

SLATE Update

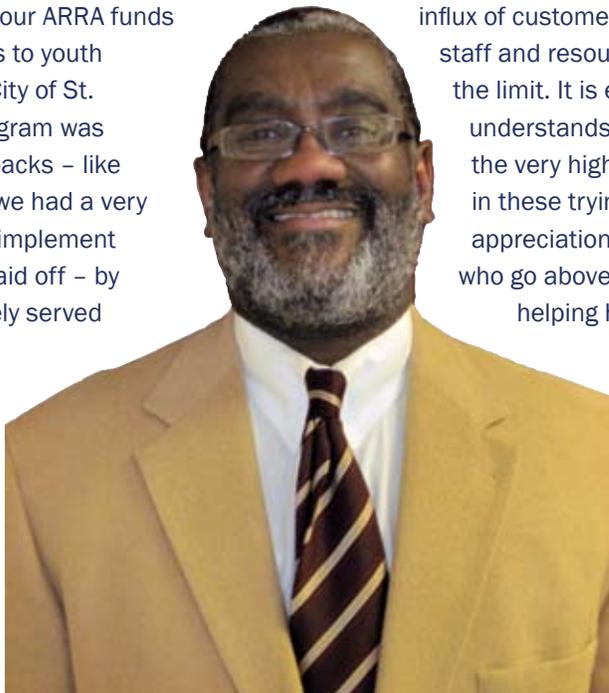
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. LOUIS AGENCY ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Changes for SLATE: Past, Present and Future

Looking back, the past several months have been marked by a series of major changes for the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE), and the entire nation. At the beginning of the year, we saw the inauguration of our nation's first African-American President. Shortly after, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was signed into law. SLATE rapidly implemented our ARRA funds to help provide summer jobs to youth ages 14 to 24 through the City of St. Louis UrbanFORCE. The program was not without its share of setbacks – like every WIB across the state we had a very limited time to plan for and implement our programs. Our efforts paid off – by September we had effectively served over 1,800 participants. UrbanFORCE introduced young men and women to the world of work and helped to build the workforce St. Louis needs. We can all take pride in these impressive numbers.



The 'Big Move' to our new location at City Hall West only added to our busy summer. I'm happy to report that the foresight of our Move Committee, along with the helpful cooperation of all our staff, made the transition a smooth and painless process.

As a result of the economic recession and the rapid influx of customers, it's fair to say that SLATE's staff and resources have been pushed to the limit. It is equally clear that everyone understands the importance of maintaining the very highest level of customer service in these trying times. My sincerest appreciation goes out to all staff members who go above and beyond to extend a helping hand to every customer who walks through our doors.

Soon, more major changes will affect not only SLATE but every Workforce Investment Act region across the state. Governor Nixon has mandated that Missouri's Next-Generation Career

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

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Centers be in place by the start of the next fiscal year, July 2010. Additional information on this new service delivery model can be found within this issue, but suffice to say that in the months ahead I invite all SLATE staff to help eliminate organizational silos and cross train across areas of responsibility.

Positive signals have begun to peek through the cloud of economic strain and unemployment that has hung over our nation these many past months. The stock market and the financial sector appear to have stabilized. The pace of layoffs has begun to slow. The Missouri Department of Economic Development recently reported a drop in the state's unemployment rate and the addition of 4,000 jobs, including nearly 1,500 in the St. Louis region. However, even when the recession

is officially declared over, it will take time for the job market to fully recover. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis warns that of the 6 million jobs our nation has lost, some may never come back. Now more than ever, SLATE needs to extend a helping hand to those who have suffered from the fallout of this crisis.

Looking forward, I encourage everyone to think seriously about ways to develop, merge, and advance the ways we serve both job seekers and businesses. Each of you contribute to our success, and help unlock the opportunities that so many St. Louisans are searching for.



Michael K. Holmes

Special thank you for making the Open House a success goes to:

Open House Committee

Mary Bell,
TANF Project Liaison
Bonnie Mireles, Business Development

Volunteers

Tondelaya Evans
Coran Hanks
Tiffany Manning
Elmedina Mujakovic
Kim Neske
Jim Sahaida
Cassandra Williams
Entire Youth Services Department



The Open House, held on November 13, 2009, showed our new location at City Hall West to more than 65 local business professionals, community leaders and City officials.

URBANFORCE: GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Alice Prince, SLATE's Youth Services Manager, accepted the Excellence in Customer Service Award from Governor Jay Nixon on September 10, 2009. The presentation took place at the annual Governor's Conference on Economic Development, held at the Hyatt Regency in downtown St. Louis.

The Excellence in Customer Service Award is presented to an individual who exceeds customer expectations and incorporates innovative service strategies that result in career enhancement for clients. Specifically, the Missouri Department of Economic Development recognized the success of the City of St. Louis UrbanFORCE, part of the Next-Generation Jobs Team. Alice was cited for her efforts to expand the scope of SLATE's youth programs as well as her ability to motivate and inspire both staff and customers.

UrbanFORCE, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, found summer employment for approximately 1,800 youth in 2009, a higher total than any other such program in the state. The DED was especially impressed by SLATE's ability to rapidly roll out the program, despite a very tight schedule. The prestigious Excellence in Customer Service Award recognizes the efforts of Youth Services and everyone at SLATE who tackled each and every challenge to ensure the success of UrbanFORCE. Congratulations to all!

WIB MEMBERS AND RCGA PURSUE COOPERATIVE ACTION

On October 13, 2009 an important meeting took place at the Regional Chamber and Growth Association's (RCGA) Regional Collaboration Center. Leaders from four local and the Missouri State Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) gathered to discuss critical issues



SLATE's Alice Prince accepting the Customer Service Award from Governor Jay Nixon.

and explore opportunities for future collaboration.

WIB member Len Toenjes convened and chaired the meeting. Jeff Serocke, Chair of the St. Louis WIB, Michael Holmes, SLATE's Executive Director, and Donny Carroll, Site Manager at SLATE's Central Career Center, were also in attendance. The St. Louis County WIB, St Charles County WIB, the WIB for Madison-Bond Counties in Illinois, and the Missouri State Workforce Investment Board were likewise all represented.

Rod Nunn, Vice Chancellor for Workforce and Community Development at the St. Louis Community College, summarized the valuable data gathered in the "State of the Region's Workforce" report. Dick Fleming, President and CEO of the RCGA, made a presentation on two important initiatives: the Regional Talent Initiative and the St. Louis Climate Prosperity Project.

An additional agenda item concerned improving outcomes for both area jobseekers and businesses. Among the specific projects under consideration: the development of a streamlined real-time labor market data collection tool that allows workforce development

professionals to accurately track the regional employment landscape. The regional need for a trained and educated workforce was especially emphasized as a way to not only increase the qualifications of jobseekers, but also as the key resource that companies considering relocation seek out.

Shortly afterwards, Jeff Serocke commented on the meeting to his fellow St. Louis WIB members. “The meeting was historic – a real opportunity to work together to advance regional goals, and find solutions to regional issues”, he said. “Len and I believe that this is the first of many such productive meetings”.

Be part of Missouri’s Next Generation Career Center Team!



As you know, the Missouri Department of Workforce Development is planning to restructure the current system and establish

Next Generation Career Centers (NGCC) by July 1, 2010. Donny Carroll, Site Manager at SLATE’s Central Career Center, and Kelley Bernardi, SLATE’s Deputy Director, chair the transition and encourage SLATE employees to submit ideas and suggestions to one of the team chair listed below:

- Policy Alignment — Stacey Fowler, Chair and Sam Hurd, Co-Chair.
- Customer Flow — Wanda Summers, Chair and Lynette White
- Product Services — Bonnie Mireles, Chair and Malinda Graves-Sampson, Co-Chair

THE HEART AND SOUL OF REOS: HELPING EX-OFFENDERS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

The Re-Entry One Stop (REOS) Career Center was initiated earlier this year through collaboration between SLATE, Missouri Probation & Parole, and U.S. Probation (Eastern District of Missouri). The office is located at 3901 N. Union Boulevard in the old GM plant building, adjacent to the New Beginnings Drug and Rehabilitation Center. REOS functions very much like other career centers in the area, with the exception of its primary goal — to reduce recidivism. The focus on ex-offenders is a needed one and contributes to the well-being of the entire community.

To assist clients in transitioning into the world of work, REOS’ in-house services include: case management, skills and vocational training, resume writing assistance, computer skill assistance, job readiness training, GED attainment and adult literacy. Employer incentives are offered to businesses.

The staff at REOS is comprised of a group of multi-talented professionals that offer unique services to this population under the direction of Bennie West. They have a passion for what they do, and expect the best effort from their clients because they give their very best. They make a special effort to ensure that REOS clients experience a comfortable environment that establishes a sense of belonging again. REOS services are recommended to ex-offenders who are committed to starting over, and to their immediate family members residing in the same household.

Kelly Chase, a member of AmeriCorps, interviewed **Raymont Avant**, one of the many ex-offender customers REOS has already served:



**Melanie Stokes,
REOS Career
Counselor, at work.**

we do not want to go back to the culture we came from. There is no other center like this in St. Louis. It is truly a one-stop. You don't need to look any farther.

KC: What do you think you have gained from REOS?

RA: REOS gives me hope that I will have a second chance to be a productive, constructive, tax-paying member of society and not let my past dictate my future.

KC: Why do you come back every week?

RA: I come back every week because it is necessary to be persistent in order to gain full-time employment. This is my objective, and I am determined to achieve it.

KC: How is REOS different from other career centers?

RA: REOS is different because this is a center geared specifically toward the ex-offender population. Here the staff is aware of how to market this population to employers. We are given the opportunity to work with society and not against it. We are all here because

KC: Can you think of an example of a staff member going above and beyond the call of duty to help you?

RA: Scott Merriweather and Charles Barnes will call me at home to tell me when they come across a job lead they think is in line with my skills. I appreciate that gesture. I feel that they are looking out for me.

KC: What are your career goals? How do you think REOS will help you meet these goals?

RA: My goal is to achieve full-time employment. What I need is an income so I can live the American way of life and be a productive member of society. REOS will help me meet these goals because they have gotten to know me and what jobs I am right for. They also communicate with employers. Also, the fact that I have attended workshops and receive resume writing assistance prepares me for the tough competition out there.



- For the month of November 2009, the St. Louis Central Career Center counted 9,081 customer contacts. SLATE on Market Street counted 6,200. Total: 15,000.
- SLATE Carondelet Career Center at Lyon@Blow Community Education Full Service School now employs two staffers: Daniel Nickelberry (Mondays) and Sonya Bailey (Wednesdays).
- The Business Services Department has officially changed its name to the Business Development Department. SLATE's Business Service Representatives have changed their titles to Business Developers.



Boeing's F/A-18 Hornet

SLATE ON THE WEB

In a continuous effort to better tell our story, SLATE is embracing new 21st century technologies. At the behest of Executive Director, Michael Holmes, SLATE has opened both a Facebook and a Twitter account. This new initiative, called "iSLATE" or "interactive SLATE", will spend equal time on both e-marketing approaches.

Facebook is a way for SLATE to directly connect with members of the community in an effort to reach a broader audience. The Facebook account will be complement our existing website at www.stlworks.com. Utilizing Facebook's many applications, SLATE will be able to quickly share news articles related to the recession and job market, client success



stories and general SLATE news and events. The more people SLATE can reach this way, the easier it will be to strengthen our mission and spread our stories.



Twitter, on the other hand, offers two new capacities. First, the Twitter account will be constantly updated with job leads from Missouri Career Source, allowing SLATE clients to have rapid, easy access to new opportunities. Second, the Twitter account will be used to stay in more direct contact with the Board of Alderman, City Wards, and other local stakeholders.

Follow SLATE on Facebook at SLATE CareerCenter and on Twitter at twitter.com/slatestl

Together, these two accounts will guide SLATE through the sometimes murky waters of

cyberspace. However, iSLATE needs help in order to tell SLATE's story. iSLATE needs staff from every department and from each Career Center to begin sending success stories and other relevant information to ISLATE@stlworks.com. While it may only take one person to post this information, it will take all of us to fully realize the potential of these exciting new communication tools.

THE ST. LOUIS AEROSPACE INSTITUTE'S TOUR OF BOEING INTEGRATED DEFENSE SYSTEMS

Boeing Integrated Defense Systems (IDS), the second-largest employer in St. Louis with a total workforce of 16,000, has partnered closely with the St. Louis Community College to screen and train potential employees. They have been keenly interested in providing the skill sets required to succeed in the aerospace industry to the local workforce. Last year, the Department of Labor awarded a \$1.2 million grant to the St. Louis Community College to build upon the success of this program and establish the St. Louis Aerospace Institute. Over the next two years, the Aerospace Institute will create career pathways into this exciting field for over 400 St. Louis area residents. Among the Institute's partners are Boeing, GKN Aerospace, Kemco Aerospace, the St. Louis County WIB, Better Family Life, SLATE, Ritenour and Pattonville School Districts.

Boeing staff members were gracious enough to arrange a full tour for the St. Louis Community College and its partners. Keith Mullen attended on behalf of SLATE. The group was treated to a guided tour of Boeing's 'factory floor', an interconnected set of cavernous buildings filled with the sounds of sheet metal presses, drills and rivet guns. Here, skilled Boeing employees assemble advanced aircraft such as the F-15 Eagle, the F/A-18 Hornet, and the C-17 Globemaster III military transport. Boeing impresses

on a number of levels, but the following observations might be of particular interest to customers thinking of pursuing a career in aerospace manufacturing:

- **Hand Toled.** For the most part, automation is kept to a minimum in favor of the tried and true hands-on approach. At Boeing, there simply is no substitute for human skill, judgment and experience!

- **Precision.** The high performance aircraft Boeing produces allow very little margin for error. The components they machine and assemble are held to a 3 parts in 10,000 level of variance — patience and attention to detail are most definitely virtues.

- **Continuous Improvement.** More than a slogan, at Boeing each employee is seen as a partner in the ongoing process to improve efficiency and reduce time and costs. For example, suggestions from staff who install the wiring on the F/A-18 helped reduce total build time from 25 to 18 days.

- **Computer Literacy.** Gone are the days when aircraft assemblers would refer to original blueprints. Now detailed, very specific 3-D instructions for each component are available electronically. The supervisor of Boeing's Craftmanship Center for advanced training informed the tour group that familiarity with information technology is the #1 skill Boeing looks for.

- **Diversity.** The Boeing personnel present on the day of our tour were truly a cross-section of ages and backgrounds: some graduates of Parks College while others were ex-military. Perhaps surprisingly in an industry often seen as male-dominated, a substantial number of



Boeing State-of-the-Art Assembly Line

workers on the floor (20% or more) were women.

Boeing staff pointed out that the components used are manufactured by a wide array of subcontractors. These companies generally offer many more job opportunities than those available at Boeing. A special thanks goes out to Alan Parker and the many other senior staff at Boeing who took time from their busy schedules to ensure a thoroughly informative and enjoyable behind the scenes tour.

The St. Louis Aerospace Institute will put in place a comprehensive set of training opportunities, from Industry Fundamentals such as blue print reading, technical documentation and safety, to skills in metal structures, electrical and mechanical components, fabrication and installation of composite materials, and courses designed to meet the needs of the suppliers who manufacture sub-assemblies. It can help prepare SLATE customers for current and future careers in all aspects of this cutting edge industry. Additional information on the Aerospace Institute can be obtained from [Keith Jostes](mailto:kjostes@stlcc.edu) at 314-853-3256 or kjostes@stlcc.edu.



Boeing's F-15 Eagle

A LOOK BACK AT SLATE'S CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY PARTY

On December 11, SLATE Staff gathered together for the 2009 Christmas Holiday Party. Servers from Sweetie Pie Catering provided a delectable holiday banquet that consisted of lasagna, meatballs, fruit salad, sides, and three flavors of chicken wings. SLATE staff filled the nearby dessert table with cakes, cookies and pastries of every description. The party theme was *Let It Snow*. A group of dedicated volunteers worked hard to make sure SLATE's offices were appropriately decorated for the occasion. Twisted Gift Exchange was followed by Motown tunes and spirited karaoke. A new addition, *Santa's Workshop*, gave everyone the chance to create their own handcrafted holiday keepsake. A total of 73 SLATE staff members from every department attended. Congratulations to everyone who helped make the 'Let It Snow' Holiday Spectacular such a success!



PARTY HIGHLIGHTS
Clockwise top: Coddy and Zeinab, Lunch is served, Twisted Gift Exchange. Bottom left: Bennie shows off his bling to Mr. Holmes



I had a great time and it was fun to be with everyone. The food was Delicious and the karaoke was hilarious!

~Kelley Bernardi

I don't remember the last time I had that much fun at work...The Karaoke was hilarious. I laughed until my cheeks were sore. It was heart warming and I look forward to more parties.

~Zeinab Mohamed Halo

