Feather River College Orientation 2019

With the starting of autumn, so does the fall semester at Feather River College (FRC). Students and various agencies gathered in the gymnasium to help kick off student’s first semester at FRC. The Dean of Students, coupled with other faculty members, addressed the new student body. They spoke about what to expect from the school, what is expected of them as students, as well as discussed various organizations throughout the community, and how they can assist them in their careers as new students.

There were over 100 participants in attendance. After a few motivational speeches from faculty members, students were given the opportunity to meet with organizations within the community. The Youth Career Center Advisor had the pleasure to meet with several students about what Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) has to offer, and answer any questions that they had. Many of the local students had mentioned using AFWD’s services before, while the students from out of town expressed great interest in exploring AFWD services.

Working with FRC, and other partnering agencies, AFWD was able to help assist students’ transition in their college careers, and beyond. AFWD welcomes the opportunity to work alongside partnering agencies to strengthen our community and help students to find their paths in life.
Team Almanor

The Lake Almanor Area Chamber of Commerce is a small but very active chamber in the Chester/Lake Almanor area of Plumas County. There is a diversity of businesses throughout the region; from seasonal resorts to year-round hardware stores, insurance firms, service stations, and of course restaurants. The Lake Almanor Area Chamber wanted to get a pulse on the local businesses.

Team Almanor was formed to contact individual businesses with the purpose of identifying the economic vitality and address any business concerns. Team Almanor is comprised of Chamber Board of Directors, Feather River College (FRC) President, Plumas County Supervisor, and Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD), and community members.

In late spring of 2019 Team Almanor conducted 2 walkabouts, one in Chester, and one walk on the East Shore of Lake Almanor, covering Hamilton Branch to Canyon Dam businesses.

Dr. Kevin Trutna, President of FRC, walked with Team Almanor. Dr. Trutna was interested to learn the training needs of local business and answered any questions about FRC courses. Several businesses asked for training courses for things such forklift operation, welding certifications, and customer service training for employees. By understanding the type of training required and requested, the local college could consider relevant courses that could help ease the lack of a qualified skilled labor market.

Several businesses were looking for employees and noted there are fewer job seekers than in years’ past. Lyn Turner, of Turner Excavating, needed a Class A truck driver and a heavy equipment operator, as her business has expanded significantly over the last couple of years. Lyn commented, “Being able to hire local employees and give them a livable wage is one of our goals for the area.” AFWD has posted the positions across 4 counties and referred different applicants to apply.
The members of Team Almanor varied each walk and enjoyed being able to learn firsthand the issues facing local businesses. One seasonal boat business owner mentioned they simply had all the business they could handle for one season. Most businesses were happy with the economic growth they experienced. Two issues consistently surfaced throughout the walks: finding qualified skilled employees and the lack of housing. Throughout Plumas County there is an affordable housing shortage.

Each business person commented they were happy to see members of Team Almanor and thanked each member for taking the time inquiring as to their business concerns. Each community has unique issues and rural communities are no exception. At the forefront of concerns is finding people to work who possess necessary soft skills such as showing up on time and dressed appropriately, but rural communities also face a lack of skilled tradesman and professional designation job seekers for open positions. As the unemployment rate nationwide is the lowest since 1969, Plumas County is experiencing difficulty as well. Yet, through events like Team Almanor, identifying issues is the first step to helping to address those challenges.

AFWD is happy to be part of the solution to employment issues, matching qualified candidates to employers’ openings.
September 17, 2019 marked Feather River College’s (FRC) annual College and Career Fair. FRC has been hosting The College and Career Fair for 10 years. Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) had the pleasure of being part of the amazing outreach to the community’s youth. Plumas County’s youth was also able to meet guest speaker Dain Blanton, an Olympic gold medalist, along with many local agencies, and colleges from surrounding areas.

Youth were given the opportunity to talk with local agencies, colleges, and among themselves about their future plans. Many students could be heard exclaiming that they did not know that there were so many agencies in the community to help. The youth stopped by the AFWD Business and Career Network booth to talk about services available and help they can receive in our office. Other students from Quincy High School had mentioned being in our office and how they had received help with their summer employment.

AFWD’s Youth Career Center Advisor was able to reconnect with a few students who had previously been into the office for help with their employment, as well as meet with new students. While our youth are not ready to leave the nest and fly, they are learning to stretch their wings and see what the community has available to them.
Meeting of the Minds – Monterey, CA

In early September, staff members from Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) attended ‘Meeting of the Minds’ a training sponsored by the California Workforce Association, in beautiful Monterey, California. This training presented topics by industry leaders, relevant to the changes facing employers and job seekers alike. Businesses are facing unprecedented issues with jobs going unfilled and businesses creating temporary positions to meet the cyclical needs of their business. During the “Unseen Problems of Underemployed and The Gig Economy,” the speaker presented strategies for business to deal with the demands of the new economy.

In the training session “Preparing the Workforce of the Future,” the speaker addressed the many issues facing businesses in this new Gig Economy. With temporary workers in greater need, it is necessary to attract workers for these part-time temporary positions. Many older workers are staying in the workforce longer and often choosing part-time positions.

The first-time job seekers are wondering whether the high price of a 4-year college degree will meet their career aspirations economically. Creating apprenticeship programs for the trades in need of workers is one way employers are meeting the challenge of a retiring workforce in the trades. The session “New Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeship Models in the Bay Area Public Utilities Industry: What’s Working and Why?” addressed the issues they are facing creating the training programs. This new model of training created in the Bay Area within the public utilities industry has been most useful.

Many businesses are deciding to grow their own employees through training. Integrity Heating, based out of Loyalton, decided to hire and train his employees in the HVAC industry. Now after a year of in-house training, the employees are able to service heaters and air conditioners by themselves. Frank Emsoff, owner, said, “It’s almost better training in-house because the employees can grow with the business. There are simply not enough HVAC experienced job seekers locally.”

With an economy of minimal unemployment, employers are challenged with finding new avenues of hiring. Workforce offices are helping businesses by identifying ways to reach both underemployed and new job seekers. The Institute for the Future indicates that 80% of the jobs in 2030 are not even invented yet. The session “Adaptability and Resilience – the new Model of Employment” addressed the changes in jobs citing Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation are creating very new positions which often require On-The-Job training, in-house. We know this trend will continue in the foreseeable future.

The training sessions over the three-day Meeting of the Minds program offered attendees many new ways to assist employers facing the challenges faced in a Gig Economy, low unemployment, a diverse workforce and ever-changing job skills requirements.
Century Old Business with New Partnership

Flanigan-Leavitt Insurance has been operating as an insurance company in Quincy since 1883. In the 1990’s Flanigan Insurance partnered with another family insurance operation out of Utah – Leavitt Group. This partnership allowed a small firm like Flanigan to offer a broader range of insurance products at better pricing which means savings for their customers.

Recently with the retirement of a long-time employee and delegating the workload between the staff, Mike and Valerie Flanigan recognized the need for a Commercial Insurance Agent. Valerie Flanigan reached out to the Business Services Representative (BSR) in the Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc.’s (AFWD) Plumas Business and Career Network (BCN) office to ask for our assistance in recruiting a capable applicant. Valerie said the company would take time to hire just the right qualified candidate and knew training would be required for anyone coming onboard with Flanigan & Leavitt Insurance.

Looking through the Plumas applicant pool there were some prospective candidates with the administrative background to qualify. AFWD staff contacted these individuals with this career path opportunity in the insurance field. This outreach resulted in several clients applying for the position. After going through a lengthy interview process, Valerie Flanigan offered the job to a candidate referred by AFWD.

With the absence of insurance knowledge for this client a partnership for the On-the-Job training (OJT) program was born. Valerie remarked, “This partnership is wonderful for a small business like ours. We rarely have openings to hire a trainee agent. Partnering with AFWD certainly helps our bottom line and we are very happy.”

AFWD is proud to have a first-time partnership with a firm over 136 years old.
New Journey in a New Town

Andrea came into the Alliance For Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) Plumas Business and Career Network (BCN) in a serious state of dismay. She had been homeless for a few months, as her home that she lived in, in the town of Paradise was destroyed by a wild fire called the Camp Fire, which was the worst fire in California’s history. She relocated to Quincy, as she had a friend she was able to stay with for a week or two, then she moved to a hotel. Andrea had been long term unemployed prior to the Camp Fire and had exhausted her Unemployment Benefits. After meeting with a Career Center Advisor (CCA), Andrea was determined eligible under the for National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) Mega Fire Grant.

With the help of her CCA, Andrea had worked on her resume and did some extensive job searching. She applied for various jobs in the Quincy area for different employers, but was not called in for an interview until she applied for a job with Plumas Bank as a Department Services Representative in the Human Resources Department. Andrea’s CCA went over interview techniques with her, and she went to the interview feeling prepared. Plumas Bank called her and offered her the position. She gratefully accepted it. Her CCA also told her of a house that was available to rent and gave her the contact information, as her temporary housing was due to expire within 30 days.

Andrea has been very grateful for the help that AFWD was able to give her through the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) Mega Fire Grant. She feels strengthened with this opportunity to start fresh after she was able to survive the Camp Fire.

We were very happy to be able to help Andrea during this very stressful time, and we wish her the best in this new journey in her new town.
From Helping Students to Helping Her Community

Brandie Maurer recently relocated to the Plumas County area where she was employed as a Para-Educator. Her job came to an end, so she came into the Plumas Business and Career Network (BCN) looking for help in finding a full-time job. She was given an overview of Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) services. Although Brandie’s past employment included working with mentally disabled children, as well as caretaking for elderly people, she had a long term career path goal to become employed as a 911 Dispatcher in the Public Safety Sector.

Brandie recently had applied for a full-time 911 Dispatcher position with the Plumas County Sheriff’s Office. She had taken the required test to start the interview process and passed it. They then set up an interview with her and although they liked Brandie and were interested in hiring her, they felt she needed extensive training due to her lack of specific dispatching experience. The Career Center Advisor (CCA) asked the Business Services Representative (BSR) to reach out to the Sheriff’s Department to discuss the possibility of doing an On-The-Job Training (OJT). The Sheriff’s office felt it would be a good idea to do an OJT, as they thought Brandie would be a good fit for their office, but were concerned with her lack of experience in this field. Brandie was enrolled into the WIOA Adult program and worked with both her Career Center Advisor and the Sheriff’s office to put together an employment plan that would provide Brandie with the skills and knowledge required to become a successful Public Safety 911 Dispatcher.

Brandie started her OJT, and from the very beginning her supervisors were impressed with how well she picked up on her Dispatching duties. Her supervisor felt that early on Brandie’s eagerness to learn her position made her stand above most trainees. Brandie loves her job and fits in well with her co-workers. She is so grateful for the opportunity that the OJT through Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. has given her. She feels that she has been given an excellent chance to do work she loves, while helping to keep the public safe.

Thanks for your hard work and dedication to becoming a 911 Dispatcher!
A New Career in Her Field of Study

Christina is going to school to earn a degree in Health Information Management. She was referred to the Plumas Business and Career Network (BCN) by ReThink Industries for a potential On-the-Job Training (OJT). Christina had been working as an Assistant Manager at a local repair shop, but her position had no promotion potential or advancement opportunities, and was not related to her chosen career path of Health Information Management.

Christina had recently applied and interviewed for a fulltime position as a Medical Billing/Administrative Assistant at ReThink Industries. Although they liked Christina and were interested in hiring her, they felt she would need extensive training due to her lack of experience. ReThink Industries felt it would be a good idea to do an OJT, as they thought Christina would be a good fit for their office, but were concerned with her lack of experience in this field. Christina met with a Career Center Advisor (CCA), and was given an overview of Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Services (WIOA). She was enrolled into the Adult program at the BCN and worked with both her CCA and ReThink Industries in putting together an employment plan that would provide her with the skills and knowledge required to become a Medical Billing/Administrative Assistant in the Healthcare sector.

From the very beginning of her OJT, ReThink Industries was impressed with how well Christina picked up on her employment duties. Her supervisor felt early on Christina’s eagerness to learn her position made her stand above most trainees. Christina loves her job and fits in well with the practice. Christina is so grateful for the opportunity that the OJT through Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. has given her. She feels that she has been given an opportunity to work in a position that has a chance for advancement, as well as working in her field of study in the health care sector.
AFWD America’s Job Center of California
Statistics
PY 2019-2020 Q1

Plumas County

One-Stop Visitors:
888

Businesses Served:
31

Business Services:
157

AFWD
Clients Enrolled:
368

Unemployment Rate
(As of: August 2019)
5.8%