

SWWDB Update



**INVESTING IN
TOMORROW**

In This Issue:

- Summer Youth Employment Participants Lauded
- Ron Johnson Lands His 'Perfect' Job
- Ed McIntyre Has Enviable Problem

Check Inside:

- Three Summer Youth Workers Profiled 4
- Green Jobs Help Beloit Residents, Youth Workers 4
- Snappers Donate Tickets Again 6

A publication describing matters of interest regarding the services and programs of the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board

SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM OFF TO GREAT START

The Summer Youth Employment Program, funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) with workers provided through the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (SWWDB), is off to a great start!

With almost 150 workers (149) placed at 45 sites, the program is designed to help young people not just earn but learn while following a potential career path. Participants can be between 16-24 years old and the program includes classroom learning as well as on-site

experience. Special consideration is given activities that expose youth to 'green' education and career pathways.

Included in this newsletter are profiles of some of those workers and their supervisors, such as the three highlighted below.

SUMMER YOUTH TRIO LAUDED AT SWTC BOARD MEETING

Three young workers participating in the Summer Youth Employment Program (utilizing ARRA dollars) have been lauded by their supervisors. At a joint meeting of the Southwest Wisconsin Technical College Board and their Foundation Board, the workers were cited by their supervisors for their work ethic and ability to contribute on the job.

A \$32 million construction and renovation project is currently underway at Southwest Tech, and Miron Construction's Project Superintendent Dean Van Dyke along with Engineer Jason Recob mentioned the three youth workers in their report, citing their appreciation not only for the

contributions of the workers themselves, but also the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (SWWDB), who supplied the workers.

Dustin Hendricks, a 2009 Southwest Tech grad who has been unable to find Auto Body work, said he loves construction work. "Some of these muddy days you come home really tired because your shoes weigh at least five pounds more than when you started," he said. He would like to remain with Miron after the end of the Summer Youth Employment program if he can't locate a job in auto body work.

Watching Tyler Wachter work on the foundation of the new Health Sciences

building, it's difficult to tell him apart from any other construction worker. He enjoys his work and plans to enter Southwest Tech's fall welding program, but does not rule out a future in construction work.

When Zachery Larkin returns to Fennimore High School this year he will have a clearer picture where his career path may lead. He says construction is vastly different from his prior dishwashing jobs, but after three weeks with Miron, he feels much more comfortable. "This is a huge project and could make anyone feel a bit intimidated," a supervisor said.

All three are valuable contributors to the project.

(See photo on page 3)

RON JOHNSON FINDS HIS DREAM JOB

*"I can't say enough about Carol Kohl and how good she was."
---Ron Johnson*

When Ron Johnson of rural Albany, Wisconsin started his classes at Blackhawk Technical College following his layoff from General Motors after 13.5 years, he was asked what his dream job would be. He answered it would be working maintenance in a health care/hospital setting. Ron's prayers were answered sooner than he could have dreamed.

The 42-year-old Johnson is currently working at the Monroe



Clinic/Hospital as a Powerhouse Operator, which includes maintenance on boilers and HVAC, among other duties. He landed the position after only six months from leaving GM in June, 2008, starting at the Monroe position in January, 2009. The only problem was that he wasn't able to continue his second semester classes at BTC (which he had already registered for), but when you locate your 'dream job,' you take it.

Ron uses both the skills he learned at BTC and those he learned on-the-job at GM. "The electrical portion of the HVAC classes was pretty basic, since that was what much of my position at GM entailed," he said. But he learned quite a bit from his refrigeration and air conditioning classes, which were

fairly new skills for him. Ron used the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) funds to help pay for his tuition and dislocated worker funds to help with books and travel costs, which were fairly substantial since BTC's Central Campus, where the classes were held, was 32 miles away (one way) from his Albany 'farmette.'

"I can't say enough about Carol Kohl (his case worker) and how good she was," Ron said. "She really helped me every step of the way."

"It was really a stroke of luck through the Internet that I found this job," Ron said. "Everything turned out the way I had hoped!"

CORD INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT SWWDB WEBSITE

For anyone interested in following the activities of the CORD group (Collaborating Organizations Responding to Dislocation), visit their icon on the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development

Board (SWWDB) website at www.swwdb.org. Link on to the CORD icon.

The site contains not only the monthly CORD Newsletters, which are geared toward the

unemployed, but it also includes the agendas and notes/minutes from their meetings plus their action plan (Matrix). Check it out!

ED McINTYRE HAS A PROBLEM—WHICH JOB TO TAKE!

Ed McIntyre of Orfordville, WI doesn't let time waste. He was no sooner laid off from his GM job in December, 2008 when he had a new job within a couple of months. In fact, the 53-year-old Ed had an enviable problem to face—a choice between two jobs! He had just landed a position with Werner Trucking when another offer from H.O. Wolding Trucking of Amherst, WI came to him. "The fact Werner's drivers are not able to get home nearly as often made the decision to go with Wolding much easier for me," he said. "I have about 40 acres to take care of and need to get home fairly regularly, so the Wolding position fit me much better," he said.

Michele, Ed's wife of 13 years, is able to take care of the daily chores while Ed is

gone, as they have a log home, a number of animals, and other chores that need attention. Michele herself is also a laid-off GM worker who is going back to school in the field of therapeutic massage. "She really takes care of a lot when I'm gone," Ed said.

Ed used TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) funds, about \$2,100 plus travel reimbursement, to allow him to take his truck driving classes at Diesel Driving School (DDS)/Associated Training Services (ATS) in Sun Prairie, WI and obtain his Commercial Drivers License (CDL). DDS also helped Ed locate employment. He started at GM in 1986 as a six-month temporary worker—23 years later he was still there. "I hadn't looked for a job since age 19. I had become very

complacent, but fortunately my skills at GM and through Badgerland Harvestore prior to that helped me to make the transition rather successfully," he explained.

He now has a totally different lifestyle compared to his GM days, but his transition has gone rather smoothly. He isn't home nearly as much, and for some couples, that could cause problems, but Michele and he have a mutual understanding and sense of what their priorities are. "I would urge others to take advantage of the services and programs available for re-training," Ed said, adding that his solution was a short-term program but others may want to attend a program that is longer in duration, such as his wife. "The programs and services are there—you just need to move forward and use them," he said.



SUMMER YOUTH WORKERS LEARN CONSTRUCTION SKILLS



Tyler Wachter, left, and Dustin Hendricks, right, look over the construction site on which they are working through Miron Construction at Southwest Tech. (See article on page 1).

"I love working in construction. Some of these muddy days you come home really tired because your shoes weigh at least five pounds more than when you started."

--Dustin Hendricks

SUMMER YOUTH WORKERS BUILD CAREERS

“I’d probably be working in a pizza chain restaurant if not for the Summer Youth Employment Program.”

**--Erika Pombert,
Monroe,
Summer Youth
Employment Program
Participant**



Jon Johnson finds his work at the high school much different than working on his home farm.

The following article highlights the progress of three of the Summer Youth Employment Program participants. They were recruited and placed by the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board.

JON JOHNSON

Growing up and working on a farm, Iowa/Grant High School junior Jon Johnson has learned first-hand “what a job in the real world” is like, as he terms it. He is learning real life occupational traits necessary for success, such as being on time and having excellent attendance.

While summer cleaning is his primary job at Iowa/Grant H.S., he said “I feel this is getting me ready for the world of work and what is expected of me in my career.” Were he not in the program, he would be helping on the farm and ‘tinkering with cars.’ In fact, through his job he is saving up for his first car, which he hopes to have at summer’s end, and he eventually plans on going into auto technology at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College.

He says his Summer Youth job is much different from working on the farm, and that it provides him with valuable experience, ethics and job etiquette. His supervisor, Michael Oium, agrees, saying that while he

appreciates having the extra worker this summer, the most important aspect is that Jon is experiencing “the social interaction in the workforce and being able to transfer his etiquette and ethics skills to other future jobs.” The positive by-product of Jon’s work, Oium says, is that he’s helping to provide a “cleaner school and safer environment for the students.” Oium feels it is a wonderful experience for participants.

ERIKA POMBERT

For Erika Pombert, Monroe, learning the difference between a job and a career has led her into a possible new direction in the Health Care field. She had planned on becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at a nursing home or hospital, but her summer work at the office of Craig M. Carter, DDS has caused her to reconsider her direction.

One thing she knows for sure—“I’d probably be working for a pizza chain restaurant if not for the Summer Youth Program,” she said. She has already altered her plans this fall at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, where she plans on completing her CNA certificate, but is also looking for courses that will progress her in the dental field. And having two career options can’t hurt.

“The Summer Youth Program is getting me ready to face the real world and learn a career,” she said. She feels the main skills she will transfer to her career is “Learning how to keep and work in a sterile environment,” plus learning all the different forms of cleaning in a dentist’s office.

Erika’s supervisor, Kari Griffiths, said Erika has been assisting with all types of tasks in the office, allowing her to learn many new skills. But she felt the most positive aspect was the two-day training program conducted by the SWWDB personnel. “She really learned the difference between a job and a career,” Griffiths said, indicating that there was a significant change in Erika’s behavior from the initial time they met before the orientation and afterwards. She said Erika learned how you need to act differently for a career as opposed to a job.

Erika has enjoyed and appreciated the Summer Youth Program. “It’s a great experience that has helped me to learn about a career in the field I really enjoy,” she said.

CHASTITY HOFFMAN

For Chastity Hoffman, working through the Summer Youth Employment Program has opened her eyes as to

(Continued on Page 5)

“This one (youth employment program) is by far the best.”

**--April Baker,
Supervisor, Habitat for
Humanity, Platteville**

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT WORKERS (Continued)

(Continued from Page 4)

How difficult it is to successfully operate a non-profit organization. For April Baker, Chastity's supervisor at Habitat for Humanity in Platteville, she couldn't be more pleased with the program and Chastity's contributions.

Chastity admitted that working at Habitat is quite different from her fast-food jobs of the past. She has seen a better side of the world of work and that "there are people here who are not as rushed" as at her past job. She also now understands the difference between a job and a career and is currently learning software programs such as Excel and

QuickBooks to help manage Habitat's business data, along with handling deposits coming into the organization. That's quite a big responsibility for a person so young, but Baker has every confidence in Chastity's abilities and work ethic.

She said Chastity's work "saves money on mailings and reduces paperwork," while also citing the time freed up for herself to be able to focus more on running the organization. Baker said she has participated in youth programs before, but "this one is by far the best." She was especially enthusiastic in the selection process, conducted by the SWWDB, saying it chose a great

participant for her.

"I can see that running a non-profit is a difficult road," Hoffman said, citing the necessary fund-raisers and limited funds. She is undecided about whether she will pursue courses related to QuickBooks but is happy for the experience. Her future aspirations revolve around becoming a criminal justice lawyer. She is currently finishing a pharmaceuticals certification at Southwest Tech and will be attending the University of Phoenix to become a paralegal. She said she would most likely currently be looking for a job had it not been for the Summer Youth Employment Program.



Erika Pombert, above, and Chastity Hoffman, below, work in their respective offices.

GREEN JOBS HELP YOUTH, RESIDENTS

The Energy Advocate Youth Project got to highlight their activities by publicly opening one of their projects on July 29 in Beloit. The project, which uses American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, provides employment to young adults in green jobs. The energy advocates provide homeowners with tips and processes to save energy and cut utility bills.

At the unveiling, DeCarlos and Michelle Nora opened their home to allow visitors and dignitaries to inspect the work that was done on

their house on Randall Ave. in Beloit.

The project serves two main purposes—it helps homeowners with older homes which often don't have energy efficiencies, plus it employs young people needing occupational skills and job mentoring. Beloit is one of five cities targeted—the others being Green Bay, Racine, Superior and Wisconsin Rapids, all of which are experiencing high unemployment, older homes, and high rates of youth unemployment.

(Continued on Next Page-6)

THANKS FOR THE HOSPITALITY--Roberta Gassman (center) thanks the Nora family for opening their home for the energy conservation event. Others include (left to right) Robert Borremans, SWWDB Executive Director, the Noras (with children), Representative Kim Hixson, the youth workers, and Rev. Floyd Prude (far right).



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We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.swwdb.org

YOUTH ENERGY PROJECT

(Continued from Page 5)

Milwaukee also has its own program underway.

Youth working in the program must meet six main criteria to be considered

“disadvantaged youth.” There are 25 workers ages 18-24 from low-income households, making \$10 an hour (\$12 for the supervisor).

One of the partners in the project, in addition to the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, who has recruited the workers and set up the projects, is the Wisconsin Energy Conservation

Corporation. Each energy youth worker went through two days of training on energy efficiency. The biggest thing the workers learned, according to Ron Coppernoll, SWWDB’s liaison for the project, was just how much homeowners could save by making small alterations.

At the unveiling, Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman lauded the workers for their efforts and the Noras for offering their house as a sample of the workers’ efforts.

The project is one of a number of ARRA-funded

efforts that will employ about 4,000 youth in Wisconsin through June, 2011. The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is utilizing almost \$158,000 in ARRA dollars to cover the wages, outreach, training, and administration of the project. Gassman mentioned she hoped the project might inspire the youth workers to consider futures in energy and weatherization careers.

About the SWWDB...

The Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (SWWDB) serves a six-county area in the Southwest corner of Wisconsin. We are a dynamic collaboration of private and public leaders working together to promote

innovation and quality in local workforce development activities.

The Board meets on a quarterly schedule to address workforce development issues and provide oversight to the eight Southwest Job Center offices

located in the area. Committee members meet on an as-needed basis to provide guidance and direction on topical issues.

SNAPPERS CONTINUE SUPPORT

The Beloit Snappers have been an outstanding and generous community-minded organization as they have continued their support of area dislocated workers by providing an additional 1,000 tickets for games in August. They had donated 2,000 tickets for prior months’ games.

Southwest Workforce Development Board (SWWDB) Executive Director Dr. Robert Borremans said the Snappers’ generosity displays what a positive, progressive organization they truly are. “This is something they don’t *have* to do—they *want* to do it,” Borremans said. “We’ve received a lot of positive feedback from those who have taken advantage of this donation. I know they are very grateful for this benevolent gesture by the Snappers.”

