



Submitted by Dianna Simar

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

Sierra Work Connection

306 First St. Loyalton

P.O. Box 709

Loyalton CA 96118

(530) 993-4295

[www.aworkforce.org](http://www.aworkforce.org)

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## We Are Here To Help

With the unemployment rate in Sierra County reaching over eighteen percent we are seeing a significant increase in foot traffic at Sierra Work Connection. News of our programs and services seems to have caught the attention of job seekers as well as employers. Often we are the first stop after hearing the news that they are being laid off. In a small community these are not just employees but neighbors and friends. The employer is every bit as upset at having to lay someone off as the person being let go. We hear repeatedly from employers that the hardest part of their job is letting someone go who has done nothing wrong. But in order to stay in business the owners are being forced to cut their staff to the absolute minimum. It is our hope that by being here for these employers now when they are making tough decisions, when times get better they will also call us for their future hiring and human resource needs.

In this economy when a job seeker enters our office they generally have no idea what the future holds for them. We are increasingly called upon to support these clients as they struggle to find their way in this uncertain time. The training we received as a Career Coach has proven invaluable for this task. The training taught us to be aware that this is an extremely difficult situation and our clients are depending on us to help get them through one of the toughest things they will face. Much of what we do now is to help the job seekers keep a positive attitude and persevere.



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## Loyalton High School Class of 2009

Loyalton High School has been organizing mock job interview workshops for its senior class for many years. This year the mock job interviews were held at Loyalton High School on February 5th. Dianna Simar, Resource Coordinator at the Sierra Work Connection, and Janelle Hardig, the Business Coordinator with the Alliance For Workforce Development, Inc. along with various other local businesses were invited to conduct interviews with this years graduating seniors. The students had the opportunity to interview with up to 5 "prospective employers". Each student answered a series of interview questions and were given feedback on their answers. The employers coached them on what they would like to hear and how they could "sell themselves" as the best candidate for the position.

It was amazing to see so many local business people taking the time from their jobs and businesses to volunteer their time for this workshop. It was also great to see the students so well prepared for this event. Each one had a resume and job application that they had been working on in their English class. Their answers were well prepared and they didn't have any problems even with the toughest questions. Each student was also dressed in business attire and looked very professional. It was evident that the students and their English teacher had spent many hours preparing for the event. These students are well on their way to being successful candidates for jobs they apply for in the future. Janet McHenry and Amy Phillipini are to be commended for the extensive preparation of these students.



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## Simple Fuels Bringing Biodiesel to Northeastern California

With California working to enhance the production and availability of renewable energy, a small start-up company in Chilcoot, CA is working diligently to bring their biodiesel plant into production this Spring.

According to the owner Jamie Lutch, [Simple Fuels](#) has completed the planning and engineering phases and currently in the final stages of construction. They plan on testing and commissioning in the next couple of months and then will move to the production phase of the business.

Members of the Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) team recently had the opportunity to tour the facility and talk to Jamie about Simple Fuels plans. During the meeting Jamie and Emily Edmonds, Process Engineer, introduced us to their biodiesel manufacturing operation, provided us with a brief history of the company and, outlined their plans for the future.

Some of the goals for Simple Fuels include:

- Full production, producing up to 5K gallons a day by June 2009
- Potential 24 hour operation depending on market
- Produce zero waste
- 2-6 new hires within 12 months

Simple Fuels now employees a total of three people and when the plant is in full production, they project that the company will need to hire and train two to six additional employees in the next 12 months.

The company has been in start up phase for the past four years and plans to be up and running with production of biodiesel in April of 2009. The fuel will be sold to end users of equipment and vehicles that run on biodiesel.

Based on the needs of Simple Fuels, the services available through AFWD, and funding possible through the WIRED Grant for Renewable Energy companies AFWD staff will be assisting Simple Fuels with recruiting and training personnel for the biodiesel operation. According to Dianna Simar, Resource Coordinator for AFWD, "Our business services will support Simple Fuels in their start up and expansion phases. By providing recruiting and training services, AFWD will help Simple Fuels maximize their resources by finding, hiring, and training employees, ensuring the company's ability to boost production."



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### *Youth at Work*

The Youth Program at Sierra Work Connection has a new face. James North lives in Loyalton and graduated from Loyalton High in 2008. With so many people out looking for work our youth are having some difficulty in finding employment. Jobs that use to be primarily filled with those new to the workforce are being taken by those who have been unemployed due to the economy and are now willing to start at the bottom again. This makes it difficult for our youth to get the work experience they need to be competitive. That's where we come in.

We are fortunate enough to have a great youth program. James North is our newest participant in the Youth Experience Program. James will be helping out at Simple Fuels in Chilcoot. This is a great opportunity to see the Biodiesel Industry from the inside and be a part of an up and coming company. The owner Jamie Lutch shares our conviction that the youth are our future. How we shape their work ethics will greatly impact the way we do business in the future. The Alliance For Workforce Development, Inc. wants to thank Jamie and Emily at Simple Fuels for their participation.

