Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) is excited to celebrate Chico’s 150th birthday with our community. AFWD has two booths during this season’s Thursday Night Market (TNM). The main booth has rotating members of AFWD staff engaging with the public that may not otherwise have the chance to reach us at our Main office on Cohasset Rd or the Camp Fire Recovery office on Mangrove Ave. This booth offers AFWD the chance to share our mission with TNM attendees.

While the main booth is exciting on its own, the 2nd booth is more dynamic. Each week AFWD is hosting a guest employer to aid in both their recruitment and sales efforts. AFWD is proud to extend this no-cost opportunity to the partners that we have made, some lifelong and others only recently. Since the beginning of this TNM season, Alliance has hosted Joy Signal Technology, Farmers Brewing Co, Safepath Products, Cleanrite Buildrite and Panda Express, with many more on deck. If you know of a business that would like to learn more about Alliance for Workforce Development and share in the opportunity to be a guest recruiter at TNM—please call us at 530-961-5125.
This March, AFWD had the opportunity to witness the first-ever Small Business Administration’s Women’s Business Summit! The Small Business Administration (SBA) is a cabinet-level federal agency dedicated to igniting change and sparking action so small businesses can confidently start, grow, expand or recover. This first annual event featured prominent Women in business, such as Assistant SBA Administrator, Natalie Madeira Cofield; SBA Administrator, Isabella Casillas Guzman; Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior; Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris, and so many more.

Day one of the event was full of inspiring and eye-opening discussion. Executive Director Nicola Corzine with the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center delivered stellar statistics on women in business. She reported, “there are 114% more women entrepreneurs today than there were twenty years ago”. Also, 64% of businesses started last year are owned by women of color. Additionally, women-owned US businesses generate $1.8 trillion each year and employ 9.4 million people.

VP Kamala Harris delivered an enlightening speech on day one. She addressed the challenges of women in business, particularly minority-women-owned businesses, in terms of wealth disparities, access to capital loans and banking services, and the like. VP Harris talked about the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act to protect women-owned businesses of Asiatic, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander descent. One quote from VP Harris that stuck out was a tribute to those who have “the ambition to see what can be without the burden of what has been”. She revealed plans to expand access to banking services, community lenders, business development funds, affordable childcare, paid leave and more.

Continued on next page...
Women’s Business Summit
Small Business Administration (cont)

Day one culminated with excellent discussions. Mellody Hobson, Co-CEO and President of Ariel Investments, discussed the 3P’s of investment: People, Purchasing, and Philanthropy. A panel discussion on Building an Equitable Recovery Framework for Women Entrepreneurs featured strategies to mend the disproportionately female-affected economic recovery from business closures and job loss. Another panel discussion, “From Essential Worker to Essential Entrepreneur: CARE Economy Entrepreneurship Opportunities” addressed issues and opportunities in the caregiving industry and revealed a goal to secure $1 billion in funding for childcare for moms. Other important topics included Innovation and Investment, Contracting Opportunities for Women-led Firms, Exporting & E-commerce, and the Changing Landscape for the Entertainment Industry.

Day two of the Women’s Business Summit featured excellent “Ask An Expert” sessions on several topics, including Innovation and Investment, Certification and Contracting, Accessing SBA Resource Providers, International Trade, and Accessing Loans & Micro Finance.

AFWD’s mission of providing pathways to success and meeting the needs of job seekers and employers is fully aligned with the mission of the SBA, and women in business has long been a focus of our efforts. AFWD is proud to partner with SBA and was honored to attend this wonderful conference.

The entire event was recorded and is available online, along with resource links and relevant information. If you would like to watch this event please visit the link below.

GoBiz – CA’s Open-Access Interactive Economic Development Data Tool

This June, GoBiz provided a presentation overviewing California’s new interactive economic development data web tool. This is a great community and place-based data tool that is open-access and available for anyone interested in community demographics including spending trends, drive time, labor market information, training & education providers by industry, business & industry operation, availability of services & utilities, and more, pinpointed to a radius of between 1 to 100 miles. The tool is populated with the most up-to-date Geographic Information Systems planning information, reported from American community surveys and census data.

The presentation was hosted by the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development in a 30-minute webinar. The program is engineered with GIS Planning to nurture economic development and business assistance efforts.

AFWD is fully equipped to assist employers in navigating this wonderful tool. Contact us to learn how to:

- Search for community data
- Create engaging data visualizations
- Access map layers
- Share the data in a variety of formats
- Save Reports for later analysis
- Use the tool to support your place marketing efforts, including social media posts, email newsletters, email campaigns, creating trade show collateral, and more

https://properties.zoomprospector.com/california/community?page=1&s%5BSortDirection%5D=false&s%5BCommunityType%5D=2&s%5BSortBy%5D=name#
Welding My Dreams Together

Trevor came to AFWD seeking assistance with the CTE Welding program at Butte College. Trevor was working at Big Al’s in Chico as a Cook for six years. Although he enjoyed working there, there was no room for advancement, wage increase, or additional hours without obtaining specific certificates or further schooling. Trevor determined another direction was necessary to support his family. Trevor is a single father who was underemployed, low-income, and working below NoRTEC self-sufficiency.

Assessments were completed with Trevor to assess his skill level, abilities and interest level. Through those assessments it was determined that employment as a Welder would be a “great fit” for his personality and things that interest him. He mentioned that he had always wanted to become a Welder because of his close family members that are welders. The only thing holding him back from his dream was the formal training. Trevor self-initiated and enrolled into the Welding program at Butte College. Due to only working part time, he requested assistance with the tuition and materials, and his required boots that he needed to complete the training. Trevor completed his training successfully and was assisted with job search to find his dream job.

Trevor applied for a welding position with Chico Metal and was offered the position. Trevor requested assistance with purchasing the required welding helmet and jacket he needed to work safely in his new job. He is now employed with Chico Metal as a Welder and couldn’t be happier with the assistance he received from AFWD helping him with his training, work attire and with helping to find secure unsubsidized self-sufficient employment doing what he loves.

Exploring the Future

Students came well-prepared with resumes in hand to meet and greet the many potential employers at the Las Plumas High School Job Fair in Oroville, California. AFWD’s Youth Program was there to connect with students and to provide them with information on our program, our Supportive Services, and all the variety of ways our Career Center Staff can assist them in job search, with interview skills, and setting financial and educational goals.

The event was held outdoors with plenty food, music and fun to be had. All branches of the US Military were present along with Cal-Fire, Butte County Office of Education, YMCA, The Boys and Girls Club, and many local companies who were all ready to discuss future employment options with the Las Plumas High School students. AFWD was happy to be part of such a worth while event and in helping to prepare our local youth with employment and educational assistance to allow them the best possible chance at a successful future.
On February 2nd 2022, Jamie P. came to our Butte County Office located in Oroville, CA looking for assistance. He brought his resume and expressed that he had recently been laid off from his part time job at Chevron. The conversation continued, revealing he had been experiencing homelessness for over two years and was living out of his vehicle, also he only attended high school to 11th grade and therefore never obtained a High School Diploma. This educational barrier has prevented Jamie from finding sufficient employment as most employers require at least a H.S. diploma or recognized equivalent. Due to his financial, educational, and housing barriers, Jamie was unable to find full-time, self-sufficient employment that would allow him to cover his living expenses and afford stable housing.

Jamie was enrolled into Alliance for Workforce Development’s (AFWD) WIOA Adult Program for Job Seeker assistance, career counseling, and supportive services. Jamie was very personable and displayed excellent professionalism during his intake. He stated, “I am motivated and looking to start work as soon as possible, I just need some help to get back on track”

Over the course of the next two months, Jamie was provided career guidance, information for community resources, resume building assistance, and other job readiness services. His ultimate goal was to secure a full-time job in customer service or manufacturing with applicable health benefits. He was even willing to relocate should a promising opportunity present itself. AFWD assisted Jamie with his research of Labor Market Information (LMI) for Northern California and Nevada.

In March, Jamie was presented with an opportunity to work at the Panasonic Gigafactory-1 [see photo to left and top right] in Fernley, NV as a Material Handler. This is a state-of-the-art facility that is a main supplier to the world’s leading battery and electric vehicle manufacturer, Tesla Motors, Inc. Panasonic was offering to train Jamie on the job and provide shuttle transport to allow him to get to and from work every day.

Before Jamie could relocate the 200 miles from Oroville, CA to Fernley, NV he needed to secure housing. Jamie found an affordable place to live near family in that area; however, his savings had been exhausted. With the use of Supportive Services, AFWD was able to assist Jamie by covering the cost of his first two months’ rent and the cost to register his vehicle in a new state. These services supported Jamie while he was earning his first few paychecks and allowed him to focus on transitioning into a new environment.

After his first month of employment, Jamie reported this to AFWD: “Thank you for all that you do. If it had not been for your assistance and guidance I would have not been able to afford to take this awesome opportunity at Panasonic. I enjoy my new job. I have learned so much already and I am excited to start building my career”.

Making this change for Jamie took time and was ultimately was a huge decision; but in the end, it was a move in the right direction.
 Creating New Paths with Safepath

Safepath Products is a local manufacturing company that manufactures industrial and residential products for ADA (Americans with Disability Act) and access code compliance, including ramps, landings, seismic surface transitions, flooring reducers, and more. Safepath Products has been one of the largest suppliers of transition products for well over 20 years.

With a high demand in production, a big challenge Safepath Products faced recently is staffing. Thankfully Marcos Silva from Safepath Products knew just where to go to receive assistance. He reached out to Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD), sent us the job descriptions for the vacant recruitments that needed filled, and communicated with AFWD diligently as we sent him resumes of candidates who were interested in working at SafePath Products.

In a few short months, we were able to assist Safepath Products with increasing their staff and placing 3 new employees on their team through our On-The-Job Training (OJT) wage reimbursement programs. AFWD is grateful to work with Safepath Products and appreciates the opportunities they continue to provide.

“AFWD has been an essential part of SafePath’s growth over the past couple of years. We have worked with and hired several candidates AFWD has referred, who have worked out quite well. AFWD representatives have been pleasant and very accommodating to our needs, the overall experience has been great.” -Marcos Silva, Sales/Marketing Manager

Engineering a Career

Crystal obtained assistance through AFWD shortly after acquiring her Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering from Chico State. Crystal was searching for an opportunity where she could utilize her newly acquired degree while receiving the training and experience necessary to become a successful drafter. Crystal was enrolled into the Adult program and provided assessment’s which determined she was on the right career path.

Crystal was then selected for an On-the-Job training opportunity with Jackson and Sands Engineering. Over the course of three months, Crystal was trained by Jackson and Sands Engineering on various skills that are necessary to become a successful drafter. She was trained in developing site plans and familiarized with the various computer programs related to Engineering and Drafting.

Throughout her training, Crystal increased her knowledge and skill set. Upon the completion of the training Crystal was secure in her position as a Drafter for Jackson and Sands Engineering while making a livable self-sufficient wage. Crystal was very grateful for the opportunities she received through the services AFWD provided and is enjoying her new career.
Paradise Grocery Outlet is a newly remodeled grocery store in Paradise, CA. After the Camp Fire in 2018, only three grocery stores are available in Paradise. Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) has assisted Grocery Outlet in their workforce recruitment by offering them the Work Experience (WEX) and On the Job Training (OJT) programs to offset their labor costs. They have had several successful WEX and OJT employees like Kaitlin Washburn featured in the picture below.

Kaitlin started Paradise Grocery outlet as a Grocery clerk and got promoted to the Frozen Lead position. As a Grocery lead, she needed to operate the Electric Pallet Jack. These jacks lift ice pallets that are 1000lbs. To use these jacks, she had to read training material, take a quiz both written and verbally, and attend behind-the-wheel training. She took these exams with her supervisor Wayne.

This training took a week to accomplish before she got behind the wheel. After she was certified on the Electric Pallet Jack she began Forklift Training which took 2 months of behind-the-wheel training. Wayne said: “She was apprehensive at first but now she feels a lot more comfortable.” When Janine Gomez, the AFWD Business Service representative asked if any other females were doing what she is doing? Wayne replied, “No, she is the only female out of the other 5 people that are trained to use the forklift”. Katelyn is responsible for the full receiving process and is getting more comfortable using the forklift and electric Jack pallet daily. To date, Grocery Outlet is staffed with 50% of their workforce through Alliance for Workforce Development and is thrilled with each of the employee’s progress.
It was determined Wyatt was a great candidate for the Temporary Job Creation (TJC) program working with Butte County Public Works doing clean-up and repair of the area affected by the 2018 Campfire Disaster.

Butte County Department of Public Works has been serving its residents since 1850. The Public Works Department maintains approximately 1,300 miles of roadways, including over 500 bridges and drainage structures and more than 18,000 road signs within Butte County.

Wyatt was required to complete safety certifications provided by AFWD and partners; OSHA 10, Basic CPR, Flagger training, and S-212 Power Saws & Chainsaw Chipper Safety training. This was to ensure he worked safely and efficiently while performing the necessary work on the Butte County areas affected by the fires. In addition, Wyatt was provided the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure his safety while utilizing the chainsaw and chipper equipment as well as working out in the elements.

Since being placed at Butte County Public Works, Wyatt has met new friends and enhanced his work experience, increasing his skill set, and making him more marketable for future permanent employment opportunities. With all the connections he has been making, Wyatt hopes to obtain permanent employment with Butte County Public Works and the Road Maintenance crew.
Stapleton Spence Rapid Response

It’s hard for a small community to recover from the impact of a 70-year-old family-owned business’ announcement that it’s closing. This is especially notable when the closure will end the employment of 75 local workers. This would definitely not be an occasion to hold a celebratory event. However, it’s hard not to celebrate the outcome of the combined Rapid Response Orientation and Job Fair that Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) provided for the remaining 35 employees at Stapleton Spence Packing Company in Gridley.

With the more rigid COVID guidelines having just been laxed there was a packed breakroom at the plant. The event included service providers from adjoining Sutter & Yuba County, Employment Development Department representatives, and five local employers who were all eager to give information about services and on the spot interviews for their open positions. Multiple offers of employment were made on the spot and follow-up interviews were immediately scheduled for many others.

One can safely say with the amazing outreach and support services AFWD and partner agencies can provide to these dislocated workers that this was a glass half full event.

**Service Providers**
- Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc.
- Sutter County and Yuba County One-Stops
- Employment Development Workforce Services Representatives

**Participating Employers**
- Gridley Grocery Outlet
- Mooney Farms
- Graphic Packaging International
- Joy Signal Technology
- Lundberg Family Farms
The Alliance for Workforce Development staff is a tight-knit bunch. We work well together and like to play when we can. Just like the rest of the nation, the staff at AFWD has spent over two years apart, conceding to emails and zoom meetings to transfer internal directives. As the statewide Covid restrictions were loosened up in April, the full Business Service team was finally able to meet in person.

The Business Service team is made up of 13 professionals spread across the six counties in AFWD’s service area: Butte, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Sierra, and Nevada. With everyone in great spirits, the team engaged in several team-building activities. The communication exercise involved 2-person teams, one person would view an image and describe what they see and the other person would re-create the picture based solely on the verbal guidance of their partner, not everyone had success yet the outcomes were entertaining.

The group exercise tasked small groups of 4-5 people to build the tallest structure possible within 18 minutes using only 20 sticks of dry spaghetti, one marshmallow, tape, and a short string. In the beginning, each team had internal struggles and disagreements on how best to achieve the goal however as the exercise went on, everyone found their strengths and eventually agreed on their unique design. Each team came out successful in creating a much taller structures than originally thought possible.

The BSR team can all agree that working together has never been a challenge. The internal support for knowledge, processes, and growth are firmly built-in to the AFWD workplace, however, there is a lot to be said about enjoying each other’s company, sharing metrics eye-to-eye, and working together trying to use marshmallow as a glue for spaghetti.

“...If you don’t develop a mutually reinforcing, interdependent relationship between culture and brand, you miss the opportunity to unleash their combined power and you put your [organization] at risk.”

- Denise Lee Yohn, SHRM
Making it Happen

Maria was referred to AFWD by her Instructor at Chico State and the CSUC Student Services Department for possible assistance regarding her final semesters at Chico State. Since her layoff, Maria has been supporting her family of 5 on the unemployment benefits received while attending school.

Maria’s long-term goal has been a career in the helping professions and ultimately settled on a career in the Social Work sector working as a child, family, or school Social Worker hoping to utilize her bilingual skills in her community. Maria has been juggling school, work, and family for approximately 6 years.

Maria was uncertain if she’d be able to continue the program to earn her degree when her unemployment benefits were getting close to the end. They have helped with some of her family’s living expenses and Financial Aid eased some of her tuition costs, however, there were still required textbooks and material fees that Maria was struggling with. She felt a sense of relief after hearing about the WIOA Workforce Program and how AFWD could assist her.

AFWD Recovery; NDWG Mega Fire WD provided the assistance Maria needed to complete the last two semesters of her training at Chico State to earn her bachelor’s degree in Social Work. Maria has obtained full-time employment and will soon begin her career in a field she is passionate about. Maria was hired by Sutter Mental Health and will be utilizing her skills and experience working as a Social Worker for the Latino Outreach Department.
What began as seasonal volunteer work, turned into a passion to pursue a full-time career as a Firefighter. Modesto Gomez started his journey back in January of 2019 when he served as a Corps member with California Conservation Corps (CCC) in Magalia, CA. He later worked during fire season as a Wildland Firefighter with CalFire in 2021 where he was responsible for responding to emergencies and protecting at-risk properties and vegetation. Modesto reported that he “always had a desire to help people in need” and decided that he was going to need additional training if he was to make this a life-long career.

In the spring of 2022, Modesto applied and was accepted into Butte Community College’s (BCC) 77th Firefighter Academy as a Cadet where “Honor, Tradition, Strength & Knowledge” are key values. The BCC Fire Academy has been active and servicing the community for close to 40 years. Participation is demanding and not for the faint of heart as Cadets face 20 strenuous weeks of fast-paced, live-action training and are expected to adhere to a strict honor code at all times both in and out of the classroom.

Due to being laid off from the seasonal patterns of his previous job, Modesto was unable to find work for many months and could not afford the entire cost of training on his own. He reached out to Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) for assistance. Modesto was enrolled as a “Dislocated Worker” under AFWD’s WIOA Programs to receive assistance with his unemployment CTB benefits and some of his required materials such as textbooks, wildland boots, and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that all students are required to have to participate in the program. With the assistance that AFWD provided, Modesto was able to continue his training at the Fire Academy and pass all of his classes with flying colors.
A Firefighter’s Journey (cont)

Through perseverance and support from AFWD, Modesto successfully graduated from the 77th Firefighter Academy on Friday, May 20th, 2022, and collected his Certificate of Achievement, along with several additional certifications including Swiftwater Rescue, Firefighter Survival, and many others. Modesto finished strong by ranking 3rd in his unit for overall Academic, Agility, and EMT Rank. Most notably, he was presented with a Recognition of Service Award at graduation for his time serving as Battalion Chief for the 77th Fire Academy.

We applaud Modesto for his commitment to excellence and for reaching this major milestone in his journey. He is set to accept a position with a local Fire Station as a full-time Fire Fighter-1 by the end of May. We wish him every success in this next chapter. On behalf of the Alliance for Workforce Development, we say: “Congratulations Modesto for a job well done!”

“Thanks to your help, I was able to continue my education and focus on graduating. When I enrolled into the class, I was very worried about my income and you helped me out tremendously right away. Not having to worry about my funds was very relieving for me and it honestly made a big difference with my success!”

- Modesto Gomez -

Photo courtesy of BCC Fire Academy 2022
Unemployment Information

Butte County - Through 4th Quarter
One-Stop Visitors: 5,906
Businesses Served: 757
AFWD
Clients Enrolled: 1,009

Chico Community Employment Center
500 Cohasset Rd., Ste. 30 (530) 961-5125

Oroville Community Employment Center
78 Table Mountain Blvd. (530) 538-7301

Camp Fire Recovery Team
1600 Mangrove Ave., Ste. 115 (530) 616-1053

Unemployment Rates
(As of: June 2022)
California 4%
Butte County 4%

Top 3 Affected Industry Sectors - Butte County
- Agriculture, Fishing, Foresting, and Hunting
- Construction
- Healthcare and Social Assistance

Unemployment Rates
(As of: June 2022)
California 4%
Butte County 4%