



Andrew J. Frauenhoffer  
Executive Director



Office of  
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# *insider*

A window to the Department for Workforce Investment, Office of Employment & Training

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Ronald J. Murphy  
Deputy Executive Dir.

## Recent change in tax credit helps ex-offenders

At a recent career fair, Greg Kring spoke to hundreds of ex-offenders and explained how they could use their eligibility for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program to obtain employment. Kring, administrative specialist with the Division of Workforce and Employment Services, attended the Sixth Annual Central Kentucky Ex-Offender Career Fair in Lexington on behalf of the WOTC program.

“Most of the people I talked with seemed sincerely interested in getting and keeping a job, and not returning to jail,” said Kring. “Based on my interaction with them, I believe that the majority would make good employees for any employer willing to give them the chance to prove themselves. The WOTC helps make giving them that chance a little easier to do.”

Legislation signed into law in December 2006 reauthorized the WOTC program through 2007. This legislation also made a major change in the program by eliminating the economically disadvantaged criterion from the qualified ex-felon group.

Prior to 2007, employers were required to prove that an ex-felon was economically disadvantaged when hired. This meant providing documentation proving the number of family members living in an ex-felon’s household and his gross income for the six months prior to hire. While it is undeniable that the great majority of ex-felons live in low-income families, providing proof of that was usually difficult and often impossible.

Now, the only criterion for the ex-felons group is that he/she be convicted of a felony or released from incarceration within a year prior to the date hired. As a result, it is now much easier for ex-felons and the employers who hire them to prove that they are eligible for the program.

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## **\$500,000 for Cumberlands Workforce Investment Area training center**

*by Michael Goins, Education Cabinet*

On April 24, Governor Fletcher presented \$500,000 in Workforce Investment Act statewide reserve funds to the Cumberlands Workforce Investment Board. The funds will support the creation of a regional high-growth training center in the Cumberlands Workforce Investment Area. The center will provide job training for adults and displaced workers to fill increased demand for jobs in the utilities industry.



Governor Fletcher recently presented \$500,000 in funding that will support the creation of a regional high-growth training center in the Cumberlands Workforce Investment Area. Pictured from left are: Chief Executive Officer Allen Anderson, South Kentucky RECC; Executive Director Donna Diaz, Lake Cumberland Area Development District; Governor Ernie Fletcher; Darrell Ishamel, East Kentucky Power; Workforce Development Director Darryl McGaha, Cumberlands Workforce Investment Board; Ron Fuller, Jackson Energy; Commissioner Beth Smith, Department for Workforce Investment; Chief Operating Officer Carol Wright, South Kentucky RECC; Mike Williams, Bluegrass Energy; David Wiles, Somerset Community College; David White, Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives; Clarence Green, Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives; and Donald Lynch, Cumberland Valley Electric.

“Kentucky must continue to be a leader in supplying energy to the nation,” said Governor

Fletcher. “These funds will help us keep up with the increased demand for Kentucky-based electricity through training workers to fill jobs in the utilities industry.”

The board will partner with several public and private industries in the creation of a high-growth training center, including the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, Somerset-Pulaski County Industrial Foundation and Southern Kentucky Rural Electric Cooperative.

“As a longtime advocate of adult technical education, I support Governor Fletcher’s continued efforts to prepare adults through additional training opportunities for the constantly evolving workplace,” said Senate President David L. Williams (R-Burkesville).

“I appreciate the Fletcher administration’s efforts to build public-private education partnerships in order to prepare Kentuckians for the job opportunities of the future,” said Senator Vernie McGaha (R-Russell Springs).

An eight-acre site adjacent to the Valley Oak Technology Park has been donated for the training center by the Somerset/Pulaski County Industrial Foundation. The project is in the design phase with completion expected by spring of next year.

The project has been approved for nearly \$2.5 million in funding from the Economic Development Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program, the Appalachian Regional Commission and a community development block grant.

“Governor Fletcher understands that moving our state forward involves education and workforce development working together,” said Kentucky Education Cabinet Secretary Laura Emberton Owens. “Today’s award is a great example of public and private entities coming together to foster economic growth in our commonwealth.”

## Inside Kentucky

**Glasgow** - On March 8, OET representatives of the Glasgow office participated in the annual Barren County 4-H Reality Store. More than 900 students participated in the all-day event. Attending were seventh and eighth grade students from Barren County Middle School as well as tenth grade students from Barren County High School. The purpose of the 4-H Reality Store is to help the students see the value of a good education in securing better paying jobs.

On March 13, the Glasgow office partnered with RR Donnelley's of Glasgow in a new veterans' recognition program. The "Veteran of the Month" will honor veterans with a certificate, media recognition from the Glasgow office and a special book from RR Donnelley's. Beginning in March 2007, a veteran living in the Barren County Healthcare Facility will be honored each month through 2007 and 2008 for his service in the military. The first veteran honored by this program on March 13 joined the Army at age 28 and is now 95 years old. Nine veterans from all branches of the military have been identified to receive this recognition during the coming year.

**Maysville** - The Maysville OET held its annual Veterans Seminar on April 19. Jennifer Bush, Kentucky Department of Veteran Affairs, was the guest speaker. Topics included military medical claims information, Veterans Administration (VA) medical centers and community based outreach clinics, disability compensation, pension, home loan guaranty, life insurance, education, vocational training, burial allowance, and survivor's compensation. Thirty veterans attended the event.

**Middlesboro** - On April 4, Cathy Owens, manager of the Middlesboro OET, spoke at the Bell County Recovery School to approximately 40 students about entering the workforce. The discussions included interview techniques, and how to complete applications and a functional résumé. Mock interviews also were held with the students.

**Mayfield/Paducah** – Jean Burgess and Jim Davis, local veteran representatives of the Paducah and Mayfield OET offices, respectively, along with Skyla Grief of the Kentucky State Penitentiary recently initiated a résumé workshop for incarcerated veterans. Recognizing that incarcerated veterans are among those who need extra help breaking down barriers to employment, the representatives designed the workshop to assist them in finding employment. The first workshop was held Tuesday, April 3, at the Kentucky State Penitentiary in Eddyville with an inmate who was pending release.

**Northern Kentucky** - On March 7, Covington and Florence OET representatives began hosting Job Connections and scheduling guests for the show. Job Connections is a weekly 30-minute program, consisting of a series of interviews with local employers and agencies. Employer and agency guests on the show discuss employment opportunities in Northern Kentucky and throughout the state. Viewers also are provided with information about making themselves more employable by improving their résumés, interview skills, knowledge of the employment process and education.

**Paducah** - On April 9, representatives from the OET, Workforce Investment Area, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and local Health Department organized a rapid response for the workers of Briggs and Stratton of Murray. The plant employs approximately 917 employees and is laying off approximately 140 employees.

**Pikeville** – The OET local manager and the Pike County JobSight manager attended the Pike County Judge Executive's Interagency Coalition meeting on April 11. The OET manager was asked to serve on the Emergency/Disaster Committee and the JobSight manager was asked to serve on the Education and Training Committee. The Judge Executive's office is creating a Web site of federal, state and non-profit agencies that assist citizens of Pike and surrounding counties. The Web site will list the agency and explain the services it provides.

## Education Secretary Owens awards \$50,000 to south central Ky. workforce board

by Kitty McAllister, Education Cabinet

Glasgow native and Kentucky Education Cabinet Secretary Laura Emberton Owens presented a check on March 23 for \$50,000 to Barren River Workforce Investment Board at the Barren River Area Development District in Bowling Green. The Workforce Investment Act statewide reserve funds were requested for an in-depth regional labor market survey for the district.



Glasgow native and Kentucky Education Cabinet Secretary Laura Emberton Owens presented a check on March 23 for \$50,000 to Barren River Workforce Investment Board at the Barren River Area Development District in Bowling Green. Pictured, from left, are Commissioner Beth Smith, Department for Workforce Investment; Chair Amy Walker, Barren River Workforce Board; Secretary Owens; and Director George Leamon, Barren River Area Development District/Local Workforce Investment Area.

“Coming home and presenting these funds is an honor for me, because we are making a significant investment in the workforce and economic development for the region,” said Owens. “South Central Kentucky is primed and ready for business expansion and new industry growth. This regional study will help identify critical workforce issues so more business and industry can be strategically addressed.”

“We appreciate Secretary Owens and the state supporting the funding of this regional labor

market survey. The information we gain from this research will be valuable in identifying and addressing gaps in workforce skills and industry needs for corporate decision makers, site selectors, educators, and elected officials in recruiting business and industry, and expanding our local economies,” said Amy Walker, Barren River Workforce Board chair.

Commitments totaling \$30,000 from regional partners will complete the funding for the \$80,000 study. Partners include Glasgow/Barren County Industrial Development and Economic Authority, \$10,000; Logan Economic Alliance for Development, \$5,000; Warren County



Local and state OET representatives were on hand for the check presentation by Secretary Owens that will help fund an in-depth regional labor market survey for the district. Left to right are Deputy Executive Director Ron Murphy, OET; Chair Amy Walker; Workforce and Employment Services Director Susan Craft, OET; Assistant Manager Sherrell Norris, Bowling Green OET; Secretary Owens; and Assistant Manager Jennifer Strange and Manager Vickie Wade, both of the Glasgow OET.

Chamber of Commerce, \$10,000; and private sector contributors, \$5,000. The study will assist BRADD and its partners in better understanding the availability, education and other characteristics of labor pools in the BRADD region, positioning the region to expand and attract more business to the area.

The BRADD includes Allen, Barren, Butler, Edmonson, Hart, Logan, Metcalfe, Monroe, Simpson and Warren counties.

## Job fairs fare well

The Ashland One-Stop (TENCO), the Ashland Community and Technical College, KYOVA Mall and the Southwestern Community Action Council teamed up to host a Tri-State Career and Job Fair on Tuesday April 24, at the KYOVA Mall. A Workforce Investment Act (WIA) counselor held a pre-hire workshop to help jobseekers get the most out of the job fair. The skill mobile from Adult Education also was available for jobseekers to have access to computers. The job fair attracted 54 exhibitors and over 200 job seekers.

The Lincoln Trail Career Center and the Elizabethtown Chamber of Commerce hosted their seventh annual job fair on April 19. Fifty-three employers and approximately 700 job seekers participated.

The Louisville OET office in partnership with the Kentucky National Guard and Indiana Workforce Development held their third annual Spring 2007 Job Fair on April 25 at the Kentucky National Guard Armory in Louisville. There were 58 employers and 11 service providers. Approximately 200 applicants attended. Of those, 60 to 75 were tentatively offered employment.

The Maysville Career Center, Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, Kentucky Adult Education, and the Maysville Community and Technical College hosted the Second Annual Lewis County Job Fair April 3, at the Lewis County High School in Vanceburg. Twenty-nine employers/exhibitors and 155 customers participated.

The One Stop Northern Kentucky, Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce – Veteran Service Subcommittee, Goodwill Industries Special Projects, and National College held the second annual Northern Kentucky Veterans Job Fair on March 22. In addition, veterans were provided on-site résumé service. Despite inclement weather, there were 72 organizations and businesses and approximately 300 job seekers.

The Prestonsburg OET office recently hosted or participated in several successful job fairs. On April 4 and 11, representatives from The Minserco Company of Mt. Sterling conducted job fairs at the Prestonsburg office. Approximately 30 individuals were hired by the company. On April 10, the Prestonsburg OET hosted a job fair. ACS of Pikeville was seeking customer service representatives. OET staff assisted with skills testing and the application and referral process. Several jobseekers were selected by the company to participate in further evaluation.

In the Somerset area, the Casey County OET office held a one-day job fair on April 3 for NESCO. April 4, the Somerset Career Center held a job fair in Clinton County. Fourteen employers and 150 applicants participated. The Five Star Food Service held a one-day, in-house job fair on April 18 in the Wayne County office. Five Star is the new Food Service for Equity Group, LLC, the largest employer in Clinton County.

## Upcoming job fairs

### **June 4, 2007: 1 - 4 p.m., Eastern Time**

*Florence One Stop, Main Conference Room  
8020 Veterans Memorial Dr., Florence*

### **June 7, 2007: 1 - 4 p.m., Eastern Time**

*Covington One Stop, Second Floor  
320 Garrard Street, Covington*

Contact OET Veterans Unit: Ken Woche, Mike Fry or Tom Schweinzer (859) 292-6666 in Covington or Rob Walker (859) 371-0808 in Florence.

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### **June 7, 2007: 1 - 6 p.m., Central Time**

*James E. Bruce Convention Center  
303 Conference Center Drive, Hopkinsville*

Contact Vonda Gates, Christian County Economic Development Council, or Becki Wells, Hopkinsville-Christian County Chamber of Commerce (270) 885-1499.

## Recent staffings

**February** - Representatives of the new Huddle House interviewed prospective employees at the Gateway Career Center of Morehead. The career center has referred over 100 individuals. As of Feb. 22, Huddle House had interviewed 98 and hired 48. Opening in April, the company plans to employ 60.

H & W Management Company met with the Pikeville OET, Pike County JobSight and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) - Pikeville Campus to discuss staffing of the new Hampton Inn. The 123-room facility will be located in downtown Pikeville and is scheduled to open later this summer. Approximately 40 employees will be hired.

The Ashland Career Center recently assisted the Tractor Supply Store with its recruitment and hiring needs. Applications were accepted Jan. 17 – Feb. 16, 2007. The employer conducted interviews at the career center February 12 -16. They plan to hire about 50 employees.

**March** - The Ashland Career Center took 90 applications for Mansbach Metal. The company plans to hire five individuals.

The Ashland Career Center accepted applications for AK Steel for Summer Relief Production Workers at the Coke Plant. As of March 23, the center had taken 165 applications. The company plans to hire 10 workers.

In Madisonville, Malone Staffing interviewed 40 customers for 10 potential hires. MPW, an industrial cleaning business, interviewed 38 customers for 15 potential hires. Mattingly Associates, a trucking company, interviewed 19 people and hired two.

Somerset OET office took UGN, Inc. applications for production workers. Seventy additional jobs were announced for the Somerset plant, bringing the total number of employees to 225.

## Louisville in-house interviews

**June 6, 2007: 9 a.m. - Noon**

PMI - Will interview for production workers, warehouse occupations, and clerical positions.

**June 11, 2007: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

CAESAR'S - Will interview for gaming occupations, hotel openings, and restaurant positions.

Contact Mary Keltee for PMI or Gary Wise for CAESAR'S at (502) 595-4309 or by e-mail at [mary.keltee@ky.gov](mailto:mary.keltee@ky.gov) or [gary.wise@ky.gov](mailto:gary.wise@ky.gov). OET, 600 W. Cedar St., Louisville, KY 40202.

## Recent change in tax credit helps (continued)

The WOTC is a federal program administered in Kentucky by the Office of Employment and Training. It assists certain groups of individuals obtain jobs by giving employers an incentive to hire them. The incentive is a significant credit against federal taxes owed.

In addition to ex-felons, the program assists welfare, food stamp, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients; veterans and persons with disabilities; and youth who live in federal empowerment zones and enterprise and renewal communities. For most of these groups the amount of the tax credit can be as much as \$2400 per eligible hire, based on wages paid and the number of hours worked.

For more information about the WOTC program, contact Barbara Gilley, state WOTC coordinator, or other program staff at (502) 564-7456.

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

*Insider* is published quarterly by the Office of Employment & Training. Submit story ideas to:

Corline Schnitzen

275 East Main Street, 2 – WB,  
Frankfort, KY 40621

Telephone 502/564-3752, Fax 502/564-7452

E-mail [CorlineE.Schnitzen@ky.gov](mailto:CorlineE.Schnitzen@ky.gov)