Alliance for Workforce Development helped coordinate a State Labor Law and Payroll Tax Seminar by Employment Development Department and the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement for businesses in the Butte area. Nearly 30 employees took part in this discussion to hear about important topics related to the way they conduct business.

Some of the topics included California Payroll reporting requirements, Labor Law, independent contractor reporting, electronic filings, federal payroll reporting requirements and more. Employers were pleased to take part in such an informative discussion from experts on the topics.

In addition, this was also a great opportunity to invite local employers to the One Stop to learn about services available to them. These businesses were given information about our employee and employer services, recruitment services and other ways the One Stop can assist their business. Overall, this event was great for everyone involved and we look forward to the next one!
In response to Senate Bill 1 the “gas tax,” increased infrastructure repairs and upcoming retirements, Caltrans will be hiring 1100 people in the next 2 years. Positions exist statewide in many areas including; Engineering, Maintenance, Information Technology, Accounting, Legal, Surveys, Planning, Human Resources, Environmental and more! On Thursday November 9th State of California Human Resource Analysts Jessica and Christina presented workshops in the Oroville and the Chico Community Employment Centers. The information was encouraging and well received by the combined 88 job seekers who attended both of the workshops. The website is not as user friendly as one would hope when applying for a job. The advice from the workshop experts and its delivery was encouraging and utilized familiar statements job seekers would hear from AFWD’s knowledgeable friendly resource staff.

“If this is your career path don’t give up, be persistent and apply for everything you might qualify for, use words from the job descriptions when you describe your skill history, use as much of your experience as you can to get noticed rather than eliminated. Take the online test before applying, fill out an application and continue to check the website for openings and application status.”

Analysts Jessica and Christina took turns giving detailed instructions about the process to apply for employment at Caltrans. They answered many questions and handed out step by step instructions to create an account, navigate the application and test.

Start your career at Caltrans today!

For more information please visit www.dot.ca.gov
The 4th Annual Manufacturing Expo took place in November and AFWD was there! College and K-12 students from all over the North State were invited to meet with over 30 manufacturers and suppliers all in one room on the Chico State campus. Students came to explore career options and learn about internships with local companies. Many booths offered hands on activities and provided live demonstrations of welding equipment, robotics, 3D printing, and food processing. AFWD Business Service Representatives and Career Center Advisors answered questions about training opportunities, job search, and connecting with employers that provide on the job training.
Northwest Lineman College Assistance

The Business Services Team assisted Northwest Lineman College with their Career Strategies and Planning course during the month of October. Over 200 students participated in the course conducted over a two week period which included resume writing instruction, resume review, and grading of their final resume and cover letter.

Students were assigned current open recruitments related to the Power Delivery Industry and were taught how to tailor their resume and cover letter to be specific to that position. Students learned how to pull key words from job descriptions and how using those key words would help their resume get identified through an online application system that many employers now use to screen candidates. Students were also encouraged to visit Alliance for Workforce Development offices in Chico and Oroville for additional resume writing assistance from our Resource Team.

Staff from the Lineman College thanked AFWD, specifically the project lead; Catherine Madsack for a seamless delivery of the contracted services. Nearly 60 students were identified as they utilized our AJCC onsite services in both Chico and Oroville. The college also anticipates an increase in enrollments this upcoming term to 240 students!

Oroville Chamber of Commerce Workshop

Oroville Chamber of Commerce offered a workshop to interested Chamber members facilitated by Sandy Linville PhD President & CEO, “Perfecting Your Elevator Pitch” - The secret to leaving a positive first impression and having an effective introduction, a summarization of who you are and the value you bring to a work setting.

The three important things your elevator pitch should do are:

1. Demonstrate why you’re different
There are thousands of other people with the exact same job description as you, so rather than simply explaining your work, you need to focus on the results you have gotten. In what areas do you excel?

2. Give the listener a reason to care
Although most people will politely hear you out, the bottom line is that no one cares what you do unless there is something in it for them. What solution can you provide? Answer that question, and you’ll have their undivided attention.

3. Leave them wanting more
Your elevator pitch can’t possibly address every single aspect of who you are and what you do, but doesn’t have to. Share just enough to pique the listener’s interest. Also, keep in mind that your pitch shouldn’t come across as some robotic, overly-rehearsed speech. It should still be natural and conversational so that the person you’re conversing with actually wants to meet with you a second time.

Business Service Representatives from Oroville Office, Mary McConville and Wendy Sweeney attended the informative session at the Longcreek Winery, hosted by its new owners Mike and Cheryl Phulps.
Fresh Twisted Café in Chico is a hidden gem that offers organic coffee, smoothies, juices, baked goods, burger and sandwiches! Doug Hernandez is the owner and operator and has had the opportunity to grow by participating in our services. I stopped by to ask a few questions about how business is going and how our programs have impacted his success. In the past two years, Doug has had ten contracts between our On The Job Training Program and our STEP program with six who are still happily working at the café to make it such a success! Swing by and see why this business is quickly becoming a local favorite!

Why have you chosen to use our applicant pool for the past couple of years?

“I come from a low income family and similar programs helped me, so I want others to get the same or similar opportunities. It is also business smart to use the programs as its less risk if someone doesn’t work out. Overall it is a better opportunity for our community to improve, getting people to work.”

In what ways have these programs impacted your business?

“Honestly, it has streamlined our training processes which makes training for new hires way faster and more efficient. Financially it has allowed me to purchase necessary equipment to keep up with the growth of the business as well as have the capability to maintain more staff.”

What ways have you utilized each person’s unique skills here at your café?

“Well, everyone has something unique about them. For instance, Amanda has a love of baking and had her own vegan & gluten free recipes, which we now have implemented into our menu. This has led me to let go of our 3rd party baker which again lowers my costs. Tim has had experience in inventory control, so he has streamlined our process creating higher accuracy in products as well as dates of raw goods.”

Where is your business headed from here?

“Things are going great so I hope to continue with our 6% growth in the next year. I am also planning on putting in place a General Manager.”
A Training Success Story

A few months ago we met with Moira Rubio to talk about a change in her career path. Moira’s work experience had been as a part-time cashier in a busy grocery store. But she wanted to learn more; wanted to do more. Moira enrolled in Career Discoveries and completed an externship. Her goal: to gain computer skills, obtain a full time job and be satisfied with the work she’d done at the end of each day – which she hoped would be in a clerical capacity.

Butte Business Services (Express Employment Professionals) were actively recruiting for a Bilingual Spanish Front Office Coordinator. With an On The Job Training (OJT) in mind we met with Moira to discuss this opportunity. Moira states now that she was hesitant and stated, “I didn’t think I could succeed. I knew nothing about this industry.” We forwarded Moira’s resume to Express; she joined the staff at the beginning of the cannery’s insanely busy hiring season. During the first couple of monitoring appointments– we’d find Moira wide eyed and somewhat bewildered but moving forward.

Moira says she is very shy and working for Express where she has had to address large groups of people was initially challenging. She always thought she was a multi-tasker but now says “I am a PRO-multi tasker.” Moira’s favorite part of the job is “being part of someone else’s journey and their success.”

Moira is a person who was very quiet, shy and kind of stood in the shadows. Not anymore. She is confident and a large part of every conversation. She’s very happy with Express and is moving on to learn the sales aspect of the business. She is looking forward to the next phase of learning.

Way to go Moira!
Breaking Employment Barriers

Roplast Industries, Inc. is a local manufacturing company that produces plastic shopping bags. The recent passing of laws requiring merchants stop using the traditional thin grocery bags and to go with more eco-friendly, reusable bags was a huge boom for Roplast. It was also a huge opportunity for Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) to assist them with their staffing needs. AFWD was able to place over 12 On the Job Training (OJT) clients as Machine Operators.

Several of these OJT clients had unique barriers to employment that many employers would not want to deal with. Roplast is “felon friendly”, and these clients were able to get employment and start rebuilding their work history and their self-esteem.

Thomas R. was one of these clients. He started work with Roplast through an OJT earlier this year as a Machine Operator and he is now a Shift Leader. He had a felony on his record that did not allow him to work in certain sectors or with certain populations. He had not been employed for almost a year, when the OJT opportunity came up. He was already an enrolled AFWD client and his CCA referred him to Roplast, where he was interviewed and hired through the OJT program. He successfully completed his OJT and is currently in follow-up monitoring. Thomas recently stopped in to the America’s Job Center, during Thanksgiving, to let his former CCA know that he was thankful for all of the help he received through the various programs AFWD has to offer Job Seekers, and that he would not be where he is today without AFWD!

Congratulations Thomas!
Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. (AFWD Inc.) Chico has provided Job Readiness Classes to Butte County residents who are on probation or living at Tri-County Treatment in Oroville on a regular basis. AFWD Inc. Career Advisors work closely with Butte County Probation to ensure the participants acquire the job readiness skills necessary to obtain full-time employment. The probation participants are a very diverse population being served in Butte County. These men and women are most likely long term unemployed, lack a GED or any formal training that would benefit them in obtaining full-time employment. The participants living at Tri-County Treatment are considered incarcerated and have limited access to internet job search. Their background is a barrier to employment, but the Job Readiness classes offers many strategies to address this barrier in order to be successful.

Recently the Job Readiness curriculum was revised and extended to include the 21st Century Skills Training curriculum and other skills and information that was decided to be needed and beneficial for clients with these employment barriers.

In November, 2017, AFWD Inc.-Chico taught the first newly revised, week long Job Readiness class. The students weren’t enthusiastic on the first day due to the fact the new curriculum involved homework, group work and active participation. The students had assignments due every morning. The participants had to create new resumes with cover letters and master applications. The students also had to complete the assignments from the 21st Century Skills Training. The Adaptability and Resilience lessons from the 21st Century Skills Training were taught. Students ended the week by presenting a small Power Point Presentation where they had to work in a group to prepare and use their adaptability skills to work as a team and present. The students shared this was the first time they had ever used Power Point to present. By the end of the week, it was evident this new Job Readiness curriculum had made an impact and provided new skills. This group of job seekers graduated from the class with new confidence and a new skill set to meet their short term and long term goals. At the end of the week all participants were very much appreciative of all the guidance and skills they learned in the Job Readiness classes that AFWD provided. They are prepared and ready to use their newly learned skills to search for employment in Butte County.
Local Enormous Growth Rendering Opportunities For On The Job Trainings!!

This year Butte County, AFWD assisted the fast growing, online retailer, Lulus, with 7 full time On the Job Trainings (OJT’s). The popular fashion boutique has expanded exponentially since the transition from a downtown retail shop to sales entirely online. They needed some assistance and we were capable of providing it. Lulu’s needed to hire Customer Service Agents responsible for taking calls and emails as well as people to fill the many orders coming in 24/7.

Lulu’s merchandise consisting of ladies’ fashion apparel, shoes, and accessories are located in 2 warehouses at various locations in Chico. The Customer Service staff recently relocated to a new, renovated office with bright white walls and massive cubbies equipped with computers for each agent to correspond with online customers, addressing questions or complaints about products, policies, or shipping methods. AFWD provided training assistance for 4 Customer Service Agents and 3 Fulfillment Team Members.

Thorough, in-depth interviewing and assessments confirmed their eligibility and necessity of the OJT. The NoRTEC Job Specific Skills Customized Competency assessment, a requirement for all OJT clients, was completed producing low scores indicating the necessity of the On the Job Training. Interest levels were examined and reviewed as well as communication capabilities and adaptability of each individual who will be working in a fast pace environment with a large, diverse group of people. In addition, all clients were lacking work experience in online women’s retail products therefore endorsing the OJT’s to develop the essential skill set fundamental to performing the actual work duties of a Customer Service Agent or Fulfillment Team members at Lulu’s.

Based on current skill gaps, Fulfillment employees and Customer Service Agents - Wholesale and Retail Sales, in the retail sector, a four to six month OJT was appropriate for the skill level necessary for the position. Clients were monitored monthly to ensure the required skills were acquired appropriately. Alliance for Workforce Development determined that all participants required monetary assistance with training related costs.

All clients completed their OJT successfully with measurable skill gains and attained training milestones enabling them to continue full time, unsubsidized employment with a successful, local business that will offer upward mobility, self-sufficient wage, stability and continued independence in the e-commerce environment.
AFWD partnered with the City of Chico through a Federal Storm Grant, to mitigate some of the damage that was caused by our extreme weather this past winter. The Temporary Jobs Creation (TJC) grant allowed long term unemployed clients to participate in temporary work that will enable them to earn an income while adding to their skill set and closing the gap in their work history. The end result is to make them more marketable for future permanent employment. These clients all have barriers to employment that have kept them from securing full time, permanent employment, including criminal records/poor work history. All clients currently live in Butte County, a designated disaster affected area. These clients were all interviewed by the City of Chico and were selected for 15 week TJC Storm Cleanup Crew positions with the city that will primarily focus on storm damage to Bidwell Park’s One Mile Recreation Area. The City of Chico is a cultural, economic, and educational center of the northern Sacramento Valley and home to both California State University, Chico and Bidwell Park, the country's 26th largest municipal park and the 13th largest municipally owned park. Bidwell Park makes up over 17% of the city. These clients are participating in a variety of storm cleanup related projects. They follow instructions of the Worksite Supervisor to carry out assigned projects/duties and perform a variety of unskilled and semi-skilled repair and cleanup in public areas due to storm damage and to perform related duties and responsibilities as required. They report to and communicate with the Worksite Supervisor for all direction, primarily using rakes to weed grounds and other landscaped areas, removing tree stumps, limbs, and other debris from grounds, participating in training and safety meetings as required and demonstrating the ability to appropriately and safely use tools including: Pulaski’s, shovels, rakes, loppers, Mcleods, hoes, hammers, and clippers. This worksite performs duties related to the flooding/storms of 2017 and is enabling clients with poor work history, or criminal records to learn valuable skills they can take with them to permanent employment.
The Registered Nurse program (Associate Degree Nurse or ADN), is a two-year, traditional RN program. Through classroom instruction the student prepares for licensure as an RN at the Associate Degree level. The four semester program provides theory and clinical content required for RN examination and licensure. Upon successful completion of the program the student is eligible to sit for the National/State licensure examination for Registered Nursing.

December 14, 2017 was filled with excitement and anticipation for approximately 47 nursing students and their families. Butte College’s Nursing Program presented the students of Class 23 with their RN Pins. Butte College and Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc., has established a partnership that has provided many students the opportunity to achieve their lifelong career goals. Circumstances beyond their control such as Business Closures, substantial layoffs and a change in family dynamics brought the students pictured left (Top left to right Chad Millard, Branden Cutler; Center left to right Allison Woolbert, Sarah Dent; Front left to right Lisa Bocks, Shastina Hughes) to AFWD, Inc. Without the assistance from AFWD, Inc. and WIOA funding, each have reported they would not have been able to complete the RN program. The students received financial assistance with various requirements: Tuition assistance, Books, Uniforms and tools, plus their Kaplan NCLEX Review, Neehr Perfect and Licensure fees. With the successful completion of the RN program these students have applied and registered for the NCLEX exam National/State Licensure Examination. Due to the connections these students made while completing their clinical requirements they have been offered full time, self-sufficient employment. The sacrifices these students made while completing the RN training have earned the starting wages reported of $38.00 to $52.00 per hour. Lisa Bocks is the first to receive her exam date January 11, 2018 and will start in the TCU Telemetry Care Unit (Cardiac) at Enloe. Once licensed these students will start their careers at Enloe Medical Center, Feather River and Oroville Hospital.
Eleven AFWD youth were recognized in the Butte County Office of Education/JAG Completion Ceremony on December 15, 2017. This partner agency program provided youth that have been involved in the justice system the opportunity to learn pre-employment skills, complete a portfolio, learn the basics of the welding trade, and work towards completing their probation requirements as well as leading a clean and sober life. All of the youth were referred to the program by the Butte County Sheriff’s Office (funding agency), Butte County Probation, Jordan Crossing Ministries, and the Alliance for Workforce Development.

Many of the youth earned the Career Technical Education Welding Certificate, with several finding employment as welders in local businesses, including two that are participating in AFWD funded On-the-Job Trainings. Some enrolled in Come Back Butte Charter School to complete the requirements for their High School Diploma. All of the youth successfully completed the program!

Family and friends were in attendance for support and to witness each youth’s accomplishments.
Butte County
Total Visitors
27,925

Butte County
Business Services
Businesses Served 309
Services Provided 990

AFWD
Total Clients Enrolled 631

Unemployment Rate
(As of: November 2017)
Butte 4.8% Nevada 3.4%
Lassen 4.9% Plumas 7.5%
Modoc 7.1% Sierra 4.7%