

Community Coordinator Report

Butte County

JULY – SEPTEMBER
2015

Celebrating current and future
prosperity...

Oroville Economic Development Corp. (OEDCO) Annual BBQ

On Wednesday, August 12, 2015, the Oroville Economic Development Corp. (OEDCO) held its annual BBQ and

networking event. Not really a business meeting, but an opportunity for businesses owners, staff members and others to mix and mingle. Also present were Representative Doug LaMalfa and Assembly Member James Gallagher, sharing information relative to North state developments - of interest to all attendees. The BBQ this year was held at Riffles Campground and Recreation Area - beautiful spot - and catered by Oroville's Lots O' Java (great food!). The event was well attended with 200 attendees representing Oroville and other Butte County businesses.



This OEDCO event felt like a very relaxed and upbeat celebration of current and future prosperity.

A helping hand towards California's Drought Conditions

The Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. was awarded federal/state emergency grant funds to help provide public and non-profit entities temporary workers for drought related projects. AFDW recruited temporary workers to assist these entities with drought related projects. Eligibility requirements included layoffs, hours reduced due to drought conditions or having been unemployed 15 out of the last 26 weeks and are living in a drought affected area.



Chico Creek Nature Center was one of six worksites that was identified and contracted with for this project. The Nature Center serves as the official information and education center for Bidwell Park. Offering the public; park maps and directions, guided walks, family programs, camps and a chance to meet our collection of living animals. They are also a resource for regional schools providing many standards aligned field trip options and professional development programs including Project WILD and Project Learning Tree for teachers and informal educators alike. The Center also affords many

volunteer opportunities to the community as well as internships for local college students.

The Nature Center is located in Lower Bidwell Park along 8th street. Over the years the grounds have been overgrown with invasive brush such as English Ivy, Hackberry and Himalayan Black Berry. It was crucial to remove these plants in order to release the water source back into the grounds for some of the natives such as the Elderberry Bush and Oak Trees. Invasive Plant Chair, Sue Mason educated the crew of six on how to identify and properly remove invasive plants. Mason was also able to get some additional tools that would increase productivity for the crew throughout this temporary assignment. Executive Director of the Nature Center, Caitlin Reilly along with Crew Leader, Tiara Phillips walked the Nature Center and mapped out the areas to be addressed and focused their efforts first on fire hazardous areas next to the Nature Center Building.

The drought project crew worked just over 1,153 hours as of mid-September and removed invasive brush, and dry grass to help reduce the fire hazard surrounding the nature center and for native plants to grow. Although the crew came from a diverse background they all have been long term unemployed and have enjoyed watching the transformation of the Nature Center since they started this temporary drought assignment.

"This is an unprecedented effort that is having a huge impact on our property. We are thrilled to be able to participate. The crew is not only making our property safer through their work but they are also clearing out many invasive species and making way for much needed habitat restoration", said Caitlin Reilly when asked about this temporary drought project.



Educational partnerships:
BUTTE COLLEGE
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO
BUTTE COUNTY ROP
OROVILLE ADULT EDUCATION

Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. partners with Butte College, CSU Chico, Butte County Regional Occupational Program and Oroville Adult Education to provide Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) assistance to their students every semester.

Career Center Advisors provided orientations of AFWD services to Butte College Allied Health occupational programs to over 200 Butte College students in nine different programs; Law Enforcement/Fire Fighter Academies, Registered Nursing 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th semester, Licensed Vocational Nursing, Certified Nursing Assistants, Respiratory Therapy, Computer Science, Heavy Equipment and Welding. Students can then determine the necessity of financial assistance and job search services upon completion of their Certificates.

Students began calling, emailing and dropping in at the Chico and Oroville America's Job Center of California requesting WIOA assistance as early as July, in preparation for the fall semester. As of this report, Butte County has enrolled 112 for AFWD assistance. Students have been supported with a variety of necessary requirements associated with their particular career program.

Students who have committed to these occupational skills programs are capable of entering gainful employment upon completion. Some programs require costly testing and Licensure, where fees are not covered by financial aid and often pose a hardship for students during their last semester. AFWD sponsored eligible candidates with WIOA training funds, assisting them in completing their trainings and obtaining the necessary licensures required to work in their new professions. AFWD, Inc. Career Center Advisors are pleased to report a 92% success rate for those enrolled in training programs.

“92% success rate for those enrolled in occupational training programs delivered by our local educational providers.”

Butte Community College Welding Program



The Butte Community College Welding Program, is an award winning program. They partner with several local High Schools that have AG Welding programs. If students have not attended a High School with this type of program to complete the required studies, they may take the prerequisites at Butte College. This program is a one year certificated program. Students also have the option of earning an AS degree in Welding Technology.

Students attend class Monday – Friday, from 7:30 am to 3:30-4pm. There are some weeks that they attend on Saturday's as well, generally to complete welding projects. There are workshops and classes they attend during the winter break. The College also partners with PG&E, for a six week program immediately after graduation in the spring to help students with specific types of welds pertinent to that industry. Students must maintain A's & B's in all of the Welding classes to be accepted by the PG&E Power Pathways program. After the students have completed all of their written exams at the end of the final semester and passed, they complete certain types of welds, such as: MIG, TIG, Stainless Steel, and Acetylene to receive State Certification for that application.

This past year, AFWD assisted 16 students in a class of approximately 35, with required textbooks and tools. To date, all students have obtained employment in various fields earning anywhere from \$16.00 per hour up to \$20 per hour to start. Considering most of these students are still in their late teens and early 20's, this is a tremendous opportunity for them to start in there careers.





OROVILLE ADULT EDUCATION CAREER & TECHNICAL CENTER

Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. youth students were all smiles graduation day at Oroville Adult Education Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) program. AFWD, Inc. youth staff, Noah Strong and Raechelle Villarreal, had three successful students: Elsiemae Frazier, Lucy Lor, and Christina Pollard. Two of these youth enrolled in the Youth program seeking education services for high school diploma/GED. Now, they are graduating from vocational training! Each of these young ladies completed 176 hours of course/clinical work. They traveled to facilities in Oroville and Paradise, where they received hands on experience and training from employed CNA's in each of the facilities and learned what it takes to be a CNA.

These youth plan on furthering their education to open more doors for themselves in the medical field while balancing their work lives. They each are very eager to begin working in the medical field working in the community impacting lives. The youth staff are very proud of their accomplishments that each youth has endeavored. Most of our youth are faced with barriers that could prevent these students from graduating, however, their motivation and dedication allowed them to persevere. They are bright young ladies who are going to make a difference in our community.

Congratulations, AFWD youth graduates!



artisan ~ designer ~ photographer

Quirky Creative

Alicia Meyer has been unemployed since July 5th, 2013 when she lost her job of 15 years as a Financial Planning Manager for the City of Chico. She attended a Rapid Response put on by AFWD on June 26th, 2013 at the City Offices. Her prior duties included supervision and production of annual budgets, supervision and training of payroll and investment staff, using financial software (IFAS), Excel, Access, and Adobe. Alicia did not feel she will be able to secure full-time work unassisted since the job search market had changed dramatically in the years she was employed, and she was earning an extremely generous salary from the City of Chico that would be hard to duplicate.



Alicia was eligible and Enrolled in MCX to utilize all available resources. An O*Net Assessment, in-depth interviewing and evaluation were conducted to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals. She was given an independent assessment to see where her interests were concentrated. She was also enrolled in “Element K” to strengthen her computer skills in Microsoft Office. Her resume was reviewed and the format updated to make her stand out. Alicia attended several of our in-house workshops including; resume, interview, and networking to sharpen her approach to job searching. After several months of job searching, Alicia realized that the job market for individuals with her skill set was relatively dried up. Businesses who used to employ or contract bookkeepers were now doing their own books with the help of do-it-yourself software like QuickBooks. Alicia decided to explore a new path. She met with a counselor from Butte College and settled on Multi- Media studies. She was re-assessed and found to have the interest as well as the transferrable skills to be successful in this training. In January of 2014, Alicia enrolled at Butte College and began her new career trajectory. Along the way, AFWD assisted Alicia with textbooks, cloud software, and other supportive services to ensure she was able to complete her studies successfully. In the summer of 2015, she launched her new business, “Quirky Creative,” A little of this, a little of that. “It's all about creating Art, crafts, designing, photographing. These are the things that fill my cup, and I love to share that joy with others.” ~Alicia Meyer, Owner. Alicia maintains an active presence on social media including Facebook, Etsy, Instagram, and an online photography portfolio where you can see her amazing photos. Alicia has provided products and services for weddings, reunions, and conventions in the form of photography, etched glassware, and customized “T” shirts. She has also provided vehicle decals for local businesses. She will be graduating in December of 2015 and is looking forward to being able to concentrate on her new business 100%.

Providing Pathways to Success...

Butte AFWD has partnered with the Department of Employment & Social Services (DESS) to administer the Skills Training Employment Program, commonly known as S.T.E.P. The Business Services team assists local businesses through this program by offering subsidized employment. Employers have the opportunity to train and provide job skills to an individual(s) while receiving a wage reimbursement for up to 6 months.

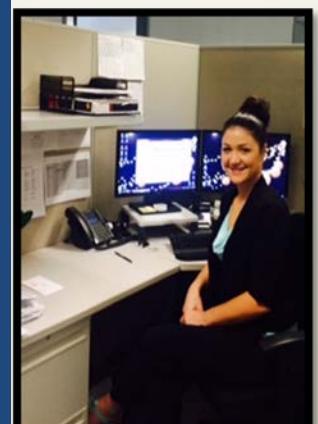
Through a networking community of Human Resource managers formed by multiple Chico employers, our business representatives were able to spread the word about the benefits of utilizing this program. One of the many employers that inquired was Associated Pension Consultants (APC) of Chico. A year ago, APC found itself in a period of transition and was trying to fill part time positions. After a few rounds of interviews from both the general public and our STEP pool, Michelle was chosen to start the training program.

Michelle began as an Office Assistant and was soon promoted to a Clerk 1 position working 25 hours a week. Her main duties include typing and proofing of documents. Michelle notes that the hardest part to get used to was the constant email communication! Michelle stated that what she liked best about the STEP program is that she was sent to three interviews quickly and all of the sudden it seemed she had a choice about her employment opportunities. Since this program was easy to use and very successful, APC continued to reach out to our Business Services team when in need of new staff.

Round two came this summer when another STEP participant Courtney was in search of a full time career path. From the initial interview, APC was ready to move forward with the same part time position that Michelle had started in. Courtney began work and quickly learned the duties of her job. With the confidence and knowledge she had learned in such a short time, a full time position was offered which she gladly accepted. Courtney stated that the best thing about APC is the professional comfortable environment and that the company is family friendly.

Employers such as Associated Pension Consultants and applicants with motivation such as Michelle and Courtney is what makes our program such a success. Our team is striving to place many more into similar training opportunities. Look for additional success stories to come in the following reports!

S.T.E.P. Program



Youth staff training

Three lucky employees at Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. participated in a Reentry Employment Specialist (RES) training on August 4 & 5, 2015 at the Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center in Elk Grove. Heather Alexander, Kim Keith and Raechelle Villarreal met with industry professionals from various law enforcement and community agencies to learn collaborative ways to job develop for clients that have justice system involvement. They discussed the importance of assessments to identify barriers which may require immediate intervention and to identify ongoing criminogenic risks and needs, as well as techniques and strategies that clients can use to become more employable. Topics included how to respond to questions about felony convictions at interviews, enhancing correctional clients' job readiness, and the importance of networking. There were strategies discussed regarding the importance of employer engagement including how to discuss the benefits to the employer of hiring those with criminal records.

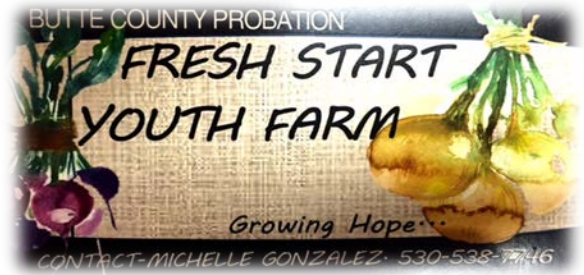
The discussions and information learned were relevant and timely; "In 2010 it is estimated that 19.8 million people representing 8.6% of the population of the United States have a felony conviction. This is almost double what it was in 1980."

(Source: <http://www.aegisjournal.com/felons-in-the-workforce>)

Alliance for Workforce Development is looking at bringing this certified Federal Bureau of Prisons training to Butte and Lassen counties in the future. The innovative tactics and best practices for working with clients with records will ensure we are giving them the most



Fresh Starts at the Fresh Start Youth Farm



The Butte County Youth team has been actively involved with the Juvenile Probation project, “Fresh Start Youth Farm”. Youth who are in Juvenile Hall or connected to the probation department can participate in the work at the garden. The garden started modestly with six raised beds in 2013, and is now almost an acre with various fruits and vegetables, all sold at a weekly on-site market.

AFWD and Juvenile Probation partnered for a two-part training on Hunter Irrigation systems. The participants completed one of Hunter’s online training modules, Skills 500, which covered basic electric and water usage principles, as well as how to start building an irrigation system. After the students completed the training, a representative from Hunter Irrigation came to the garden site and led an all-day hands-on training for the group. When they were done, the garden had a complete solar powered irrigation system,

installed entirely by youth volunteers. Certificates were earned by all who completed both training sections.

The newest addition to the Fresh Start Youth Farm is the Scholarship program. Youth who have worked a minimum number of hours in the garden, completed a set of pre-employment competencies, and have an interest in continuing their volunteer participation in the garden’s activities can apply and interview for a scholarship. The scholarships are funded by donations and garden sales.





AFWD America's Job Center of California Statistics

Butte County Visitors

17,387

AFWD Business Services

Business Served	436
Service Provided	1,303
Positions Filled	343
Training Assistance	71

Program Services

Total enrollments

Adult	92
Dislocated Worker	63
Youth	24
Employed	87

Unemployment Rate

Butte 6.9%	Nevada 5.2%
Lassen 6.4%	Plumas 7.6%
Modoc 7.3%	Sierra 6.5%



*Alliance For
Workforce Development, Inc.
Providing pathways to success*

A proud partner of



Chico Community Employment Center
2445 Carmichael Drive
Chico, CA 95928
(530) 895-4364

Oroville Community Employment Center
78 Table Mountain Blvd
Oroville, CA 95965
(530) 538-7301