interest inventory and assessment. Cost of training and education provided with financing and payment options that expand equity and flexibility.
- **Innovative:** Programs should be competency-based where the length of the program should not be bound by time, but learning and performing at competency levels required by the employers. Some career and technical programs could be offered on an personalized and individualized approach (open-entry and open-exit schedule) so that a student can buy a certain set of skills he/she wants (e.g., MIG welding with light gauge aluminum.) Programs could be integrated with on-the-job training, cooperative work experience and internships, and practical lab and shop training.
- **Business and Industry Endorsed:** Ensuring support from employers and business leaders who make investments in their workers' talent development and take competitiveness seriously, and benefiting employees whose earnings and career opportunities are grown as they acquire new knowledge and skills. Secure employer and union financial support/subsidy to make education and training more affordable for their employees and members.
- **High Quality and Cutting Edge:** Making a commitment to providing instructional curriculum and practice equipment that turns out a graduate that satisfies both the immediate region's employers in terms of an increased pool of very highly qualified workers; and the adults who got jobs and were extremely satisfied with the exactness and quality of their individual training.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

This Task Force recommends that the Columbia/Boone County Missouri adult career and technical education partnership be formed with an organizational structure that is:

- Appropriately funded with some local governmental base funding, state economic development and workforce development and other grants, and tuition/fees
- Provides comprehensive oversight that takes advantages of the state agency jurisdictions and benefits of the Missouri Department of Economic Development, Missouri Workforce Investment Board, Missouri Department of Higher Education, and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Adheres to quality best practices and productivity
- Manages a budget that is efficient and effective
- Operates within the highest standards of business and educational ethics
- Enables oversight by the city of Columbia, and the Boone County Commissioners

- Enables close collaboration and partnerships among existing educational institutions, including:
 - Moberly Area Community College
 - Linn State Technical College
 - Columbia Public Schools
 - Columbia Area Career Center
 - Columbia College
 - Stephens College
 - University of Missouri—Columbia
- Enables close collaboration and partnerships with local businesses and industry leaders including the Columbia and other Boone County community Chambers of Commerce and the Columbia Regional Economic Development organizations.

It is important to note that the organizational structure for the Columbia/Boone County adult career and technical education partnership should not be represented by a “building,” but as a “*system*” formed for and on behalf of Columbia and Boone County citizens by a consortium of economic development and training partners.

The Task Force recommends that it may be appropriate that the actual day-to-day management of the adult career and technical center be contracted out to one higher education institution best suited for this purpose. However, the day-to-day management institution may sub-contract with other cooperating institutions and facilities for the particular delivery of programming, whether for credit or non-credit—day or evening. All sub-contracted institutions and agencies shall expect to earn returns based on cost recovery—plus.

The contracted management institution shall expect to operate the center and programs on a cost recovery plus agreed upon reasonable return to reserves (profits).

In general the day-to-day management institution shall be governed by a seven (7) member Board of Directors composed of:

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| • Columbia School District Designee | one |
| • Columbia City Designee | one |
| • Columbia Chamber of Commerce Designee | one |
| • Other area Chamber of Commerce Designee | one |
| • Columbia Regional Economic Development Designee | one |
| • Boone County Presiding Commissioner | one |
| • Columbia Higher Education Institutional Designee | one |
|
 | |
| • Director of the Columbia Area Career Center | ex-official |

The contracted operating institution shall perform the following responsibilities and through shared governance:

- Ensure that the organizational structure and operating system has a clear vision and the guidance needed by employers and economic developers to achieve a well-defined strategic direction.

- Make sure that local and regional service providers (other institutions) have sufficient flexibility to make decisions and take actions that respond to the needs of the employers.
- Establish a policy infrastructure that guarantees that all elements of the adult workforce training system are fully aligned with Missouri DED, DESE, and/or DHE assets and policies and jurisdictions.
- Ensure that the system has the capacity to continually integrate articulation and transfer of skill sets to other related programs.
- Put mechanism and incentives in place to promote efficiency (in part, though the sharing of local faculty, labs, shops, classroom, and on-the-job training experiences) and preserve low-cost options and alternatives for employers and adult learners.
- Ensure that the training system facilitates effective communication among all stakeholders; gives the employer community a primary role in program training direction and implementation; and function as part of a region-wide economic development partnership.
- Ensure that the system is performance-based with accountability for results.
- Work to preserve and strengthen the Columbia School District's Career Center, and does not have adverse consequences on joint use of its faculty, curriculum, facilities (labs, shops, classrooms) and other resources.
- Examine and develop short- and long-term funding solutions for the present and the expansion of training services. Consider the use of funding mechanisms such as:
 - Existing local sales tax
 - Employer(s)- or student paid tuition and fees
 - Employer paid specific customized training
 - New Jobs Training Bonds coordinated through Missouri DED
 - Retained Jobs Training Bonds coordinated through Missouri DED
 - Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Customized Training Grant
 - Division of Workforce Development Customized Training Grant
 - Workforce Investment Board (WIB) grants for fast-track, short-term training
 - DESE Incentive Grants.
 - Federal Economic Stimulus funds
 - Missouri legislative direct appropriation
- With the Board of Directors, secure adequate long-term funding for adult career and technical education programs and services, and ensure that future local and state allocations and budgets reflect the importance of workforce and economic development relevant to the Columbia and Boone County Missouri region.
- Create a 30 mile radius regional workforce labor supply/demand forecast with business leaders. Identify the gaps between current inventory of training programs and findings from the labor supply and demand analysis; fill the gap(s) with training.

Columbia Model for Adult Technical Training

