AFWD IS UP AND RUNNING AT THE BUTTE COUNTY ONE-STOPSS

As of July 2011, the communities of Butte County have become part of the Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc.'s service area. AFWD’s goal is to continue to provide job seekers with access to employment and training opportunities as well as providing our employers with links to qualified applicants.

The Chico One-Stop, located on 2445 Carmichael Dr., provides an array of One-Stop services, in conjunction with our partners, Butte County Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS), Department of Rehabilitation, Department of Children’s Services, Department of Behavioral Health, Butte College and Experience Works.
In our Oroville offices, located on 78 Table Mountain Blvd. and 2348 Baldwin Ave. we are fortunate to be able to provide these same business and job seeker services in partnership with DESS and the Employment Development Department (EDD). All of our efforts will be directed towards workforce development, economic vitality, and a stable and prosperous business community throughout Butte County.

The new Deputy Director, Shane Starr joined AFWD in July of this year, relocating from Sacramento where he held various Governor appointed positions including the Assistant Director for the Employment Training Panel. Sue Vivilacqua has been promoted to Program Manager for Butte County. Prior to her new position, Sue worked for AFWD as a Career Center Advisor for the Lassen County office. In addition, she has owned her own business for 23 years. Together, their leadership and experience will guide this organization in providing high quality services to job seekers and businesses in Butte County and its communities.
Hundreds of students from Butte Community College attended the Career Fair on Campus, Tuesday, September 7th. Greeting them were representatives from the various private organizations and Businesses in and around Butte County. Privileged to represent Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) at this event were Business Service Representatives, Nicole Clift, Mary McConville, Chelsie Reinking, Luis Moreno and Career Center Advisors, Mark Alvidrez and Sharon Nilsson.

Mark and Sharon, along with help from their colleagues and co-workers, assembled an assortment of information on fast growing occupations in which students could begin their training at Butte College. High school students as well as College students stopped by the AFWD booth to ask questions and gather handouts. Descriptions, statistics, and resource websites were given for such jobs as Caregiver, Maintenance Aide for Trails/Fuel Reduction Crews and Landscape Maintenance. Information was also available on AFWD’s Youth Program as well as job seeking tips for high school students.
Governors Green Challenge Grant Update

In addition, AFWD continues to coordinate with CSU, Chico’s Department of Mechanical Engineering, Mechatronic Engineering and Sustainable Manufacturing Programs to utilize Challenge Grant funding for assisting students with their training. Program Manager, Sue Vivilacqua and Career Center Advisors, Mark Alvidrez, Will Pagarigan, Lisa J. Scott and Jill Ghirardelli have partnered with Educator/Coordinator, Daren Otten to complete eligibility requirements for senior students on target to graduate in spring semester 2012.

MOORETOWN RANCHERIA FAMILY EDUCATION FAIR
A Community Outreach Event

The Mooretown Rancheria Family Education Fair was held on September 12th and was attended by AFWD representatives Pang Xiong, Megan Weiss, Mark Alvidrez, Mary McConville, and Chelsie Reinking. This event was sponsored by the Concow-Maidu tribe at the Mooretown Rancheria, along with Berry Creek, Enterprise, and Mechoopda tribes. This was a great opportunity for job seekers to gather information about our services, along with networking with other agencies.

There were over 17 occupied booths ranging from colleges and universities to companies such as Home Depot. The event was geared toward youth and family involvement, and gave staff a great opportunity to collaborate with several tribal members and other vendors. Staff gathered referrals for both youth and adults, along with information for training programs from several colleges and universities.
AFWD BUTTE STAFF TRAINING
The Building of the AFWD Team in Butte!

In preparation for the return of full WIA services to Butte County, staff training was held for the newest members of the Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) team at the Innovation Lab in Chico, California from August 16th - August 26th.

The training which was spearheaded by Chris Sullivan (Director of Job Seeker Services) and Holly Schirmer (Director of Business Services) was nine days of intensive, all inclusive Job Seeker and Business Services information. With the help from our Deputy Director, Shane Starr, Program Manager, Sue Vivilacqua, Plumas Lead CCA, Brent Cunningham and our Fiscal Team over 24 new members of the AFWD team were trained along with three of our partners from the Butte County Department of Employment & Social Services.

The veteran staff at AFWD incorporated interactive role playing techniques and a fun, high energy learning environment to train on the many levels of services AFWD provides to Job Seekers and the Business Community.

Stewart Knox, Executive Director of the Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC), graciously presented to us an overview on NoRTEC’s background, philosophy and the role they play in North State Workforce Development.

In conclusion of our training and with Shane’s leadership, the Butte AFWD team was able to develop a vision statement which we will use and strive to fulfill on a daily basis; “To Be Recognized as the Leader of Workforce Development throughout the State of California.”
JOB SEEKER SERVICES

Job seekers are actively dropping by the Chico and Oroville One-Stops to take advantage of the universal job seeker resources and services available to them every day. The computer labs are full of clients searching job postings, applying for jobs, and enrolling into CalJOBS. During the month of September alone, the Chico One-Stop recorded 2,871 visitors. The Oroville One-Stop recorded 2,602 visitors and our staff at the Baldwin office recorded 152 visitors in the one week they have been at this location. Having provided services to at least 5,624 clients in a single month, AFWD staff, along with our One-Stop partners, continue to diligently and enthusiastically work together to meet the immediate needs of all of our clients.

The Resource team has also been instrumental in encouraging job seekers to meet with a Career Center Advisor (CCA) to further assist in their job search. The CCAs are busily building their caseloads with job seekers to assist on a more individualized level. The CCAs have been helping clients with core services such as updating resumes, job referrals, career counseling, etc. One-on-one sessions have been a great opportunity to cooperatively develop personalized Activity Action Plans.

CCA’s have also been providing Case Management and more intensive services for many clients by developing appropriate training plans and individual employment plans. Additionally, CCAs conducted orientations to senior students at the Chico State University and collected WIA applications for possible participation in the programs.
The Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. is proud to announce the development of a business services unit in Butte County. The four Business Service Representatives (BSRs) will collaboratively cover the communities within Butte County to provide businesses with services available to them through our organization. The large areas of Chico and Oroville will be a major focus for this BSR team, but efforts are already underway to ensure business services are also maximized in the smaller communities of Butte County, such as Paradise, Durham, Palermo, Gridley and even the small town of Biggs.

The BSRs have literally hit the ground running. In the first week of operation, the office was inundated with phone calls from employers looking to post job announcements and fill their open positions. Unfortunately, the BSRs were also kept extremely busy with follow-ups to businesses looking to downsize or close their doors permanently, which required additional services and information to their effected employees.

In just under one month, the team has provided business services to over 70 employers from the Butte County area. These services include dislocated worker information, job postings, HR information, OJT placements and general information on AFWD services.

The outreach efforts in which the BSRs have participated in have culminated in the membership of several community organizations. Currently, these memberships include the Chico Chamber, Oroville Chamber, Paradise Ridge Chamber, Gridley Area Chamber, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Butte Human Resources Group. Attending functions and presenting information at the multitude of events that are put on by these organizations has allowed the team to quickly spread the word on business services in Butte County.
Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. Responds to Live Oak Prison Closure

Located in Sutter County, Leo Chesney Correctional Facilities is permanently closing its doors as of September 30, 2011. The prison housed over 300 inmates and employed approximately 80 people. When the closure was announced, the Sutter County One-Stop took the lead in providing Rapid Response Services for the affected workers. And, they invited Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) from Butte County to participate in the orientations in order to offer job search services to employees who are Butte County residents and wish to be served out of the Butte County One-Stop.

During the Rapid Response orientation, laid off employees in attendance learned about job services available to them, including job search assistance, resume and interview assistance, specific job skills upgrading, and supportive services. The goal is to make the transition between jobs as smooth and brief as possible. AFWD staff attended five orientations and met with 15 affected workers. These workers appreciated the job search services overview and were all scheduled for a one-on-one follow-up appointment to meet with a Career Center Advisor to complete the registration process and begin their job search.
AFWD has partnered with Enloe Hospital to provide assistance to our community’s nurses as they prepare for their certification exams.

Staff attended the first sessions of the Orthopedic Nursing Overview Review Course and the CCRN-PCCN “Exam Cram” course, both sponsored by Enloe Medical Center. Together, there were over 160 nurses in attendance and more than half of would be taking the state exam to further their education and careers.

Building your business one STEP at a time

The Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. in partnership with the Butte County Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS) is creating an opportunity towards self-sufficiency through an On the Job Training program. The Skills Training Employment Program (STEP) provides workforce solutions for businesses by providing employers with a predetermined wage reimbursement of up to 50% for an employee in training. This could mean a savings to a local employer of almost $5,000 in a six month period.

In a two week period, there have been 13 employers willing to hire from our pool of STEP job seekers, and over 25 referrals for these positions. Staff have been working diligently with the clients, providing assessments and soft skills trainings to better prepare them for the transition from county services to a successful employment opportunity. In reaching our goal of enrolling over one hundred clients into STEP, we will provide our clients a pathway to self-sufficiency and provide local employers with a well-prepared workforce.
Women In Business Conference

The 13th Annual Women In Business Conference was held at the Chico Masonic Family Center and was presented by the Northeastern California Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Butte College. The philosophy behind this event is to “Empower, Educate and Encourage” business women within our community. With Nicole Clift as our Business Services Representative in attendance, Alliance For Workforce Development Inc. was able to have a presence to network and share our services with numerous businesses from our area.

This opportunity not only opened pathways for networking with local companies but began a relationship with professionals such as speaker Joy Chadacoff. Her business Smart Women Smart Solutions is based out of Los Angeles and is a wealth of information we may be able to utilize for upcoming programs or events. Comments from others in attendance was that this was by far the best conference where information was timely and extremely useful for any business woman!