

**Governor’s State Workforce Development Board**  
**September 30, 2021 State Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Thomas Freeland	Mr. Gregory Clark
Mr. Dan Ellzey	Mr. Gregory Tinnell
Col. Craig Currey	Mr. H. Perry Shuping
Dr. Tim Hardee	Ms. Valerie Richardson
Dr. Mike Mikota	Mr. Warren Snead
Dr. Windsor Sherrill	Mr. John Uprichard
Mr. Archie Maddox	Mr. Michael Sexton
Mr. Charles Brave, Jr.	Ms. Felicia Johnson
Mr. Jay Holloway	Mr. John Durst
Mr. Mike King	Mr. Ross Turner

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

Mr. Pat Michaels  
Mr. Cliff Bourke  
Mr. Joe Daning  
Dr. Joe Patton

**Welcome and Opening Remarks .....Chair, Mr. Thomas Freeland**

Chairman Thomas Freeland called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. A quorum was present with members participating both in-person and virtually.

**Approval of Minutes from June 23, 2021\* .....Mr. Freeland**

Mr. Mike Mikota made a motion to approve the June 23, 2021 meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Craig Currey, and unanimously approved by the State Workforce Development Board.

**South Carolina’s Employment Situation ..... Mr. Dan Ellzey**

Mr. Dan Ellzey, Executive Director, SC Department of Employment and Workforce, delivered a presentation on the status of Unemployment Insurance claims, South Carolina employment levels, reemployment initiatives, and UI system enhancements. His presentation covered the following points:

- Initial Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims are currently below pre-pandemic levels. Since March 2020, DEW has processed 927,688 initial claims and paid out \$6.5B in unemployment insurance. South Carolina has eliminated Federal benefits as of June 26, 2021. The UI Trust Fund remains solvent with a balance of \$1.2B.
- As of August 2021, 2,302,743 individuals are employed, which is an increase of 3,402 compared to February 2020. South Carolina’s unemployment rate of 4.2% is up 1.4% percentage points compared to February 2020, but is lower than the national rate of 5.2%.
- The number of jobs posted in September is 104,000, which is about 40,000 compared to pre-pandemic levels.
- The agency has implemented several reemployment initiatives, including weekly work search, weekly job match, enhanced referrals, virtual job fairs, recall taskforce, and individual employer plans.
- Multiple UI system enhancements are in progress to improve the overall constituent experience. System upgrades will be implemented on November 1, 2021. In conjunction with UI enhancements, DEW is enhancing the mobile application and refreshing the website.
- Partnerships with Adult Education and the Technical College System continue to promote GED attainment and short-term training. The agency has also partnered with the Lt.

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Governor’s Office to promote soft skills and youth employment. A Youth Public Service Announcement will launch in October.

- Building a cybersecurity workforce has become a critical issue in South Carolina, as demonstrated by Governor McMaster’s effort to develop a statewide cybersecurity strategic plan. Several efforts are underway to support the development of a cybersecurity workforce: WIOA sponsored IT training, CompTIA A+ and Security+ training provided free to employers, technical assistance to defense manufacturing companies through the SC Cyber Assistance Program, and short-term UI approved training. There are currently more than 1,600 open cyber-related jobs. All projections show that job openings in this field will increase rapidly over the next few years. Incumbent worker training is an important strategy for growing the cyber-workforce to fill openings.
- The strength of South Carolina’s economy has led to decreased WIOA funding. DEW has eliminated travel, downsized WIOA management positions, and utilized discretionary grants in response to reduced funding. Local areas are encouraged to evaluate cost-sharing models, the utilization of technology for service delivery, and discretionary grants to offset reduced funding.
- Looking forward, rural development, piloting business engagement strategies, and incumbent worker training will all be areas of focus.

**Rural Development Activity.....Mr. Daniel Young**

Mr. Daniel Young, Director of Grants and Incentives and Executive Director of the Coordinating Council for Economic Development, SC Department of Commerce, presented on Commerce’s efforts to support rural economic and community development. He explained that Commerce’s approach to rural development is to prepare communities for when opportunities come to the area. Preparation includes investments in infrastructure and “downtown” or community development through programs such as Locate SC and the Community Development Block Grant. In 2020, Commerce announced more than \$700M in new investments and 2,600 new jobs in Tier 3 and 4 counties. Commerce expects this year’s activity to exceed 2020, with 2,500 new jobs announced and \$1B in capital investments. The Gallo and Generac projects in Chester and Edgefield counties are significant projects for 2021. Gallo expects to hire 500 workers and invest \$450M in the economy. The ReadySC Generac project has received 10,000 applications for less than 1,000 jobs, with most of the applications coming from the surrounding counties. In addition to infrastructure investment, workforce preparation through training and soft skills is necessary to ensure that rural areas are ready when projects come.

**LWDA Promising Practice.....Ms. Johnnie-Lynn Crosby**

Ms. Johnnie-Lynn Crosby, Regional Business Solutions Director, SC Works Greater Upstate, presented on sector partnership efforts in the Greater Upstate. The Greater/Link Upstate Region established a Manufacturing Sector Partnership in 2019 as a strategy for aligning partners to engage businesses in the manufacturing sector. The partnership spans a 14 county region, including WorkLink, Upper Savannah, Greenville, and Upstate Local Workforce Areas. The partnership has three priorities: build a talent pipeline through improved career awareness, address middle skills and technical skills gaps, and state policy and regulatory change. A key outcome of the partnership is the creation of a skills matrix for Entry-Level Maintenance Technician positions. The model allows the workforce, education, and economic development system to engage more deeply with

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business and industry partners. Because of the region’s success, the region is evaluating the launch of an Information Technology partnership. Mr. Warren Snead offered an example of strategic partnership with the Upstate LWDA, explaining how the local area, Spartanburg Technical College, and DEW responded to a temporary layoff at Cooper Standard in July 2021.

**Recognition of Board Members.....Mr. Freeland**

Chairman Freeland recognized the contributions of Mr. Ed Sturken, Dr. Tim Hardee, and Dr. Mike Mikota, and their service to the state as longstanding members of the State Workforce Development Board.

**Other Business/Adjourn.....Mr. Freeland**

Chairman Freeland reminded members of the Workforce Symposium on October 19, 2021, in Greenville, S.C. The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.