

## Meeting Notes

**Date:** 11-3-09, 9 a.m.

**Location:** Room D/E, Rock County Job Center

**RE:** CORD Group Meeting

The following CORD Steering Team members and others were present:

- Bob Borremans, Executive Director, Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (SWWDB), (presiding)
- Gail Graham, Executive Director, United Way of North Rock County
- Jim Stickels, Wisconsin Literacy, Inc.
- Mary Frederick, UAW/GM
- Bud Gayhart, UW-Whitewater, Small Business Development Center
- Sharon Kennedy, Vice President, Learning, Blackhawk Technical College
- Sue Conley, Executive Director, Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin
- Martha Pearson, Women's Economic Empowerment Center Director, YWCA, Janesville
- Tara Vasby, Representative Chuck Benedict's office
- Josh Smith, Assistant Administrator, Rock County
- Amy Charles, Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board
- Julie Funk, AFL-CIO LETC
- Katie Kuznacic, Assembly Speaker Mike Sheridan's office
- Diane Pillard, Dean, University of Wisconsin-Rock County
- Vic Grassman, Economic Development Agency, City of Janesville
- Bruce Palzkill, DWD/Job Service
- Eric Larson, President, Blackhawk Technical College
- Amy Loudenberg, Greater Beloit Area Chamber of Commerce, Beloit
- Cindy Sutton, Division Manager, ESS, Rock County Job Center
- Danyell Tremmel, Representative Paul Ryan's office
- Steve Kincaid, Stateline United Way, Beloit
- Darcy Luoma, U.S. Senator Herb Kohl's office
- James Otterstein, Economic Development Manager, Rock County Planning and Development
- Russ Podzilni, Chair, Rock County Board of Supervisors
- Nick Fitzgerald, Tricor, Janesville
- Andrew Janke, Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation
- Katie Crawley, U.S. Senator Russ Feingold's office
- Brad Lichtenstein, President, 371 Productions
- Lynne Blinkenberg, Community Engagement Director, Wisconsin Public Television
- Gregg Bosak, Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, (recording)

Following introductions, Bob reviewed a bit of the history of AWARE/CORD and how we came to where we currently are.

Lynne Blinkenberg explained how a grant from FRONTLINE's Digital Nation last fall has led into the program *(Un)Employed in a Digital World*. They currently have six families they are working with, but are seeking six or seven more. The families use 'flip cameras' to record their everyday experiences. The program will be an online story-telling project featuring video diaries and written stories from Janesville and Rock County, including displaced workers from GM

and related businesses. It will highlight workers seeking education and training, and those who have successfully transitioned into new employment. An air date is expected in January, 2010. Those who want to participate or know of any who might, can contact Lynne Blinkenberg at (608) 265-6331 or [lynne.blinkenberg@wpt.org](mailto:lynne.blinkenberg@wpt.org).

Brad Lichtenstein explained where he was in his production feature covering what happens to people when a plant like GM closes and how people put their lives back together again. The program will be featuring eight local individuals—Cindy Deegan, Nick Fitzgerald, Gayle Listenbee, John Beckord, Angie Hodgkins, Tim Cullen, Paul Ryan, and Ed Martinez. Brad explained he wanted to create a constellation of people offering many perspectives. It is hoped and anticipated that the program will:

- Raise the level of digital literacy among dislocated workers
- Provide easy-to-use effective on-line community
  - Connecting users to share stories, experiences and information
  - Connecting users to all supportive services
  - Connecting users to job preparation tools
- Convene a community offline to collectively plan and create content for the community portal.

Brad mentioned that he eventually would like to profile 75 communities similar to Janesville, with this project being a sort of ‘training tool’ to accomplish that mission.

Next Bob reviewed the *Rock County Profile* and the goals and outcomes in each broad category. He mentioned that in some instances, little had been done but in many others, there had been quite a bit addressed and completed. He mentioned that the communication category was critical and we had made some excellent progress. He also highlighted new programs or initiatives that had been implemented such as the Hire a Neighbor (with Monster), the Job Center Annex along with *Java and Jobs*, the *Rock County Profile*, the *Community Resource Guide*, and other initiatives. In some instances, it was a matter of coordinating on-going programs or altering current initiatives, while in other cases it meant starting something new and/or different. In other cases, programs may have developed from CORD activities or goals, such as the recently-unveiled Rock County 5.0 which includes private sector involvement, even though the program evolved as a result of a statewide planning process. James felt CORD’s main achievements have revolved around collaborations, communication, and making connections.

Next Gregg reviewed the *Rock County Profile* document. The initial document prepared by the CEAP group of the University of Michigan for the March group session. The revision process started when we anticipated President Obama’s ‘Car Czar’ Ed Montgomery might visit us following our invitation. While that most likely will not happen, the revision of the document continued. The updated document contains newly-added information, with more pertinent graphics and an increased local emphasis so it can be used by a variety of organizations if they desire. While it is an objective look at the area, it also contains the positives of the region. Bud mentioned we may want to consider adding success stories to the document. James also had a few upgrades. Those wanting to make changes should contact Gregg at [g.bosak@swwdb.org](mailto:g.bosak@swwdb.org).

Bob gave a ‘State-of-the-State’ report. Distributed was the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board’s Program Year Progress Report for 2009-2010. Bob mentioned that the national and state statistics showing declining unemployment numbers/percentages is misleading. He cited the fact that in October, only 36 job orders were placed in the six-county area—with only 10 being in Rock County! He indicated that funds for many of the programs is being exhausted, and that due to differing eligibility standards depending upon the program, many jobless perceive they are being treated unjustly when others receive benefits and they don’t qualify. Bob reviewed charts which showed that clients served in 2009-2010 compared to 2007-08 had tripled (3,335 to 1,135)—with two months left in the year! New grants/monies are being sought to help address this funding shortfall, but the future looks very unsettled to meet these burgeoning needs.

Next Bud explained the E-Hub program. They have been providing entrepreneurial training for 12 years. They will be offering the program in Janesville and Beloit, with a start planned for February. Mark Burwell, National Executive Director, explained how ‘The Power of 92’ (Reggie White’s Foundation) led into the E-Hub program. The program, which would be excellent for motivated dislocated workers, empowers aspiring entrepreneurs to realize their dream of owning and operating their own business. The classes will be offered in both Beloit and Janesville starting in February and continuing with a second set most likely in March..

Bob described the timeline for CORD and what our future direction might be. Having been meeting every two weeks, the group came to a consensus that meeting once a month might now be more appropriate. Any less and we may lose momentum. It was decided to meet on the first Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 1, 2009 at 9 a.m. at the Job Center.

The meeting ended at 11 a.m.