Wildfires recently roared into the lives of many Californians as mega-fires exploded throughout the state. In rural Modoc County, fire safety had been a concern before these fires and projects had been implemented to proactively address and mitigate wildfire dangers. One such project is located in the wooded Cal Pines community clearing protective fuel breaks.

Successful partnerships are often required to evolve to continue moving forward with their goals. With the closure of the Devil’s Garden Conservation Camp, Modoc County had lost the valuable labor of inmates supervised by Cal Fire for fuels reduction. Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) had previously partnered with Modoc County to provide funding for temporary workers to clean up and repair storm damage on public lands. When the Modoc Fire Safe Council began looking for alternate labor to complete work on the Cal Pines Fuel Break Project, Modoc County CAO, Chester Robertson suggested utilizing a crew of workers from the storm repair project who would be employed and supervised by the County with funding assistance from AFWD through the P2E grant-funded On-The-Job Training (OJT) program. The Modoc Fire Safe Council accepted the proposal and the work moved forward.

AFWD contributed funding for a portion of the wages for two workers during their 16-20 week OJT. The OJT offered the workers both employment and the chance to learn marketable skills as they contributed to the success of this critical project.

AFWD staff joined representatives from the Modoc Fire Safe Council, Modoc County, Cal Pines Property Owners Association, and the Modoc Resource Conservation District on a recent tour of the Cal Pines Fuel Break Project. Partners were able to see the scope of the project, the progress that was made, and observed the workers in action at the current worksite. Working Together for Modoc County!
David came to the Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) office in Alturas seeking assistance finding a job. He had taken a bold step in resigning from his full-time position of over a decade in the Hospitality sector in order to seek a new career that would utilize his diverse skills and offer greater advancement opportunities.

AFWD staff met with David to assess his skill set, interests and work history which revealed a broad scope of experience and an aptitude and interest in working with his hands. David was not interested in entering a training program for a new career, but preferred to focus on finding work that would utilize his extensive freelance construction experience. He also needed a job that did not require travel out of the area for job assignments as many construction projects do as he was a single father and needed to work locally in order to provide care and stability for his young son.

David was encouraged to attend a Virtual Resume Workshop to provide him with ideas and tips for updating his resume. He did so and stated that the workshop was “insightful.” David met with his Career Center Advisor after attending the workshop to review his first resume draft. After review and brainstorming, David and his advisor determined that detailing his freelance construction experience needed to be showcased prominently at the top of his resume when targeted towards jobs in Maintenance, Construction and other hands-on work instead of following a strict chronological style. After doing so, David quickly began to receive interest from employers for job interviews. One interview request was for a Maintenance Worker position with Early Head Start. This job offered all the components that David was looking for in his job search. His interview was successful and David began working full-time for Early Head Start. He stated that the job is good fit for him in every way. His duties include maintaining both the Alturas and Tulelake Early Head Start Centers. David is enjoying the challenges of his varied duties and the opportunity to utilize his skill set. Congratulations, David!
Family Member Opportunities

With the growing need to fill healthcare positions in the Northstate, in collaboration with SMART Workforce Center, Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) launched a new job seeker resource. Healthcare has been a priority sector in Northern California for a long time due to the challenge of recruiting and retaining qualified healthcare providers ranging from entry-level to highly skilled. This challenge is even more difficult within the rural areas of our beautiful locale. While we have had an ongoing recruitment strategy in our area, a collateral challenge has been identified.

When recruiting medical providers into the counties we serve, the family members of these relocated individuals needed streamlined job-seeking assistance. Through a partnership between AFWD and SMART, in association with Partnership Health Plan and the many healthcare providers in the counties we serve, we are proud to present the Family Member Opportunities tool found on northstatejobs.com. This tool makes it much easier for the new members of our communities to lay down roots and grow with us.

The Family Member Opportunities tool will make it easy for future residents to connect to the America’s Job Center of California (AJCC) in the county where they will be moving. From the Family Member Opportunities webpage, the user can click on the county that they intend to relocate to and will then be directed to the website of the corresponding AJCC in that area. Once on the proper AJCC website, the candidate can call or fill out a “Contact Us” form. From there, the talented staff at the AJCC will follow up and identify how best to assist the job seeker.

This new tool is a big win for Northern California and will make it easier to retain medical providers and help with the growing workforce need in our area by connecting those who need a job to the employers who are hiring. AFWD and SMART are proud to join forces to assist the healthcare sector and make a positive impact on our community as a whole.

You can check out the website here:
https://northstatejobs.com/medical-provider-family-member-opportunities/
New Opportunities

Jimmy was recently enrolled in the P2E program to assist him with job search and to navigate his probation. He had been out of jail since July and was finding it difficult to find employment, but refused to give up. Working with his Advisor, they developed a professional resume and worked on interview skills. They also coordinated with the Resource Coordinator who suggested that Jimmy go down and talk to Chester Robertson, CEO of Modoc County, to see if they may need assistance with a new program that the County was working on involving fuels reduction. Sure enough, Jimmy made a good impression and was given the opportunity to be on the crew. As Jimmy had never performed the work of a Forest Conservation Worker, it was determined that an On-the-Job Training would be the best way to proceed, so on November 18th, Jimmy started his new job. Jimmy was also helped with the purchase of work clothing and December rent as his first check would be a little short due to starting in the middle of the month. Jimmy is enjoying his new position and is learning fast. He also appreciates the opportunity the P2E program and Modoc County have given him.
Surprise Valley Chamber of Commerce
At Work in the Community

Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) staff recently had the opportunity to support the Surprise Valley Chamber of Commerce at two events. The first event was a mixer hosted by the Chamber in late October at Warner Mountain Weavers in Cedarville. Over 40 people attended the Friday evening event. Surprise Valley which lies on the eastern side of Modoc County includes the small rural towns of Cedarville, Eagleville, Fort Bidwell, and Lake City. Cattle ranching and alfalfa hay production fuel the Surprise Valley economy alongside small businesses that offer products to the local community and visitors to the area. The Surprise Valley Chamber actively supports both the business and the private communities and works year-round to attract visitors to Surprise Valley.

Guests at the Chamber Mixer were able to learn about the rich history and activities of the host location, Warner Mountain Weavers, which is also the flagship store and warehouse for Lani’s Lana~Fine Rambouillet Wool Products. Warner Mountain Weavers offers an annual Woolgathering Festival and workshops including wool spinning, natural dyeing, rugmaking, and dye plant harvesting. Lani Estill was available to talk to guests and share information about her Rambouillet wool products which are sourced from the Bare Ranch sheep in Surprise Valley. Lani’s website offers an online store and the goal of this storefront is to, “…offer a product that is produced right here in Northern California/Northwest Nevada that is often only imported from countries far away. We want our wool to be available right here at home. For although we sell in bulk to companies like The North Face, we have an amazing superfine wool that is just so good, that home spinners and fiber artists should be able to access it too.” The North Face is currently offering a wool beanie made with Lani’s wool which is also available on her website for purchase.

In early November, the Surprise Valley Chamber hosted guest speaker, Ned Coe the Modoc County District 1 Supervisor for a Q&A session. AFWD staff attended, also providing feedback and information regarding partner programs with the County that Supervisor Coe mentioned which included the NDWG Storm and P2E grant-funded programs. These programs provided workers who have cleaned up and repaired storm damage at multiple locations including the beloved Cedar Campground and funded On-The-Job Training opportunities for workers clearing a crucial fuel break in Cal Pines. Additionally, along with Supervisor Coe, AFWD staff invited the Chamber members to attend future meetings of the Moving Modoc Forward action group.

Lani Estill from Lani’s Lana~Fine Rambouillet Wool Products demonstrates process to wind yarn into skeins.
Before Covid-19 began, both Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) and TEACH Adult Education staff had identified the crucial need for drivers in Modoc County with a Class A/B license. However, training opportunities were limited and expensive and the closest training center was in Redding over 2.5 hours away. Shasta College in Redding offered a truck driving program, but it required in person attendance for an entire semester.

Sarah Merrick from TEACH Adult Ed recently followed up with Shasta College on the status of their driver training program. She found out that the format of the class had been changed for the Spring 2022 semester beginning in January 2022. The first eight weeks of class would be offered online and the hands-on driving portion scheduled for eight Fridays. Brainstorming together, TEACH AE and AFWD recognized that they could offer comprehensive assistance to interested students by partnering together to support the Shasta Truck Driving program.

An informational meeting was held for potential students outlining the Truck Driving program and the requirements to apply along with an overview of the services available from both TEACH AE and AFWD to support students. Those wanting to move forward with the application process met with TEACH AE and Janet Marinoni, Lassen College Adult Ed Counselor later in the week for assistance in applying online to become a student at Shasta College and in filling out the FAFSA application for financial aid. TEACH AE also offered the use of their computer lab for students lacking a computer and/or Internet at home for the online portion of the class. AFWD staff spoke to potential students to assess them for eligibility for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding which would cover the tuition, fees and other required costs of the truck driving program that the students were unable to fund themselves. AFWD also offered support to students in the form of career guidance and planning and job search and placement after training. TEACH AE and AFWD have both completed the application/eligibility process with four eligible candidates and have three additional candidates interested in the program.

Partnerships are the Key to Success!

Janet Marinoni, Lassen College Adult Ed Counselor and Sarah Merrick, TEACH Adult Ed
Unemployment Information
July 2021 - November 2021

Unemployment Rates
(As of: Nov. 2021)
California 5.4%
Modoc County 4.6%

AFWD America’s Job Center of California
Statistics

Modoc County - 2nd Quarter
One-Stop Visitors: 589
Businesses Served: 38
Business Services: 724

AFWD
Clients Enrolled: 725

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