

# Workforce Investment Act Program Year 2010

Annual Report



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**Bobby Jindal**, Governor  
**Curt Eysink**, Executive Director

## Office of the Executive Director

October 3, 2011

It is my pleasure to present the 2010 Workforce Investment Act Annual Report for Louisiana, which covers our efforts and activities from July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011.

This past program year began with our state at the center of the worst manmade environmental disaster in U.S. history. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster and subsequent drilling moratorium created new challenges for our state, which was still feeling the effects of the national economic downturn. While more people than ever before are using our services, we grapple with continued cuts to Workforce Investment Act funding.

But facing challenges is nothing new to the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and we are determined to build on the success of our efforts as we focus on improving the business climate in Louisiana, drive employment, and provide excellent service to the people and businesses of our state.

This annual report provides a snapshot of how the Louisiana Workforce Commission rose to the challenges it faced and made a difference for the better in the lives of thousands of Louisianians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Eysink".

Curt Eysink  
Executive Director

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## I: State News

### Putting People to Work

The Louisiana Workforce Commission continued its mission to put people to work through a variety of initiatives in PY 2010. The program year started with the transfer of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), from what was the then-Department of Social Services, to LWC. Programs transferred were Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living Program Part B, Independent Living Older Blind and Randolph-Sheppard. The overriding goal of bringing LRS under LWC is to expand the LRS programs' level of service and increase job placement rates. The move was completed in January.

In close partnership with the state's Department of Economic Development, LWC was active in the recruitment and placement of workers for incoming and expanding facilities in Louisiana throughout the year. Employers also engaged LWC to assist in finding skilled labor to meet increased demand.

### Legislative Efforts

LWC was successful in getting several legislative initiatives signed into law in 2011. One measure came as a result of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and ensures the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund is reimbursed by those responsible in the event of a disaster covered by the Oil Pollution Act. Another initiative signed into law puts Louisiana's child labor law in line with federal law and makes the administration of that law more efficient.

An innovative measure to leverage funding sources as much as possible was the agency's successful initiative that allows the state's Second Injury Board to allocate up to 1 percent of the board's annual budget to Louisiana Rehabilitation Services to be used to help people with disabilities get jobs. The allocation is eligible for a 4-to-1 match of federal funds.

The Louisiana Legislature in 2011 also approved the extension of non-refundable apprenticeship tax credits for employers to January 1, 2015.

### Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Strength

Like the rest of the country, Louisiana continued to experience sustained, higher unemployment in 2010. However, the state's unemployment insurance trust fund continued to be among the strongest in the country. As of Sept. 23, 2011, the state's trust fund had a balance of \$836.8 million. By comparison, 35 states have had to borrow money from the federal government in order to pay benefits, and 28 states still owe the federal government \$36.4 billion and will need to replenish their trust funds through higher taxes.

Louisiana has not borrowed one penny to fund regular unemployment benefits, and its average employer tax rate is the lowest among all states. Because of the trust fund's stability and strength, current unemployment tax rates on employers will remain unchanged for 2012. Louisiana's Incumbent Worker Training Program assesses employers based on the balance in the trust fund. Because of the fund's strength, the program can continue to be funded at its current \$20 million level in 2012.

## **Combating Fraud**

Attacking fraud aggressively and efficiently in unemployment insurance and workers' compensation has been a priority for LWC. In August 2010, the state contracted with SAS, a leading business analytics software and services provider, to build and maintain an enterprise-class fraud detection system. The LWC is the first state agency in the nation to use the system, which uses predictive modeling, social network analysis and traditional data mining to detect suspected improper payments and tax avoidance measures faster and more efficiently. In the first six months of using the system, LWC had collected more in overdue unemployment taxes than it had in the previous five years combined.

Unemployment claimants who cheat the system were the focus of a statewide crackdown by LWC that kicked off in April 2010. Partnering with the state's Attorney General's Office to prosecute cases, the effort in just a few months has resulted in the arrests of 47 people who allegedly defrauded the system of more than \$421,000 in unemployment benefits. The crackdown will continue and more arrests expected.

The LWC is integrating fraud efforts to more efficiently attack fraud. By leveraging available data in an automated fashion, the integrated fraud unit will be able to dedicate resources toward specific cases for audit or investigation.

## **Dealing with Uncertainties**

The worst man-made environmental disaster in U.S. history, record-setting floods, and the threat of a possible federal shutdown were all events that LWC endured in PY 2010. Unlike natural disasters the state has faced in the past, the full impact of the oil spill and the subsequent drilling moratorium still is not known and continues to evolve.

Despite the uncertainty, the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) marshaled resources quickly to respond effectively. While most activity centered in Workforce Investment Areas (WIAs) that border the coast, all WIAs throughout the state were involved through job seeker assistance and employer verification as oil spill-related jobs were posted through the agency's online job services system, LAVOS (Louisiana Virtual One-Stop). Final numbers show more than 18,000 applications for clean-up jobs were entered into LAVOS statewide and 3,802 oil spill-related job openings were posted. At the same time, 13,973 referrals were made to oil spill-related job openings, with a minimum of 1,396 job placements made.

The Spring 2011 floods and efforts to divert floodwaters away from the state's most populated areas were the focus of the state, and the LWC stepped up and assisted affected employers in flooded areas, while ensuring local offices remained open and provided uninterrupted service.

Additionally, the possibility of the federal government shutdown and additional severe cuts to WIA funding also threaten Louisiana's workforce development and job placement system. The LWC proactively prepared contingency plans to handle the range of possible scenarios, with maintaining services its top priority. The LWC offered a retirement incentive to its employees in response to announced cuts in federal WIA funding, and was successful in avoiding staff layoffs.

## Outreach and Research

LWC worked closely with the LSU Division of Economic Development to develop and release the preliminary 2018 occupational forecast using a variety of means to get the most accurate information available in June 2010. The LWC used the following strategy to revise the 2018 forecast for State Workforce Investment Council approval in June 2011:

- Using LWC data from quarterly wage and employment reports as well as annual job vacancy surveys as starting points, LSU economists reviewed statistical industry forecasts, looking for economic causes of trends.
- Economists also contacted and interviewed “driver firms” — a little more than 150 companies in Louisiana that employ about one in four Louisiana workers
- News releases and corporate announcements were factored in to more accurately reflect changes in demand through 2018
- Additional input was given at regional business meetings across the state.

The revised industry forecast was approved by the WIC at their March 2011 meeting. The revised occupational forecast for 2018 was presented and approved in late June 2011 by the Workforce Investment Council, the statewide group appointed by the governor to oversee and direct workforce strategy for Louisiana. The revised forecast is that Louisiana will experience an annual 0.8 percent statewide growth rate in new job demand through 2018, which equates to 16,595 jobs annually. Annual replacement accounts for 71 percent of total job demand or 46,570 jobs each year. New jobs are forecast to grow by 18,670 each year.

At the request of the state WIC to improve the usability of the 2018 occupational forecast, the Labor Market Information Unit developed a file that sorted the occupational projections by the most significant source of education or training for each occupation. This data, presented by regional labor market area as well as statewide, was completed and published on the [www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net) website during PY 2010.

The 2018 forecast was developed after the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster and resulting moratorium; however, much of the long-term effects from the oil spill and/or moratorium are still unknown. Plans are to review and update the forecast every year.

The importance to Louisiana economic development of being able to accurately gauge impact to worker supply and demand is the driving force behind LWC's ongoing simulator initiative with the University of Louisiana – Lafayette. The simulator will connect LWC's demand data with ULL's extensive supply data on students in the state. The result will be a more precise forecasting tool that will help identify gaps as things change in the marketplace. Version 1 of the simulator was expected to go live in December 2010, but the release was pushed back until September 2011. Field offices began testing the Workforce Simulator in February 2011 in order to address any issues in the system.

In November 2009, LWC was awarded a \$2.3 million federal grant as part of a Louisiana-Mississippi consortium that will benefit both states in producing comprehensive labor market information on green jobs in the region. LWC is serving as the project lead. Initiatives include extensive research on the regional green economy, development of workforce solutions and economic development strategies necessary for future job growth.

- Primary research activities included a survey of more than 20,000 employers (approximately 13,000 in Louisiana) and numerous interviews with industry associations, employers, economic development officials and other stakeholders.
- The research identifies current and future workforce needs, catalogs existing training resources, and provides detailed descriptions of each industry's involvement in these activities.
- The resulting body of knowledge will inform future economic development and workforce development decisions.
- The information will help local and state economic development officials identify promising industry clusters for future growth while workforce development officials will be able to address changing skill requirements and skill deficits.
- Training providers will be able to examine the need for new education programs.
- Web-based tools are being developed to help job seekers learn about employment opportunities and apply for open positions.
- The tools will provide information necessary to make informed career decisions and allow users to search for training providers.
- Labor market analysts will be able to track labor demand based on online job advertisements.

The completed reports are scheduled to go live at [www.laworks.net/green](http://www.laworks.net/green) by fall 2011. The site will include results from the employer survey, 22 industry profile reports, an active green job bank, and monthly current labor market analyses of the available green jobs and those claiming unemployment insurance. Additional outreach in the form of four regional conferences to advertise the products and services that LWC can provide as a result of this grant were planned for September 2011.

## II: Statewide Activities

### **Business Services Teams**

As part of a renewed emphasis geared to focusing on an outside-in customer philosophy for business, the LWC has started a transition into a Business Services Team (BST) concept. This BST is a statewide group of employees comprised of both state and locally funded workforce professionals that serve as liaisons between LWC, its local offices and the business community of Louisiana.

The BSTs are a key source of business intelligence for local Workforce Investment Boards and the LWC. Members of this unit manage employer relationships, connect them to the Business & Career Solutions Centers, and broker products and services provided by LWC, as well as other state agencies that have value incentives to Louisiana businesses.

The local area coordinator within each Workforce Investment area serves as the functional business services lead for their area. This unit not only performs business outreach functions that have been traditionally assigned only to business services representatives, but they also include recruitment and placement members who ensure that services, such as employer job vacancies and OJT contracts, are being properly identified, coordinated and managed to ensure that employer needs are met.

Although the Business Services Team concept is functionally operated from the local and regional area levels, the key to this initiative success depends on broad level support and guidance from the LWC. With this understanding, the LWC is in the process of developing tools, such as a high-quality and unified marketing tool kit, to be used by all BST members doing business outreach, regardless of their assigned division within the LWC. The LWC will also be evaluating training solutions that would train all outreach staff on the value-centric philosophy of engaging with business. A statewide data solution that would allow all BST outreach components of LWC to track the contact and activities associated with these contacts is also being researched. This will allow for the essential component of enabling the BSTs to broadly see who has had contact with a business, as well as any other key information taken from the visit.

Due in part to these changes in philosophy and organization, recent data collected by the state have indicated an enhanced market penetration rate of 46 percent, well over the 20 percent goal.

### **Community Development Block Grant**

The Community Development Block Grant Program was developed under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide capital, technical assistance, and trained employees for existing businesses in the region. The program was developed in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and was designed to assist businesses in returning to operations by providing a sufficient workforce.

CDBG was targeted to assist low-to-moderate income individuals. The program focused on developing skilled workers in the construction, healthcare, transportation, advanced manufacturing, oil and gas, and the culture and recreation industry sectors.

- Lifespan of the program:           October 2006 thru December 2010
- Individuals trained:                9,722
- Individuals placed:                 5,360

**SUCCESS STORY: Building Crafts Training Program**

LWC's Community Development Block Grant program implemented a building crafts training program in conjunction with the Preservation Resource Center, the Prince of Wales' Foundation for the Built Environment (a charitable foundation established by HRH The Prince of Wales) and Delgado Community College. This program successfully started a new workforce industry — historic preservation — along Louisiana's Gulf Coast.

This program recruited individuals who were unemployed and trained them in this new industry. Since October 1, 2009, numerous master carpenters from the UK spent countless hours with journeymen in and around the New Orleans area, including instructors from Delgado Community College, and taught them the skills necessary for historic preservation. Delgado Community College has since created a building crafts training program concentrated in historic preservation so that this expertise can be taught for generations to come.

With so much fine craftsmanship along Louisiana's Gulf Coast, especially New Orleans, that has been lost due to hurricanes or is otherwise in need of repair, this program has the potential to significantly increase the number of new jobs within the historic preservation industry.

**Customized Workforce Solutions Teams**

LWC has the capacity to coordinate the establishment of local or regional Customized Workforce Solutions Teams (CWST) designed to address the workforce challenges of large employers, industry sectors, regions and agencies across Louisiana.

Representing state, LWIA and partner resources, this team strives to be an indispensable source in developing demand-driven, customized and comprehensive solutions that meet the needs of both employers and job seekers.

The CWST works to maximize the abilities and resources of LWC and other state agencies, as well as private and non-profit organizations, to develop customized workforce plans at the speed of business. Each plan is designed to identify specific workforce challenges that are being faced by employers and/or industries, and include a detailed action plan consisting of stakeholder responsibilities, timelines for execution and anticipated outcomes. The CWST draws from its full complement of available resources in the areas of employee recruitment, training and development, and funding.

**SUCCESS STORY: Cypress Point Surgical Hospital**

Cypress Pointe Surgical Hospital in Hammond opened its doors for business in December 2010. The previous September, local economic development officials approached workforce officials in the Tangipahoa Business & Career Solutions Center with a request: help the hospital's human resources director find qualified employees to staff the \$30 million hospital.

"Everybody who applied for a job with the hospital was channeled through us," said LWC's Dot Lavigne, who played a leading role in the project but credits the center's entire staff for the success. Efforts included hiring housekeepers to medical personnel, with 35 – 40 positions.

Workforce officials also served as a referral source for Enterprise Zone credits administered through Louisiana Economic Development, which enabled construction efforts.

### **Disability Program Navigator**

The Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative was initially funded in 2003 to expand the capacity of the One-Stop Career Centers to serve customers with disabilities by providing accessible, seamless, and integrated services. In addition to creating systemic change, the navigators act as facilitators to bring together multiple partners in the One-Stop Career Centers to develop an integrated resource team approach with the purpose of blending and braiding resources around an individual customer's employment needs. The initiative came to Louisiana in May 2006 following the disaster of Hurricane Katrina.

In 2009, the Louisiana DPN implemented a three-phase training curriculum. To date, more than 200 trainings have been conducted and approximately 2,500 state and local staff have been trained. Assistive technology workstations are installed in 36 of the Business and Career Solutions Centers throughout Louisiana. Navigators also continued their efforts to assist ex-offenders by attending job and resource fairs to empower them with the resources necessary to find and maintain employment once released. They participated in work group meetings organized by various statewide groups dedicated to the prisoner re-entry initiative, Communities Committed to Re-entry. From the 2010 ARRA Summer Youth Program, navigators were able to secure 10 percent of the positions to be used for transition-age youth seeking summer employment.

Navigators spearheaded and facilitated the Social Security Ticket to Work program throughout Louisiana. This included assisting WIAs in three regions to become Employment Networks. Navigators continued to work to update the area disability resource manuals for their regions so that the manuals contain up-to-date information covering a broad scope of topics.

For the fifth year in a row, navigators worked with other disability-focused groups to host job fairs statewide with the goal of finding adequate employment for people with disabilities. In 2010, DPN spearheaded the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) job fairs and will spearhead the 2011 NDEAM job fairs. The job fairs are held in Baton Rouge, Slidell, Shreveport, Alexandria, Monroe, Lake Charles, New Orleans, Lafayette, and Houma. The job fairs are open to the public, but businesses are informed that the job fairs are geared toward individuals with disabilities who are job ready and looking for employment opportunities. Last year, nearly 3,200 individuals participated in the job fairs in search of employment.

The LWC DPN is the lead agency for the implementation of the Work Pays strategic plan. Work Pays is a coalition of public, private, and state agencies that provide support and services for individuals with disabilities in Louisiana. The Work Pays strategic plan is designed to support a coordinated system of employment supports and services for people with disabilities in Louisiana. The plan provides a road map describing how state agencies and stakeholders will work together to build a system for persons with disabilities that will be integrated into larger employment efforts within Louisiana.

Navigators continued their involvement with numerous interagency collaborations and worked to build and strengthen their relationships with mandated and non-mandated partners in order to better leverage resources.

### **Fidelity Bonding**

LWC offers a bonding program designed to help individuals who otherwise would be overlooked during the hiring process. Any at-risk job applicant is eligible for bonding services, including ex-offenders, recovering substance abusers (alcohol or drugs), welfare recipients and others with poor financial credit, economically disadvantaged youth and adults who lack a work history, individuals dishonorably discharged from the military, etc.

The program is a great tool to get prospective job applicants who would otherwise get overlooked through the normal hiring process. Bonds, ranging in coverage from \$5,000 to \$25,000, are free

to the employer with no deductible amount and cover an employee for a six-month period. This coverage covers the employer's liability for that employee for any dishonest act that the employee might commit during that time period. The bonds are available to any employee who otherwise would not be available for commercial bonding. Bonds can be issued to the employer as soon as the applicant has a job offer with a scheduled date to start work.

The program is well received by the state's Department of Corrections, enabling convicted felons to become bondable and prove their honesty in the workplace.

### **Foreign Labor**

The Foreign Labor Certification Unit manages all H-2A applications submitted to USDOL by Louisiana agricultural farmers who need workers. Through this program, jobs are first offered to U.S. workers, with the remaining unfilled jobs filled with foreign workforce. More than 350 farmers (crawfish, rice, livestock, citrus, corn, nursery crop, soybeans, strawberries, vegetable and pecans) and their employees are impacted by this program on an annual basis.

Some 300 farmers were certified by USDOL for the H-2A program in PY 2010, with more than 1,800 workers employed through the program.

The program is very beneficial to the agricultural economy of the state, giving farmers a viable workforce available to work whenever needed. Employees get a good paying job under prevailing wages determined by USDOL and are ensured of adequate housing, via USDOL and OSHA rules and regulations.

### **Incumbent Worker Training Program**

The Incumbent Worker Training Program is a partnership among the LWC, business and industry, and training providers. The IWTP is designed to benefit business and industry by assisting in the skill development of existing employees and thereby increasing employee productivity and the growth of the company.

The program is funded by an assessment on employers covered by the unemployment insurance program that is dedicated solely for customized training. The existence of IWTP does not preclude the use of WIA funds for customized training, but augments and enhances this option. Businesses are encouraged to work with local Workforce Investment Boards to craft grant proposals that work in concert with any proposed IWTP grants. The IWTP application specifically asks for information about any pending or current publicly funded training the company may be receiving. This prevents duplication of efforts from diverse funding streams and promotes synergy of training initiatives.

Through customized training contracts and the Small Business Employee Training Program, a total of \$25,255,949 was awarded to companies in fiscal year 2010 – 2011. 40,534 Louisiana workers from 853 companies were trained, 17,444 jobs were retained, and 916 jobs were created. The average wage increase for those workers who received a pay increase after training was 15 percent.

**SUCCESS STORY: Premier Auto Consortium**

Premier Auto Consortium received an IWTP grant for \$53,449 to train 71 employees. The following is an overview of the group's assessment of the program from their training director as they near completion of their contract:

"Before the program, we never were able to provide training to certain members of the organization who now receive high quality training. The group of individuals who have benefited the most are our salespeople. Historically in the automobile industry, there is only a 20 percent retention rate for entry level salespeople their first year in the business. Many of these individuals then return to the ranks of unemployed. The retention for first-year salespeople at The Premier Auto Group over the last 12 months is 57 percent. I believe the reason is the quality of training we have been able to bring to them to improve their skill level and keep them motivated. Many of these new salespeople have come to us from the LWC's job services website. When these individuals come to us, they are motivated but simply lack the needed skills. The training we provide through the IWTP grant puts these people in a position to succeed at more than twice the rate than individuals who do not receive training."

**Louisiana Employment Assistance Program (LEAP)**

The LWC collaborated with the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services in October 2010 to achieve the goal of job readiness by providing the Louisiana Employment Assistance Program (LEAP). The program is a combination of the Strategies to Empower People Program formally known as S.T.E.P. and the Louisiana Job Employment and Training Program formally known as LaJET. The LEAP program is designed to help participants in their transition from cash assistance and or nutrition assistance to self sufficiency by providing intense job readiness activities and job search training with employer contacts, which will help participants obtain and retain employment. Currently, LEAP is active in St. Tammany, Jefferson, Orleans, Baton Rouge, Terrebonne, Lafayette, Calcasieu, Rapides, Caddo, and Ouachita parishes.

A combination of LaJET and STEP participants will be referred to LEAP, of which a total of three separate groups shall be identified: STEP, LaJET with children, and LaJET without children. STEP participants have priority for the referral program. LaJET referrals will be determined using recent quarterly wage records in order to identify those most likely to re-enter the workforce after receiving the services.

LEAP is comprised of four components.

Component A – (STEP and LaJET clients) – This component consists of two weeks of structured job readiness classes for a total of 60 participation hours. There are a total of two, two-week job readiness classes each month.

Component B – (LaJET clients only) – This component is completed only by LaJET referents identified as employed part-time (less than 30 hours a week), who score below 6.0 on the TABE Reading test or who have previously taken the Component A class. This component consists of individual, self-directed job search.

Component C – (LaJET only) – This component is reserved for the LaJET-ABAWD (Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents) population in the event that the current federal mandatory-ABAWD participation waiver is canceled. When utilized, this component will direct ABAWD designated Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to WIA services available at the nearest Business and Career Solutions Center for follow-up services. An exit interview will be performed at the end of this component.

Component D – (STEP only) – This component consists of two weeks of self-directed job search. LEAP facilitators are responsible for verifying job search participation using LAVOS or, where space is available, directly monitor the job search progress onsite.

### **Louisiana Rehabilitation Services**

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services came under the umbrella of LWC's Office of Workforce Development programs through state legislation enacted in 2009 and effective July 1, 2010. The mission of LRS is to assist persons with disabilities in Louisiana to obtain or maintain employment and/or independence in the community by working with business and other community services. There are three programs under the umbrella of LRS:

#### **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program**

Vocational Rehabilitation provides a planned sequence of individualized services designed to assist persons with disabilities reach a vocational goal of employment. It is a comprehensive career development process that begins with a partnership between a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and the individual with a disability. The individual and counselor work together to develop an employment plan that is individualized and specific to the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual with a disability. The plan identifies the VR services the individual will require in order to achieve their employment goal. These are comprehensive services that go far beyond those found in typical job training programs, and include such services as assessment, guidance and counseling, work readiness and placement, vocational and other training, prosthetics and orthotics, transportation, interpreters and readers, rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology, and many others.

In 2004, a cost benefit analysis was conducted by Louisiana State University's Human Development Center to determine the economic benefit of the VR Program to the state of Louisiana. It revealed that for every \$1 invested in individuals with disabilities receiving services through VR, \$9 is returned to Louisiana in the form of increased taxes and reduced public assistance payments.

*Employment* – In FY 2011, 2,362 individuals with disabilities obtained successful employment as a result of the VR program. This represents an increase over FY 2010 in which 2,353 individuals obtained employment. The average hourly earning of individuals who obtained employment was \$12.73.

LRS, in partnership with the Louisiana Medicaid Purchase Plan and the Louisiana Business Leadership Network, continues to participate in the planning and implementation of the Louisiana Job Fairs for people with disabilities. The 2010 job fairs were led by the LWC's Disability Program Navigators and was held statewide in nine cities throughout Louisiana.

LRS partners with the University of New Orleans' Training Resource and Assistive-Technology Center to provide self-employment training services to persons interested in self-employment as a vocational option. In Fiscal Year 2011, 13 individuals with disabilities received assistance from LRS in establishing small businesses and 21 individuals completed business plans.

LRS is an active participant in the VR Business Network that provided job leads to VR consumers from all over the country, including Manpower, Inc.; McDonald's; USDA Forest Service; Mellon Bank NY; Marriott Hotels; Tune Promoters' Automatic Inc., and others. As information is received from the VR Business Network, the LRS program coordinator distributes the information to LRS counselors throughout the state.

LRS has made great strides toward assisting SSI and SSDI beneficiaries to meet their employment goals. LRS continues to collaborate with Work Incentive Planning and Assistance, the Medicaid Purchase Plan Program, as well as many other agencies in the state to ensure Ticket-to-Work is successful in Louisiana. LRS maintains a statewide 1-800 ticket hotline number for individuals interested in learning more about their ticket and how VR would be able to assist them. In FY 2011, LRS received \$1,391,459.85 from the Social Security Administration's reimbursement program.

*Workforce Development* – VR is an integral component of workforce development and is actively involved with the 18 Workforce Investment Areas. LRS is represented on each of the 18 boards and VR staff has a presence in the Business & Career Solutions Centers. LRS' program coordinator for rehabilitation technology provides consultation to the Business & Career Solutions Centers. In addition, the agency's rehabilitation employment development specialists (REDS) serve as the liaison for the centers within their region and provide services to individuals who participate in the VR program, such as job seeking techniques and employment development. The VR program works in collaboration with the Disability Navigators and most recently worked cooperatively on developing an application to the U.S. Department of Labor to obtain the Disability Employment Initiative Grant.

*Transition* – The primary focus is to provide services to assist students with disabilities as they transition to adult life and move beyond high school to other settings, such as further training and employment. In SFY 2011, LRS renewed/revised existing local cooperative agreements with the 64 parishes, four special school systems, charter schools, and the Recovery School District in the New Orleans area, supported local interagency core teams, participated in cross-agency training and outreach, and engaged in capacity building of young adults and family outreach efforts. LRS continues its support of innovative models and practices related to transition. The VR Program has designated one transition counselor in seven of the eight regions; however, since most regions are large and include many rural parishes, general caseload rehabilitation counselors are also assigned to work with transition students.

*Rehabilitation Engineering/Assistive Technology* – LRS contracts with Louisiana Tech University, Center for Rehabilitation Engineering, Science and Technology to provide highly specialized engineering and technology solutions to individuals with disabilities. Last fiscal year, 286 individuals received direct assistive technology evaluation and assessment services. This fiscal year, more than 370 persons will receive these services. Services include computer assessment, activities-of-daily-living evaluations, home and job-modification evaluations, adaptive driving and transportation evaluations, vehicle modification reports, and seating and positioning assessments for wheelchairs and wheeled mobility systems.

LRS also continues its relationship with the Louisiana Assistive Technology Network on an expanded program, funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration to provide statewide demonstration-learning, lending, and purchasing assistance of assistive technology. LATAN is now providing a device-rental service in order for LRS consumers to have a more realistic trial use of an assistive technology device before requesting the VR program to purchase the device. LRS refers consumers to the LATAN finance/loan program to assist them with certain purchases.

*Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program* – The purpose of the Randolph-Sheppard program is to provide employment opportunities for qualified persons who are blind by establishing and maintaining Business Enterprise Facilities. The program currently operates 78 facilities throughout the state, employing 214 individuals. Gross sales for this period were up 1.7 percent with gross profits up 6.7 percent. Average vendor earnings increased \$11,409, to \$32,398.

## Independent Living Part B Program

The Independent Living (IL) Part B program provides services to individuals with disabilities in order to enhance the ability of these individuals to function more independently within their family and community. The program is administered by LRS through contracts with Independent Living Centers located across the state. IL Part B funding is used by the IL centers to provide 4 core services: information and referral, independent living skills training, peer counseling and individual and system advocacy. Funds can also be used to provide personal care attendant services and assistive technology, if available. More than 2,700 individuals received independent living services at an average cost of \$218 per consumer during fiscal year 2011.

### **SUCCESS STORY: Herman Delahoussaye**

Many individuals with severe disabilities, like Herman Delahoussaye of Jeanerette, are breaking down barriers in the workforce to gain employment with the aid of assistive technology commonly called AT with help from the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services.

About 13 years ago, Delahoussaye was injured in an all-terrain vehicle accident. He broke his neck and sustained an incomplete spinal cord injury that caused quadriplegia and paralysis from the chest down. A close friend of Delahoussaye referred him to LRS, an agency that works to assist individuals with disabilities in Louisiana to obtain or maintain employment through its flagship program, Vocational Rehabilitation.

“We know that offering an array of comprehensive vocational services, job placement assistance and assistive technology to individuals with disabilities can result in employment opportunities, independence and ease financial burdens on families,” said LRS Lafayette Regional Manager Deborah Aymond.

After working most of his adult life as a solid waste operator, Delahoussaye wanted desperately to work and be productive but did not have transferable work skills that coincided with his disability. “I knew that there was some type of job out there for me,” he said. “I am not a quitter.”

For some individuals with disabilities, AT is a necessary tool that enables them to engage in or perform many tasks that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. AT is a generic term that includes assistive, adaptive and rehabilitative devices to assist individuals with disabilities with mobility, cognitive, visual or hearing impairments. AT provided by LRS can include walkers, wheelchairs, vehicle and home modifications, hardware and software to assist with access to computers or other information technologies.

“The equipment that has been installed in my home and my van is such a big help because, no one has to strain or hurt themselves or me trying to move me about,” said Delahoussaye.

While in trial work, Delahoussaye landed a job with Lydia's Grocery Store to watch security cameras. Delahoussaye contacted his VR counselor and stated, “I found someone who is willing to play ball.” According to his counselor, from that moment, things improved for Delahoussaye.

Delahoussaye started with monitoring up to 17 cameras from his home. His employer later acquired another store adding another 14 cameras that are monitored. Delahoussaye now monitors another store for a different employer. He has become active in his community, participating in the City of New Iberia's initiative to stop shoplifting.

“I love my job and I have good benefits. You know, when you have a little more each month, you can breathe and sleep a little better. I really can't express how wonderful this makes me feel to be able to help my family out. It gives me a sense of worth,” said Delahoussaye. “I really don't know where I would be right now if it were not for LRS.”

### **National Emergency Grants**

National Emergency Grants (NEGs) are discretionary awards by USDOL that are intended to complement already existing resources and service capacity on both the state and local-area levels. NEGs provide supplemental workforce development and employment services funds, in addition to other adjustment assistance for dislocated workers, in response to a significant dislocation event. Significant events are those that create a sudden need for assistance that cannot be reasonably accommodated by the ongoing operations of the formula-funded Dislocated Worker program. NEGs are typically awarded for mass layoffs, plant closures and declared emergencies that are determined eligible for public assistance by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

In PY 2010, assistance was provided to 807 new dislocated workers through NEG funds, of which 432 received training services. In 2010, LWC applied to USDOL and received two new grant awards totaling \$11,415,062.

The BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill impacted the state's natural resources and the livelihood of thousands of Louisiana's citizens living and working along the coastline. This \$10 million award provides assistance to 1,250 eligible dislocated workers affected by the oil spill with workforce development services that will quickly get them trained and into gainful and sustainable employment. Case management and supportive services are provided to increase the likelihood of success.

The second award totaling \$1,415,062 is for on-the-job training (OJT). This grant is designed to assist eligible dislocated workers and heavily impacted communities in quickly recovering from the effects of the economic downturn. This program will assist 160 individuals with workplace training who have been unsuccessful in finding adequate employment. Partial reimbursement for wages will be made available to employers as an incentive for hiring and training these individuals based on the size of the business, the dislocated worker's initial skill level, and the skill level needed to perform the job.

### **Rapid Response**

Rapid Response is a federal strategy designed to avert potential layoffs and to provide readjustment services to workers impacted by plant closures and mass layoffs. Readjustment services are also provided as a result of natural disasters resulting in mass dislocation. The goal of Rapid Response is to enable dislocated workers to transition into new employment as quickly as possible, thus reducing the length of time that workers would normally draw unemployment insurance benefits.

In PY 2010, Louisiana experienced an increase in layoffs within the government sector, with 32 layoffs impacting 1,322 state and local workers, an increase of 44 percent from PY 2009. State government layoffs occurred in all regions of the state, with parish-level layoffs occurring in Regions 7 and 8 (Northeast and Northwest Louisiana.)

In PY 2010, the Rapid Response Unit handled 98 Extended Mass Layoff Actions taken by employers that resulted in the separation of 6,462 workers from their jobs for at least 31 days. These numbers were down from PY 2009, when the state responded to 99 mass layoffs impacting 8,722 workers. Nearly one-third of the extended mass layoffs were in the manufacturing industry (aerospace and shipbuilding), while 34 percent of the workers impacted were in Region 1 (New Orleans.)

Rapid Response provided re-employment services to 2,747 workers in all regions of the state in PY 2010, a decrease from the 4,215 workers who received re-employment services in PY 2009.

**Re-employment Services**

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is focused on connecting Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants with re-employment and training services. To this end, Re-employment Services (RES) ensures that claimants have access to the full array of re-employment and training services available at Business & Career Solutions Centers, while ensuring that claimants comply with all legal requirements governing the receipt of UI benefits. (Training and Employment Notice No. 31 – 09, March 11, 2010).

The re-employment of UI beneficiaries and the reduction of erroneous payments are high priorities for Louisiana. Louisiana received a grant of \$1,401,949 to implement the Re-employment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Initiative pilot program.

The purpose of this pilot is to focus on better integration and connection between UI services and center services. The REA program pro-actively integrates with RES and other WIA-funded services geared toward rapid re-employment and reduction in claim duration, thus reducing the demand on Louisiana’s Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.

Louisiana’s Business & Career Solutions Centers provide a comprehensive and integrated service delivery model to ensure that UI claimants receive an enhanced level of services leading toward a job-ready labor force. Services include group orientation, UI eligibility assessment, one-on-one career counseling, customized re-employment plans, and referrals to appropriate services such as workshops and/or training.

The chart below provides cumulative statistical information for REA activities for second quarter performance: **April 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011**

Total REA Claimants	Completed Orientation Services	Failed to Appear for Orientation Services
1,252	563	599

**Source:** Louisiana Virtual One Stop (LAVOS)

**Registered Apprenticeship**

The Apprenticeship Division provides oversight, technical assistance and monitoring of Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors and employers throughout the state to ensure compliance with federal and state laws. Responsibilities of the division are to:

- Develop materials and conduct programs of public awareness to secure the adoption of training in skilled occupations and related training policies and practices used by employers, unions and other organizations.
- Develop policies and plans to enhance opportunities for job seekers to participate in skilled training, both on-the-job and through related theory instruction.
- Monitor Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors for compliance with state and federal apprenticeship laws and regulations by conducting periodic program quality and Equal Employment Opportunity compliance reviews.
- Provide technical assistance to program sponsors to strengthen their programs to increase overall effectiveness.
- Coordinate the effective use of federal, state and workforce development resources to create a clear training-to-employment corridor for customers of the workforce development system in the most integrated, effective way possible.

- Engage in partnership activities with other state programs, organizations and employers to ensure quality service and customer satisfaction.

Over the past year, Registered Apprenticeship has seen a plateau in growth, in large part due to economic conditions. The LWC Apprenticeship Division served 52 apprenticeship programs that provided employment and training to approximately 3,500 registered apprentices across Louisiana. ARRA-funded projects — mainly in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport — served as a lifeline to avoid a decrease in overall apprentice utilization. While programs in these three regions saw significant improvement in employment, other programs in the state continued to struggle to put their apprentices on a job.

The injection of ARRA funds into Louisiana impacted registered apprenticeship in a variety of ways:

- The increase in ARRA-funded construction projects provided new jobs that put increasing numbers of “benched” apprentices to work. In some cases, their time in the apprenticeship program was forced to be extended because of the inability to obtain enough OJT hours to satisfy apprenticeship standards for advancement.
- There was a notable increase in the number of contractors who inquired about starting a registered apprenticeship program, in large part due to wanting to use registered apprentices on federal projects. Registered apprentices are the only exception to Davis-Bacon regulations requiring that all tradesmen be paid according to federal prevailing wages.
- The need to provide technical assistance to program sponsors in the application of registered apprenticeship to Davis-Bacon regulations has been significant over the past year, and continues to be. This has given the Apprenticeship Division an opportunity to contact and provide direct services to a wider range of employers than in previous years.

While not a year of overall growth, it has been a year of maturation for the Apprenticeship Division. The revisions of Louisiana apprenticeship laws and administrative rules were finalized to bring the agency into federal compliance with CFR 29 Part 29. The program sponsors have grown acclimated to the new online apprentice tracking database, which has streamlined the division’s policies and procedures. The application to the DOL Office of Apprenticeship for the LWC Apprenticeship Division to be recertified as a state apprenticeship agency was submitted in August 2011 as a result of completing all of the new regulatory requirements within CFR 29 Part 29.

The Registered Apprenticeship state tax credit was renewed for another four years by the Louisiana Legislature in spring 2011. During the first two tax years of the program, the LWC qualified tax credits totaling \$1 million in 2008 and \$1.4 million in 2009. To date for tax year 2010, qualifying credits equal \$1,236,329. According to the Louisiana Department of Revenue, tax credits actually claimed were \$280,000 (for tax year 2008), \$969,000 (for tax year 2009), and \$714,000 (for tax year 2010 to date). For 2008, 113 employers qualified for the tax credit; for 2009, 100 employers qualified; for 2010, 87 employers qualified.

### **SUCCESS STORY: Project “WOW” — Wider Opportunities for Women**

The construction industry has always faced tremendous obstacles in attracting women into the industry. Traditionally, in most construction trades, men make up nearly 100 percent of the workforce. However, in the past decade, more and more initiatives have developed specifically designed to inform and recruit women into the construction industry.

One such initiative is aimed at middle-school girls in Plaquemines Parish in Louisiana. For the past two years, the Plaquemines Parish School Board has offered Project WOW to the community. It is a weeklong day camp in which 20-30 girls spend five days exploring different vocations. The project’s mission is to equip adolescent girls with information and skills that explore traditional and non-traditional career opportunities. Project Wow’s goal is to provide diligent mentoring, hands-on training, and high ethical life skills.

In both 2010 and 2011, the LWC Apprenticeship Division and the Greater New Orleans Apprenticeship Directors Committee have partnered with WOW to host a full day of hands-on project stations at the Finishing Trades District Council Training Center in Kenner. The campers complete seven different projects in seven different trades by the end of the day, giving them brief yet valuable exposure to what the trade is like. The stations include electrical (wiring a wall socket); carpentry (building a wooden toolbox); operating engineer (being raised above the building in a lift); interior finishing (painting a wall using roller with extended arm, paintbrush and wall coverings); plumbing (installing a sink drain); glazing (learning how to cut glass properly); and welding (suiting up in full welding gear and observing the use of a blow torch to make a metal name plate).

Several girls attending the 2011 camp were repeat attendees from 2010. It is anticipated that the very successful Project WOW will grow in size and scope in coming years.

### **Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)**

Through the resourceful use of funds, 3,600 low-income youth, ages 14 – 24, were employed in Louisiana in the 2011 Summer Employment Programs. Funding sources included stimulus funding from WIA/ARRA programs, WIA Youth programs, local city general funds, Community Development Block Grant funds, local Webs and private sector funds (Mobil/Exxon Partnership in St. Bernard Parish.) These job experiences provided valuable skills for youth and served as a stepping stone on the path to self-sufficiency. Likewise, these programs gave youth the opportunity to benefit from training and employment services such as work experience, leadership development, work readiness and mentoring. Some of the industries that employed youth included healthcare, service, environmental, government and green building. Healthcare and service industry sectors were specifically targeted as both core and growth-oriented sectors of employment in Louisiana.

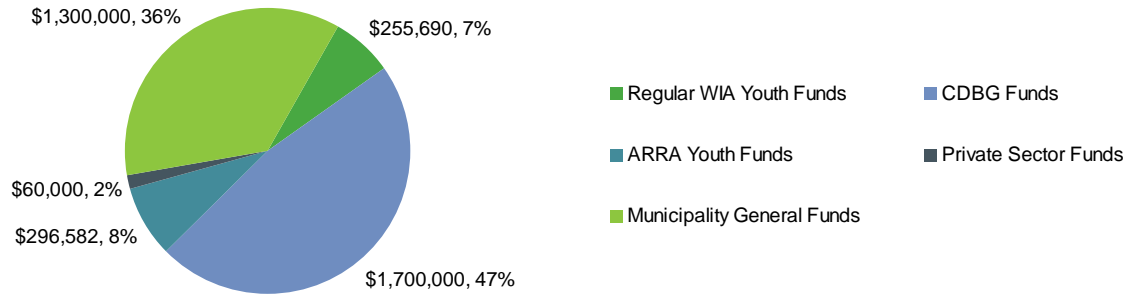
The summer youth employment programs provided the opportunity for local Was, municipal entities and private-sector employers to partner for several months to administer the programs. Other objectives of the program were to reach a higher percentage of out-of-school youth and increase participants’ work-readiness skills.

While regular WIA and ARRA funds were greatly reduced, other entities stepped up and provided vital funding:

- Regular WIA Youth funds expended: \$255,690
- ARRA Youth funds expended: \$296,582
- Non-WIA funds expended: \$3,060,000

With this collaboration, half of Louisiana’s LWIAs were able to provide a Summer Youth Employment Program for 2011.

**2011 Summer Youth Employment Program**



**Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**

Trade Adjustment Assistance is a USDOL program that provides a variety of re-employment services and benefits to workers who have lost their jobs or suffered a reduction of hours and wages as a result of increased imports or shifts in production outside the United States. Workers may be eligible for training, training travel allowance, subsistence allowance, Re-employment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA), Alternate Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA), job search, relocation allowance, Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) and Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC). Certified individuals may be eligible to receive one or more program benefits and services depending on what level of assistance is needed to return them to suitable, sustainable employment.

From July 2010 through June 2011, 12 petitions were filed on behalf of 2,025 dislocated workers, resulting in the certification of six petitions for TAA/ATAA/RTAA services and benefits. These certifications will provide services and benefits to 1,351 participants in Region 1 (New Orleans), Region 7 (Shreveport), Region 4 (Lafayette) and Region 6 (Alexandria). Various industries and businesses were affected, including automotive and parts (front bumpers, radiators, and floor coverings), medical, oilfield services, chemical material, distribution warehouse center, call center, and wood product veneers.

**SUCCESS STORY: Terry Lee**

Letter received by TAA Unit from participant:

After 19 years of employment, I was laid off from International Paper in November 2008 due to the mill closure. The Louisiana Workforce Commission filed a petition with the U.S. Department of Labor on behalf of International Paper Company for Trade Adjustment Assistance. With the certification of the petition, I was allowed to pursue training in the field of computers which is something I had wanted to do for the past 10 years. Through the TAA funds, I was able to complete training and obtain employment. This would not have been possible in this field without an associate degree.

I enrolled at the University of Arkansas at Monticello-College of Technology at Crossett in August 2009 in the Computer Maintenance/Networking Program. I obtained employment at Morehouse General Hospital in May 2010 after completing all my computer-related courses. Morehouse General Hospital allowed me to continue my education until I graduated and received my associate's degree on December 13, 2010.

I continue to be employed at Morehouse General Hospital as a computer technician. Had it not been for the TAA money, this would not have happened because I would not have been able to financially afford an education. I now look forward to going to work, because it is a job that I enjoy.

**WIA Success Stories**

The best way to show the effectiveness of the Workforce Investment Act is through stories that show the success of WIA-funded programs in Louisiana. Here are eight stories — one from each region of Louisiana — that show how local workforce development officials are creating successes.

**REGION 1 (NEW ORLEANS) SUCCESS STORY:****Ordinary Phone Call Leads to Extraordinary Opportunity**

Robin Haas, recruitment and placement specialist with the Plaquemines Business & Career Solutions Center, recognizes opportunity everywhere. That was the case when she received a call from a previous job seeker saying they had been hired by U.S. Concrete.

For many people, that would have been the end of it. But not Haas — instead, she got online and looked up information on the company, called them up and solicited their business. With its main office out of state, U.S. Concrete normally works with temporary agencies for their many work sites throughout the country, but the company had not been getting the work force it needed for its Belle Chasse location.

At the request of the employer, Haas listed several positions through LWC's online job services system. She personally screened résumés and interviewed several candidates, and whenever a strong candidate was identified, she e-mailed their résumé to U.S. Concrete for consideration. And if Haas had difficulty finding appropriate candidates from her own talent pool, she reached out to other LWC Business & Career Solutions Centers in the region for their top candidates.

Within a year U.S. Concrete hired 16 individuals through the LWC. And it all started with just a phone call.

**REGION 2 (BATON ROUGE) SUCCESS STORY:****Baton Rouge Area Employers Benefit from On-the-Job Training**

On-the-job training (OJT) is an LWC program for employers. The current OJT program provides reimbursement of up to 90 percent of eligible new employees' wages while they get on-the-job training for up to 26 weeks for permanent, full-time jobs.

In Baton Rouge, OJT serves as a key business retention tool advocated by local economic and city officials:

- Convergys operates a call center in Baton Rouge that provides customer support for the telecommunications industry. The company plans to begin hiring 33 new workers in November 2010 for OJT within its call center operations.
- Staples, which operates a virtual contact center in Baton Rouge that supports its North America delivery business, is anticipating hiring 44 new workers for OJT. The first round of hiring to fill 15 positions began in September 2010.

OJT efforts with Convergys and Staples follow the success at Shoulders of Strength, Inc., which hired and trained two family support coordinators through OJT assistance and worker recruitment by the Baton Rouge Business & Career Solutions Center.

**REGION 3 (HOUMA) SUCCESS STORY:****One-Stop, 24-Hour Company Finds One-Stop, 24-Hour Service**

A one-of-a-kind, one-stop complex with 24-hour access demands one-stop, 24-hour support services. That's why Brett Borne, human resources manager for C-Port at Port Fourchon in Golden Meadow, turns to the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and its always-available online resources through the [www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net) website.

C-Port, part of the Edison Chouest Offshore family of companies, is a multi-service marine complex designed to reduce port turnaround time for deepwater offshore vessels. It is also a business offering career opportunities for those with initiative and willingness to learn, traits that Borne says he finds from applicants he's hired through LWC. "Any job that we have, I post on laworks.net" to get the number of quality applicants he wants, he says. "A newspaper lasts just a day, but the web is always there."

In addition to being a great referral source, Borne sees LWC as a great resource for worker on-the-job training. "With on-the-job training, not only can we offer employment, but advancement in our company," Borne says. "Despite what may be in the news otherwise, there are a lot of career employment opportunities available today."

**REGION 4 (LAFAYETTE) SUCCESS STORY:****Employers Go from Job Vacancies to Hires Within One Day**

With its extensive database of qualified job seekers, LWC's online job services system, LAVOS, can make an employer's search for the ideal job candidate a quick task. Here are two recent cases where employers went from help wanted to help found in a matter of hours:

- The Comfort Inn of Opelousas had been looking for a front desk clerk for some time and wasn't having much luck. But that all changed when general manager Jaya Patel called Acadiana Works, Inc. and the St. Landry Business & Career Solutions Center. LWC workforce development officers Paula Devalcourt and Judy Guillory quickly got to work. On Monday, Oct. 25, 2010, the job vacancy for the position was entered into LWC's online job services database. A search was begun for qualified candidates to refer, and in a matter of hours, a referral was made to Patel. The match proved to be a good one, with the new hire reporting to work the very next day, Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2010.
- Cadre Pump & Fabrication, with offices in Broussard, New Iberia, Eunice and Lafayette, had an opening for a pump design and fabrication manager. One of the company's requirements was to find an experienced, degreed mechanical engineer. The company worked with the Lafayette Business & Career Solutions Center and posted the job on the LWC website, [www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net), in the morning, "and before lunch, we were receiving résumés for review," says Cadre General Manager George Orr. An interview was held the next day, and Cadre found its new employee, a registered professional engineer with 29 years of experience, including pump design. And job seeker Edwin Lutring landed a job that pays \$85,000 a year. "LWC did a great job assisting us in filling this critical position in our company," says Orr.

**REGION 5 (LAKE CHARLES) SUCCESS STORY:****Company's Expansion Efforts Gets Boost from Employer-Based Training**

Beverly Martin, president of Browne Stewart Company in Lake Charles, and her husband, Cary, wanted to expand their business. However, the day-to-day bookkeeping demands of running their building and remodeling products business took away from the time needed to focus on expansion efforts.

In January, Mrs. Martin contacted the LWC Calcasieu Business & Career Solutions Center for help. In her meeting with Gwendolyn Guillory, business services representative, and Geraldine Ringo, recruitment and placement specialist, Mrs. Martin said her business had long needed a bookkeeper but she did not have the money to train someone.

Guillory and Ringo thought of a solution for Browne Stewart: employer-based training. Within a month of their meeting with Mrs. Martin, the company was approved for the training contract, and a job vacancy for the new position was posted in LWC's online job services database. Job seeker Jacqueline Hacker, a dislocated worker who had exhausted her unemployment insurance benefits, was selected for the position, and she started work on March 9, 2010. Hacker's training contract was completed by August 2010. Today, both Jacqueline Hacker and Beverly Martin are happy with the results: Browne Stewart has gained a good, dependable worker, and Hacker is back on her feet in a job that she enjoys.

**REGION 6 (ALEXANDRIA) SUCCESS STORY:****Partnership Proves to be Win-Win-Win-Win**

Kerotest Manufacturing Corporation in Mansura is one of just a few manufacturers in rural, six-parish central Louisiana Workforce Investment Area 60 that is able to provide marketable, vocational skills to job seekers. At the same time, the company faced a constant struggle maintaining a drug-free workforce with the soft skills necessary to be successful. The high turnover costs for Kerotest equated to high training costs.

Local workforce development staffers first approached Kerotest more than five years ago with information on how they could help ease hiring problems while saving the company money. The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) set aside dollars for on-the-job (OJT) training, and a partnership with Kerotest was a good fit, with positions such as machine operator, inventory control, and shipping available for job seekers working with LWIA 60. Workforce staffers made soft skills instruction and “no drugs” counseling a priority for job seekers, not only because of the hazardous mix of drugs and machinery operations, but to ensure stability in the job seekers’ work and personal lives.

Since then, both Kerotest and LWIA 60 have benefited from the partnership. The company participates in employer-based training using the OJT component, which has helped alleviate both high turnover and high training costs. Workforce staffers have provided recruitment, applicant screening and testing services for Kerotest, and job seekers have been able to secure permanent, full-time jobs. Of the many Kerotest employees provided by LWIA 60, only one has had to be released due to drug use.

An added benefit has been the involvement of the company in LWC efforts. Kerotest Plant Manager Bart Jones now serves on the local WIB, helping to provide continuing direction on workforce investment solutions in the rural area, and the employer participates in LWC regional and local meetings, providing input to statewide and local employment and training service plans.

**REGION 7 (SHREVEPORT) SUCCESS STORY:****Past Successes Paved Way for Patriot Proppants**

When the Town of Arcadia held a meeting to woo Patriot Proppants LLC, a manufacturer of resin-coated sand for oil and gas field use, to locate its new facility in Webster Parish, LWC’s Annette Blake was there. Blake, business services representative for Northwest Louisiana, provided information on LWC services and state tax incentives.

The meeting was a success, and Patriot decided to locate its facility in the South Webster Industrial Park in Sibley. Blake was on the scene again, when she was personally invited to attend the announcement event by company President Jason Renkes. Renkes used the occasion to announce that Patriot would be using LWC for all their plant hiring.

Patriot’s first need was office personnel, specifically, an HR manager, and Blake came through again. She referred Mahala Hutto, who had worked closely with the Webster Business & Career Solutions Center over the last 10 years in administrator/HR positions with various businesses in the Webster Parish area. Hutto was hired for the job.

The new partnership with Patriot was also built on past successes LWC had assisting with the hiring needs of several of the subcontractors who built the plant. The relationship continued with LWC posting Patriot’s job vacancies on LWC’s website, screening and referring applicants, and delivering resumes to the plant site.

### **Past Successes Paved Way for Patriot Proppants** *(continued)*

When the plant was completed, LWC services included writing employer-based training (EBT) contracts for 10 employees who were hired by Patriot. Renkes was especially interested in hiring recently laid-off workers, and the EBT contracts were written for workers laid off from GM, Weyerhaeuser and Trane.

Today, Patriot's two-line production facility in Sibley can store approximately 14 million pounds of product for the Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma areas. The company has hired 38 full-time employees, many of them previously affected by downturns in the automotive and wood product industries.

Patriot, proud to be located in Webster Parish and to be part of the manufacturing base in Northwest Louisiana, is the latest LWC success that has been laid over the course of several years. Interaction with and between local mayors, Chambers of Commerce, businesses, various economic development councils, The Coordinating & Development Corporation, local and regional LWC leadership, and key business staff led to LWC being aware of and invited into the process early and significantly contributed to the success of the project. This interaction and cooperation also minimized barriers and simplified the process.

### **REGION 8 (MONROE) SUCCESS STORY:**

#### **Northeast Louisiana Helps Employer in Oil Spill Response**

At first glance, Northeast Louisiana and rural Morehouse Parish seem an unlikely place to find a workforce solution for an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. But for Hub Enterprises, that's exactly where they found success.

In June 2010, Hub Enterprises of Lafayette was looking to hire 100 workers for security positions along the Gulf Coast in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster. The company also wanted to help an area feeling the effects of higher unemployment. Familiar with the services offered by LWC, Hub Enterprises contacted the Bastrop Business & Career Solutions Center, and the wheels were soon in motion. Center staff worked with the City of Bastrop to secure a location for a job fair and got the word out about the hiring event, pulling together staff from other LWC centers in Monroe, Farmerville and Winnsboro to help in the effort.

The day of the job fair saw 1,000 applicants come through the doors. LWC staffers were there to pre-screen applicants, keep the traffic flowing properly during the interview sessions, handle clerical duties, run errands and do whatever Hub Enterprises needed during its three-day stay. Everyone who came to the job fair was interviewed as promised, with 150 applicants invited back for a two-day training. Of the 120 job seekers who passed the training, 75 have been hired to date by Hub.

### **WorkKeys® Initiative/National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)**

ACT, Inc. is an internationally recognized organization providing a broad array of assessment, research, information and program management solutions in the areas of education and workforce development. WorkKeys is a recognized job skills assessment system measuring real-world functional skills that employers use to determine hiring qualifications and training needs that are critical to job success. These skills are valuable for any occupation, skilled or professional, and at any level of education. WorkKeys measures the current skills of individuals in four key areas: communication, problem solving, interpersonal skills and personal skills.

Coordinated by the LWC and other workforce partners, WorkKeys is an integrated part of many workforce development programs. Business & Career Solutions Centers use the assessment tool to determine and certify skill competencies through job analysis and skill measurement.

### **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)**

Through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, employers are given an incentive to hire individuals who would otherwise be overlooked in the hiring process. Employers receive federal tax credits for employing veterans, ex-felons or individuals currently receiving or who have recently received public assistance. With submission of the proper paperwork and supporting documents, LWC certifies that the employer is eligible to receive between \$1,200 and \$9,000 in tax credits.

During the last fiscal year LWC certified 24,243 applications to receive tax credits. Through streamlining of processes and the first phase implementation of a web-based application, LWC was able to process 34,066 applications, more than any previous year. The second phase of database implementation, projected to roll out in January 2012, will enhance the program by reducing the amount of incoming and outgoing mail and increasing the number of applications processed.

### **Veterans Program**

Select Business & Career Solutions Centers have a full-time staff of Veterans Employment Representatives (Vet Reps) to assist Veterans.

Vet Reps are trained and dedicated to helping all qualified veterans reach their career goals. Among the many services provided:

- Career and job counseling
- Labor market information on the jobs and employers in this area.
- Recommendations for training and education to qualify for better jobs and careers.
- Information on Veteran job programs and training.
- Resume preparation, interview skills and internet job searches.
- Developing jobs for those Vets with barriers to employment.
- Providing referral information on social service and family support.
- Linking Vets with Department of Veterans Affairs medical and benefits information.

In addition, the Vet Reps conduct file searches on all new job vacancies, contacting any qualified veterans immediately. The goal is to get the best-qualified veterans to employers before non-veterans are referred.

Outreach is conducted in order to find and meet the intensive service needs of the special targeted Veterans, as well as to employers in the area to assist Veterans gain employment. Vet Reps outreach to:

- Special Disabled and Disabled Veterans
- Homeless Veterans
- Transitioning Service Members
- Incarcerated Veterans
- VA VR& E offices
- Community Stand Downs
- VA Medical Centers
- Military Installations
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Offices
- Vet Centers
- Civic and Service Organizations
- Homeless Shelters
- Veterans Organizations
- Homeless Veterans Reintegration Programs (HVRP)
- Incarcerated Veterans Transition Programs (IVTP)
- Veterans Workforce Investment Programs (VWIPP)

Among the successful activities of the Veterans Program:

- The REALifelines Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) continues to work with the Army Wounded Warrior (AW2) program and their staff to provide case management and comprehensive services to those veterans most severely wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan and their families.
- The DVOP in the St. Bernard area developed a computer metric tracking system to analyzing all job orders processed through the center to monitor veterans' priority of service. Data can be immediately shared among all workforce specialists. The conversion of paper forms used locally for veterans' services into electronic forms is currently in progress.
- The LVER & DVOP of the East Baton Rouge Business & Career Solutions Center held its annual Louisiana Veterans Job Fair. Participation included 30-plus employers, 65 Veterans, and 250 overall attendance.
- The LVER and DVOP of the Bossier Business & Career Solutions Center, in alliance with other regional Veterans staff, conducted the sixth annual Northwest Louisiana Veterans Job Fair at the Bossier Civic Center. There were 100 employers and 500 Veterans in attendance.
- The DVOP at the Webster Career Solution Center followed up on a previous Veteran success story, learning that the veteran was still working with the same employer and had been promoted. The veteran has successfully transitioned out of a boarding house into an apartment, regaining his independence.

### III: Workforce Intelligence (Labor Market Information)

#### Redesign of the Labor Market Information Website

Users are going to find a new improved Labor Market Information (LMI) website that began with the unit receiving the Labor Market Improvement Green Jobs Grant. During this program year July 2010 through June 2011, the initial design and layout was developed and a vendor was chosen. The new LMI portal will improve functionality for the broad spectrum of end users. Look for new features that will include working scenarios from the ULL Workforce Simulator; results from the Green Jobs grant; and improved displays of current labor market information.

#### Workforce Longitudinal Grant

The Occupational Information Services Department, with the help from LSU's Department of Economic Development, secured a grant in December 2010 that will create a longitudinal data system. The purpose of which is to improve the state's ability to monitor, plan, and research labor market conditions and workforce developments. Reports outlined in the design plan of this three year grant will provide the first longitudinal study detailing the flow of school and training completers — exiters into the workforce system.

#### Job Vacancy Survey

In PY 2010, LWC contracted with LSU to conduct a job vacancy survey to help determine workforce needs in the state. The annual job vacancy survey helps the workforce development system gain insight into the number and types of jobs available in specific industries and regions of the state. Employers can use this information to gauge the existence of labor shortages and to plan solutions to hiring needs. Economic development and both secondary and postsecondary education are using career clusters to align workforce preparation at all education and training levels, and the training providers can use this information to help design just-in-time training to meet employer needs. The job vacancy survey is one way for the state to determine the number and types of jobs available in specific industries at a specific point in time. The 2011 Job Vacancy Report was conducted and completed by June 30, 2011. The final results of the 2011 are on the [http://www.laworks.net/LaborMarketInfo/LMI\\_JVS\\_20112.asp](http://www.laworks.net/LaborMarketInfo/LMI_JVS_20112.asp). Below are excerpts from the Job Vacancy Report for 2011:

There were approximately 20,411 job vacancies in Louisiana during the second quarter of 2011 resulting in a vacancy rate of 1.1 percent. This means that for every 100 jobs, approximately one job was vacant. The number of job vacancies decreased by approximately 9,770 since the second quarter of 2010, a 32 percent decrease.

The largest number of job vacancies by industry group was found in Educational and Health Services (approximately 6,360) while the largest vacancy rate (2 percent) was found in the Other Services industry group. Other Services consists of repair and maintenance, personal and laundry services, membership associations and organizations and private households. When looking at the results by occupational group, Construction and Extraction had the largest number of job vacancies (approximately 2,400), which also carried the highest vacancy rate of 2.1 percent.

Overall, Louisiana employers were seeking employees with experience in 73 percent of the job vacancies. Approximately 47 percent of the job vacancies required more than a high school education with 20 percent requiring vocational training, certification, or a two-year college degree.

Approximately 2 percent of all job vacancies offered a starting wage of \$6.55 per hour or less. Jobs paying \$6.56 – \$7.55 accounted for 11 percent of vacancies. However, 31 percent of vacancies were paying \$7.56 – \$10.55; 11 percent of vacancies were paying \$10.56 – \$13.00; 22 percent of vacancies were paying \$13.01 – \$18.00; and 24 percent of vacancies were paying more than \$18.00 per hour. In addition an added survey question showed that employers offered supplemental health insurance for 63.2 percent of all job vacancies.

The number of job vacancies in Louisiana for 2011 was approximately 7/10ths of the number of vacancies in 2010. Almost half (48 percent) of the job vacancies were found in Regional Labor Market Areas 1 and 2, down from 55 percent in 2010.

## IV: Performance Data

### Program Costs

Program	Total Participants Served	Total Expenditures	Cost per Participant
Adult Programs <i>(Does not include Self Service Only)</i>	243,484	\$10,439,990	\$43
Dislocated Worker Program	5,315	\$4,881,133	\$918
Youth Program	3,056	\$12,156,797	\$3,978

### PY 2010 WIA Financial Statement — Operating Results

Fund Source	Available	Expenditures as of 6/30/11	Percent Expended	Balance Remaining
Adult Funds	\$11,588,178	\$6,743,708		\$4,844,470
C/O Funds	\$3,696,282	\$3,696,282		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,284,460</b>	<b>\$10,439,990</b>	<b>68.3%</b>	<b>\$4,844,470</b>
Dislocated Worker Funds	\$6,378,237	\$3,416,195		\$2,962,042
C/O Funds	\$1,464,938	\$1,464,938		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,843,175</b>	<b>\$4,881,133</b>	<b>62.2%</b>	<b>\$2,962,042</b>
Youth Funds	\$11,793,755	\$5,714,965		\$6,078,790
C/O Funds	\$6,441,832	\$6,441,832		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,235,587</b>	<b>\$12,156,797</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>\$6,078,790</b>
Rapid Response Funds	\$1,949,942	0		\$1,949,942
C/O Funds	\$2,114,631	\$1,955,266		\$159,3650
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,064,573</b>	<b>\$1,955,266</b>	<b>48.1%</b>	<b>\$2,109,307</b>
Statewide Activity Funds	\$5,594,122	\$3,112,243		\$2,481,879
C/O Funds	\$4,186,519	\$4,186,519		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,780,641</b>	<b>\$7,298,762</b>	<b>74.6%</b>	<b>\$2,481,879</b>

<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$55,208,436</b>	<b>\$36,731,948</b>	<b>66.5%</b>	<b>\$18,476,488</b>
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**Three-Year Progress of the Workforce Investment Act Program**

The chart below illustrates Louisiana's historical results, indicating the state's continued development of an Integrated Services Delivery model that increases service delivery to more individuals while maintaining quality outcomes.

	Program Year 2008	Program Year 2009	Program Year 2010
<b>Adult</b>			
Participants	217,377	256,553	243,484
Entered Employment Rate	66.2%	56.6%	57.7%
Job Retention Rate	79.8%	74.3%	78.4%
Average Earnings	\$12,613	\$12,359	\$13,850
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>			
Participants	9,290	14,995	5,315
Entered Employment or Education	72.1%	64.8%	63.4%
Job Retention Rate	83.4%	78.4%	82.6%
Average Earnings	\$18,418	\$16,148	\$18,007
<b>Youth</b>			
Participants	3,755	3,368	3,056
Placement in Employment or Education	66.8%	54.6%	60.9%
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	51.7%	54.4%	63.6%
Literacy and Numeracy Gains	43.4%	55.5%	61.3%

**NOTE:** Results are based on U.S. Department of Labor Common Measures definitions.

**Program Year 2010 Workforce Investment Act Program Performance**

	Negotiated Goal	Actual Performance	% of Goal Attained
<b>Adult</b>			
Entered Employment Rate	56.0%	57.7%	103.0%
Job Retention Rate	70.0%	78.4%	112.0%
Average Earnings Rate	\$12,100	\$13,850	114.5%
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>			
Entered Employment Rate	68.0%	63.4%	93.2%
Job Retention Rate	72.0%	82.6%	114.7%
Average Earnings Rate	\$13,900	\$18,007	129.5%
<b>Youth Common Measures</b>			
Placement in Education or Employment	57.0%	60.9%	106.8%
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	52.0%	63.6%	122.3%
Literacy and Numeracy Gains	44.0%	61.3%	139.3%

**Adult Program**

The state exceeded all three measures, Entered Employment Rate, Employment Retention Rate and the Average Earnings. Through LWC's Integrated Service Delivery Model and the utilization of the waiver allowing the transfer of funding from the Dislocated Worker program to the Adult, the LWIAs have been able to continue providing services to large number of individuals. The number of individuals that received services in PY10 decreased only slightly to 243,484.

**Dislocated Worker Program**

The state met the Entered Employment Rate and exceeded the Employment Retention Rate and the Average Earnings measure. Louisiana increased the number of dislocated workers served from 14,995 to 5,315, a 65 percent decrease from the prior year.

**Youth Common Measures**

The state exceeded all of the three youth common measures, Attainment of a Degree or Certificate, Placement in Employment or Education and the Literacy and Numeracy Gains.

Louisiana requires that at least 50 percent of all youth participants served under WIA be out-of-school youth. In PY 2010, approximately 74 percent of the youth participants served were out-of-school youth.

Over the last two program years the State has placed priority and focus on the WIA Youth program to ensure that program service delivery is in alignment with the National Youth Strategic Vision placing emphasis on servicing out-of-school and at-risk youth through the workforce investment system.

In April of 2011 a two day workshop was conducted for all Youth Coordinators representing all eighteen Local Workforce Investment Areas. Topics of discussion included program design, peer to peer sharing of best practices and intensive training on the Youth Common Measures and review of key definitions of WIA Standardized Record Data required elements.

**Waivers**

In order to make the best use of resources and as part of the state’s extension of the WIA/W-P State Plan, Louisiana was granted extensions of certain waiver requests by ETA in order to possibly seek relief from provisions that restrict flexibility and creativity or limit efficiencies. Following are the waivers granted by ETA and obtained by Louisiana.

<p><i>Waiver of the funds transfer limitation at WIA Section 133(b)(4) to permit states to approve local area requests to transfer up to 50 percent of local area formula allocation funds between the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. State policy for transfer of funds between adult and dislocated worker programs.</i></p>	<p>This waiver enhanced the LWIAs ability to be flexible in planning and addressing the needs of their area. One of the cornerstone foundations of the Workforce Investment Act is the integrating and streamlining of services and costs to workforce development, which is consistent with Gov. Bobby Jindal’s desire to integrate programs in order to better serve the citizens of Louisiana. This waiver helped the LWIAs by addressing the economic situation of the local areas by providing either additional Adult or Dislocated Workers services based on that need. Over half of the LWIAs used this waiver in PY 2010 to help meet the needs of the employers and job seekers in training specific needs.</p>
<p><i>Waiver of the required 50% employer match for customized training at WIA Section 101(8)(C) to permit a match based on a sliding scale as follows: (a) no less than 10% match for employers with 50 or fewer employees, and (b) no less than 25% match for employers with 51 – 100 employees. For employers with more than 100 employees, the current statutory requirements continue to apply.</i></p>	<p>The waiver for customized training helped optimize the resources available under workforce development initiatives by focusing on employers’ needs while minimizing programmatic and bureaucratic barriers. By using the sliding scale match, the employers gained the flexibility to compare their cost benefit ratio of contributing a match amount to the benefits of a skill increase for their employees. Employers benefited by having a labor pool with the marketable skills they required. Louisiana was able to integrate various funding streams while providing employers with an integrated seamless approach to workforce development.</p>
<p><i>Waiver of WIA Section 101(31)(B) to permit LWIAs to reimburse the employer for on the job training on a graduated scale based on the size of the business. The following reimbursement amounts will be permitted: (a) up to 90% for employers with 50 or fewer employees, and (b) up to 75% for employers with more than 50 but fewer than 250 employees. For employees with 250 or more employees, the current statutory requirements will continue to apply.</i></p>	<p>The waiver for on-the-job training helped employers to use the resources available under workforce development initiatives by focusing on employers’ and job seekers’ needs while minimizing programmatic and bureaucratic barriers. The sliding scale for the employer match helped to create the necessary flexibility for employers to compare their cost benefit ratio of contributing a match amount to the benefits of a skill increase for their employees. Employers benefited by having a labor pool with the marketable skills they required.</p>

<p><i>Waiver of WIA Section 123 requiring competitive procurement for the follow-up and supportive services elements and inclusion of these elements in the design framework of youth services.</i></p>	<p>This waiver removed the barrier to rapid implementation of the summer employment program and allowed the WIBs the flexibility to either expand existing competitively procured contracts by a percentage equal to the percentage increase in the total allotment from the state or conduct an expedited, limited competition to select service providers.</p>
<p><i>Waiver of the prohibition on the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for older and out of school youth. In addition allow youth participants 16 to 17 years of age to use Individual Training Accounts. (WIA Section 123, WIA Section 134(d)(4), 20 CFR 661.305(a)(3), 20 CFR 664.510)</i></p>	<p>Louisiana Older Youth, Out-of-School Youth and youth 16 – 17 years of age benefited from the services provided by certified training providers by allowing the LWIBs to use the ETPL for Older Youth, Out-of-School Youth and youth participants 16 – 17 years of age, with streamlining services and increasing flexibility as results. By increasing the number of participants who received training in a faster and more efficient manner, LWIBs were more flexible in securing training providers, promoting better utilization of service providers in rural areas, and eliminated duplicative processes for service providers, thereby reducing administrative costs.</p>
<p><i>Waiver of the current performance measures at WIA Section 136(b) in order to implement the common performance measures.</i></p>	<p>Louisiana used the common measures, which were more conducive to the development of a demand-driven integrated system.</p>
<p><i>Waive provisions at WIA Section 122(c) regarding the requirements for eligible training provider subsequent eligibility based on performance data and allow the state to use the initial eligibility determination at WIA Section 122(b) if needed.</i></p>	<p>LWC requested the waiver of the requirements for eligible training provider’s eligibility based on performance data and allowed the state to use the initial eligibility determination process at WIA Section 122(b), if needed. The ability to return to initial ETPL eligibility provided areas with sufficient providers to ensure training was available in demand occupations in relevant sectors in their region.</p>



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