

# SLATE Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. LOUIS AGENCY ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT



Francis G. Slay, Mayor



Spring 2011 Issue

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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SLATE Update is the quarterly newsletter produced by the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) for our staff, partners and friends.

ST. LOUIS AGENCY ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT  
**SLATE**  
MISSOURI CAREER CENTER  
DOWNTOWN • CENTRAL WEST END

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**By Michael K. Holmes** — As workforce development professionals, it sometimes seems we live in a world of numbers. On a regular basis we track unemployment statistics, WIA outcomes, job retention rates, earnings (current and potential), number of customers served, average costs and a host of other measurable indicators. Make no mistake, these are important and highly useful figures, whether we are rating past performance or planning ahead.

From time to time I think it's beneficial to consider our effect beyond numbers on a page. SLATE serves approximately **24,000** individuals at our Missouri Career Centers each year. As we know, our customers run across the full spectrum. Some are recent college graduates, others, by choice or circumstance, dropped out of high school. Some have never been employed, others are dislocated workers with decades of experience in such fields as advanced manufacturing. We do our best to serve everyone, whether they are a youth searching for their first job or a returning ex-offender. There is no such thing as a cookie-cutter, standardized approach — the unique qualities and contributions each individual brings to the table are our foremost consideration.

Employment searches and unemployment can be a stressful and challenging time for anyone, whatever their background. When SLATE helps someone get back on track, and connects him or her to a fulfilling career path that offers opportunities for future growth, that individual will likely be exited from our system. However, the positive, intangible results of our efforts, on behalf of that jobseeker and their family members, children, friends and colleagues, and to our whole community, can last a lifetime.

Sincerely yours,



## **MAYOR WELCOMES ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF EDUCATION**

The Mayor's Commission on Children, Youth and Families welcomed a special guest on February 23, 2011. Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier has served as the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) since October 2009. She leads the department's efforts and oversees 11 grant programs totaling approximately \$1.9 billion. OVAE supports a systemic approach to preparing students for high-growth careers through partnerships among secondary, postsecondary education and training, and business and industry.

The genesis of this important event came about when Dr. Dann-Messier met SLATE Executive Director Michael Holmes at a conference in Washington, D.C. As a result, she

became keenly interested in our community's innovative workforce development collaborations and agreed to include St. Louis City on her itinerary. The visit was part of a national conversation to inform reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act, which provides over \$1 billion to all 50 states.

At Forest Park Community College, the Assistant Secretary met with Mayor Francis G. Slay and dozens of members of his Commission on Children, Youth and Families. Dr. Dann-Messier perceptively guided and moderated an in-depth session that examined the viewpoints, best practices and challenges experienced by the many stakeholders present. "I'm very impressed with what you've achieved here," stated Dr. Dann-Messier toward the end of the discussion. "I've conversed with city leaders around the nation and St. Louis is definitely ahead of

the pack." She also emphasized the Obama administration's willingness to work across organizational boundaries to achieve results.

The Mayor's Commission on Children, Youth and Families works to ensure that every child in the City of St. Louis receives a safe, healthy and enriched childhood that helps them reach their full potential. SLATE Executive Director **Michael Holmes**, a member of the Commission, was pleased to attend the dialogue between Assistant Secretary Dann-Messier and our community's youth service providers. Deputy Director **Kelley Bernardi** and Youth Services Manager **Alice Prince** also attended on behalf of SLATE.

## **CAREER JOB FAIR HELD FOR VETERANS**

Show-Me Heroes, part of the Missouri Division of Workforce Development, is Governor Nixon's initiative showcasing Missouri businesses that are willing and eager to hire returning veterans. The Governor has publicly stated that the unique skills and advanced training possessed by veterans make them ideal candidates for a variety of job openings. SLATE Missouri Career Center Workshop, Business Development and Veteran Services staff jointly developed and presented 3 sessions for veteran job seekers transitioning to civilian life. On Saturday, January 22, a *Show-Me Heroes Career Fair* took place at the Millennium Student Center on the University of Missouri St. Louis campus. The three workshop topics were:



**Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier addresses the Mayor's Commission on Children, Youth and Families and local community representatives.**

1. *Networking and the Job Search* – Participants were encouraged to look at networking as a vehicle to connect with employers’ decision-makers. Networking tips, handouts summarizing network expansion strategies, and savvy ways to connect with new opportunities were all provided.



**Mark Kukiz (left) listens to advice from Andy Minor, a career transition specialist for Boeing, at the Show-Me Heroes Career Fair for Veterans.**

2. *Writing Your Sales Pitch* – The participants were shown how to develop a unique, professional, and memorable 30-second sales pitch. By identifying key skills and being able to articulate them concisely, job seekers gained experience on how to make a positive first impression while sharing with employers exactly what they have to offer.

3. *Ace The Interview* – Job seekers were shown how to prepare for and handle interviews in today’s job market. They learned to properly address difficult/potentially touchy questions regarding past employment experiences or barriers to employment, along with appropriate attire, thank-you letters, and follow-up contacts.

The event generated interest from the local media, and resulted in high turn out for the businesses and job seekers. Overall, **46** exhibitors participated (41 employers) and **284** job seekers (170 veterans) benefited from the event.

**SLATE HELPS 99ERS THROUGH BOUNCEBACK “BOOT CAMP”**

The economic upheaval in recent years has affected millions of Americans in professional trades who through no fault of their own have found their careers stalled in mid-stride. After nearly two years of unsuccessful job hunting, these individuals can feel fatigued, frustrated and forgotten.

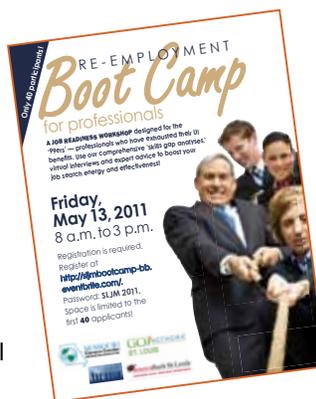
On May 13, SLATE co-hosted an all-day *St. Louis Job Market Boot Camp* specifically targeting the 99ers — dislocated workers who are nearing the end of their Unemployment Insurance benefits. The event focused on emerging non-traditional job-seeking methods:

Cloud computing, LinkedIn profiles, Optimal Resume, and virtual interviewing with

Human Resources staff in specific industries. Useful workshops on overcoming the “I’m Overqualified” syndrome and the national media’s sometimes exaggerated negative coverage were also offered to the 16 participants.

*The BounceBack Boot Camp* was a joint effort between SLATE, the St. Louis County Career Centers, the RCGA, the Go! Network and the Human Resource Management Association of Greater

St. Louis. SLATE’s own **Frank Alaniz** and **Bob Petrich** were among the Boot Camp facilitators. They expressed hope that the Boot Camp for professionals will be offered on a bi-monthly basis.



*“You saved a life today.”*

~OMAR, BOOT CAMP PARTICIPANT



**Michael Holmes** (*right*)  
speaks at the **Workforce Day  
of Action Open House.**

**WORKFORCE DAY OF ACTION**

Statewide, Thursday, March 24 was the designated day to discuss the future of Workforce Development. Locally, the special guests who attended from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., were **John W. Scates**, Administrative Staff for Senator Roy Blunt; **Mattie C. Moore**, Administrative Staff Deputy Director for Senator Claire McCaskill; and **James P. McHugh**, District Director for Congressman Russ Carnahan.

**Michael Holmes** opened the proceedings by summarizing the significant increase in demand for Career Center services since he assumed his role as SLATE’s Executive Director in 2008, and the many ways our agency contributes to economic development, both in the City of St. Louis and regionally. A Q&A session followed with WIB members, SLATE staff and guests from education and training partners. Shortly thereafter, Site Manager **Donny Carroll** led the entire group on a guided tour of the Central West End Career Center.

During the discussion, Mr. McHugh commented on the importance of organizations like SLATE getting their message out. “In football, the quarterback gets all the press, but it’s the defense that wins games...and that’s how I think of workforce development”, he commented. The Workforce Day of Action was an important step in increasing public understanding of the critical role played by SLATE and other Career Centers.

**LOCAL EMPLOYER  
PROMOTES SLATE**

On April 28, 2011, *Habitata Building Products, LLC* – the maker of Halcyon Shades – sponsored a networking event that promoted the SLATE Business Development Department.

The event, titled *Spring Fling Networking Thing*, took place at Habitata’s

office at 1600 S. 39th Street, St. Louis, MO 63110 and gathered approximately **40** business representatives interested in networking and learning about SLATE’s services.

During the event, Habitata’s owners and hiring managers shared their valuable experiences working with SLATE’s Business Development Department and introduced SLATE to their peers.

As a result of this referral, SLATE’s Business Development Department received six new business contacts and 30 small business owners became aware of the no-cost products and services available to them at SLATE.

***Congratulations  
and Thanks!!***  
to the following SLATE staff:

*Retirement*  
**Betty Cowthon** - in April, 2011  
after 37 years of service

*40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*  
**Kenneth White** - in April, 2011

*5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*  
**Cynthia Vernon** - in May, 2011

# The Many Faces of Training

## Part III

# at SLATE

SLATE strives to provide the best job readiness programs possible to St. Louis area job seekers, but we don't do it alone. Existing and new partners play a critical role in many of the services provided to SLATE's customers. "We help other agencies with grants, training dollars, and identify appropriate individuals for their training programs. This type of partnership allows SLATE to upgrade the skills of our customers and leverage our Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training dollars. It's a win-win for everybody," said **Stacey Fowler**, SLATE's Adult Services Manager. This article will focus on the partnerships that help give job-seekers a competitive edge in today's market.

The U.S. Department of Labor and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) awarded **\$3.2** million dollars to the *United Auto Workers-Labor Employment and Training Corporation* (UAW-LETC). In August 2010, the *St. Louis Community College* and UAW-LETC formed a collaboration to provide training to displaced auto workers. "SLATE was initially asked to

assist UAW-LETC with recruitment of dislocated workers, adults, ex-offenders, veterans, people with disabilities who worked in the automotive field, but now any disadvantaged individual wanting to upgrade their skills is being recruited," said Fowler. Eligible participants are able to select from one of four accelerated training programs:

- Energy Technician fundamentals
- Environmental Hazardous Materials Technician
- Green Manufacturing Process Technician
- Hybrid/Electric Vehicle Maintenance.

An online Green Portal interest profiler helps participants explore their personalities to see if they are a fit for these growing career opportunities.

UAW-LETC's goal is to train **400** participants by June 2012. SLATE's Adult Services team has helped recruit over **42** individuals interested in entering these exciting new career paths of tomorrow and is working closely with UAW-LETC staff. "To help the UAW-LETC staff

maneuvers through our NGCC system and process, a SLATE point of contact was assigned," said Fowler.

Even though UAW-LETC wasn't required to work with the Career Centers, it quickly discovered the advantages of our partnership. "SLATE made a commitment to help the UAW-LETC recruit eligible participants who really are interested in one of the four training career paths," said Fowler.

The classes range from six to 16 weeks depending on the program and take place at the campuses of *St. Louis Community College*, *St. Louis University*, and *St. Charles Community College*. "Employers will be able to advance their Green initiatives and begin to restructure, reduce and conserve," said **Marla Roach**, a program coordinator.

SLATE's commitment to green technology job training will continue through another new partnership with *Better Family Life, Inc.* — a community-based agency with a long tradition of helping economically disadvantaged populations

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find ways out of poverty and into self-sufficiency through employment.

A **\$3.3** million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor's Pathways Out of

Poverty program is helping unemployed individuals with disabilities, high school dropouts and individuals with criminal records enter the workforce and secure jobs in the new clean-energy economy. SLATE is coordinating closely with *Better Family Life* to help recruit individuals into several different types of green training, including construction trades, home energy auditors, solar installation & design, and biofuels tech. The eligible participants must reside in specific zip codes in St. Louis City where the poverty rate is 15 percent or higher. Open Enrollment is on Tuesdays at 9 a.m. and on Wednesdays at 1 p.m., at the MET Center, 6347 Plymouth Ave., St. Louis. For more

information, call (314) 746-0810 (vendor) or **Stacey Fowler** at SLATE, [sfowler@stlworks.com](mailto:sfowler@stlworks.com).

While SLATE can help our community partners identify individuals who will participate in training programs, it relies on educational institutions for curriculum development, instructors and training facilities. For years, SLATE has sent customers interested in upgrading their skills to the *St. Louis Community College* which has a full set of training programs in a variety of different industries.

Recently, the Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA), five area community colleges and six workforce investment boards across the region entered into a partnership that resulted in the *Graduate! St. Louis Consortium*. The consortium targets three industries important to the St. Louis area – Healthcare, Information Technology and Green Industries through a **\$4.4** million Community Based Job Training grant awarded to SLATE from the DOL. This funding will allow an estimated **2,200** par-

ticipants to complete credentialed training, earn degrees and professional certification, and position them for high-paying positions in regional growth industries. Over the coming months all the Graduate St. Louis grant partners will offer numerous expanded training opportunities, with more information available through a dedicated website.

Fowler said her staff keeps a record of all those referred to free training. "If we refer someone, for example, to the green training, we use our tracking system, Toolbox II, to note which program the customer is participating in, so we know who to follow-up with for their progress," said Fowler.

A customer's journey might begin at SLATE before entering one of our many training partnerships, but SLATE continues to track their progress and ensure they are prepared for the next step in their career. Fowler: "They are still our customers. Even though they are going to a partner agency for training, most come back to us for help with their job search."

*"They are still our customers. Even though they are going to a partner agency for training, most come back for help with their job search."*

~STACEY FOWLER, SLATE ADULT SERVICES MANAGER

**FACE TO FACE: ST. LOUIS WIB MEMBER LYNN BEAUCHAINE**

**Lynn Beauchaine** was appointed to the St. Louis WIB in 2010 and currently serves on the Business Development Committee. She is president/owner of Lynn Beauchaine & Associates, Inc. and has over 35 years of experience in handling unemployment compensation and Human Resources issues for employers. She represents a small business with about 15 clients and helps to lower their unemployment taxes: "I spend every day helping companies save money and people to get jobs."

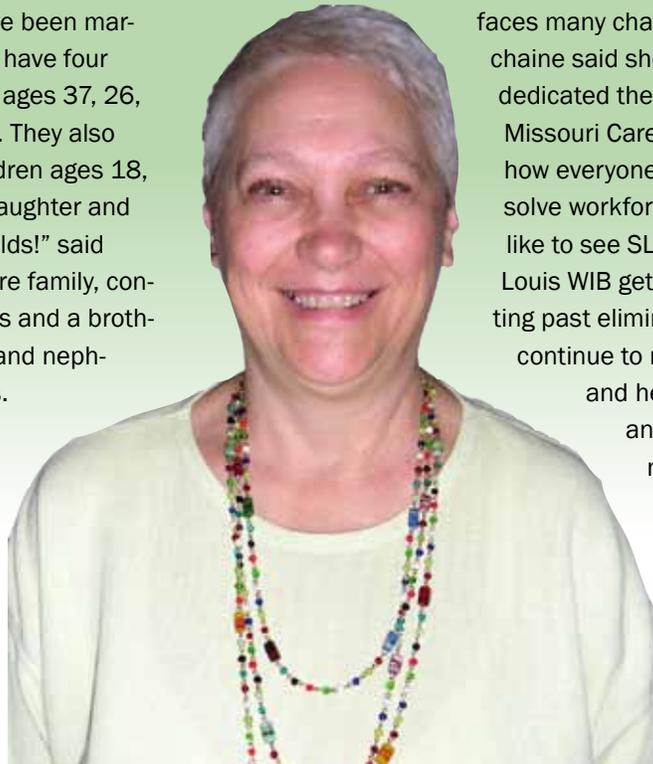
Her life is tightly connected to St. Louis City. Beauchaine was born and raised on Arsenal Street, a few blocks west of Anheuser-Busch and Gus's Pretzels. After she got married to her school sweetheart Lawrence Beauchaine, they moved across the street, staying in the same Benton Park Neighborhood. Lynne and her husband have been married for 37 years and have four children – three girls ages 37, 26, and 18 and a boy 22. They also have three grandchildren ages 18, 14 and 9. "Yes, my daughter and I both have 18 year-olds!" said Beauchaine. Her entire family, consisting of three sisters and a brother with many nieces and nephews, lives in St. Louis. Beauchaine started working when she was 16, first at Famous-Barr's credit department, then, after finishing high school,

for a CPA firm. In 1974 she joined Otto Faerber – a personnel company, and in 1993 took over the business creating Lynn Beauchaine & Associates, Inc.

Beginning in 1992, Beauchaine has been active in the State Steering Employer Committee (MEC) and worked on a task force for the Missouri Division of Workforce Development. In her role, she assisted state government to streamline the Missouri unemployment system and unemployment laws.

She said it is an honor to serve on the St. Louis WIB. "It is truly government and employers working together on workforce development and job training issues, helping businesses and regional economic development," said Beauchaine.

While admitting the St. Louis WIB faces many challenges, Beauchaine said she has seen how dedicated the staff of the SLATE Missouri Career Center is and how everyone works together to solve workforce issues. "I would like to see SLATE and the St. Louis WIB getting stronger! Getting past elimination of funding, continue to make a difference and help people get jobs and training they need, and help local companies be more profitable with strong economic growth," said Beauchaine.



## SLATE SNAPSHOTS

**1. Healthcare Event.** About 100 professionals gathered at SLATE's CWE location to hold courtesy interviews with the BJC HealthCare HR staff on April 14, 2011.

**2. Valuable Input.** Dettra Fields, BJC HealthCare HR specialist, examines James Blaze's interviewing skills.

**3. Partnership Expanded.** SLATE's Executive Director, Michael K. Holmes (*left*) and the St. Louis County WIB Executive Director, Gene Gorden (*right*), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) announcing a new partnership with the St. Louis County Department of Human Services' Business Development Department on April 26, 2011, before a group comprised of Business Development staff from both SLATE and St. Louis County at City Hall West.

**4. Relief For Joplin Tornado Victims.** As a result of SLATE Youth Services Department's organized effort, staff donated 1,500 bottles of water, mops, buckets, cleaning supplies, and toiletry items desperately needed by the people of Joplin.

