

**Governor’s State Workforce Development Board**  
**September 28, 2022 State Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Thomas Freeland	Ms. Felicia Johnson
Ms. Valerie Richardson	Mr. Gregory Clark
Mr. Dan Ellzey	Mr. Warren Snead
Mr. Charles Brave, Jr.	Mr. Gregory Tinnell
COL. Craig Currey	Mr. H. Perry Shuping
Dr. Windsor Sherrill	Senator Ross Turner
Mr. Pat Michaels	Ms. Susan Cohen
Mr. Jay Holloway	Ms. Darline Graham
Mr. John Uprichard	

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Cliff Bourke, Jr.  
Representative Joe Daning  
Mr. Mike King  
Mr. Michael Sexton

**Welcome and Opening Remarks ..... Mr. Thomas Freeland, SWDB Chair**  
Chairman Thomas Freeland called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. A quorum was present, with members participating in person and virtually. Mr. Freeland reflected on Workforce Development Month, packed with job fairs, workshops, and many other events, including a press conference on September 7, 2022, at Michelin in which Governor McMaster gave the official proclamation of September as Workforce Development Month. He thanked the local staff who contributed to the success of the month and the board members who attended events. Mr. Freeland announced Ms. Val Richardson's appointment as Vice-Chair of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB).

**Approval of Minutes from June 28, 2022\* ..... Mr. Freeland**  
COL. Craig Currey motioned to approve the June 28, 2022, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jay Holloway and unanimously approved by the SWDB.

**Director’s Report ..... Director Dan Ellzey**  
Mr. Dan Ellzey, SC Department of Employment and Workforce Executive Director, delivered a presentation on the state’s employment situation including quit and hire rates and the labor force participation rate, and the Laurens Direct Connect initiative. His presentation covered the following points:

- South Carolina’s economy continues to be strong. UI claims are below pre-pandemic levels, with 1,800 individuals filing initial claims during the week ending September 19, 2022. The UI Trust Fund had a balance of nearly \$1.4B on September 19, 2022.
- There are 70,834 more people employed than in February 2020. The preliminary Unemployment Rate for August 2022 is 3.1%. This rate is lower than the US average unemployment rate of 3.7%. As of September 19, 2022, more than 111,387 jobs are posted in SCWOS, a net of 47,000 more jobs posted than pre-pandemic.
- Mr. Ellzey discussed “quiet quitting” or the “great resignation.” South Carolina’s quit rate is lower than other states at 3.6%. Many are quitting to move to higher-wage jobs. The demand has pushed hourly wages from \$25.50 in January 2020 to \$28.00 per hour as of August 2022.
- South Carolina’s labor force participation rate is 57%, the fifth lowest in the nation, compared to the national average of 62.4%. DEW convened the South Carolina Labor Force Participation (LFP) Task Force to evaluate SC’s labor force participation, research how to engage the

\*Denotes voting item

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sideliners, and to survey companies to ensure the state will have the labor to meet business demand. The results of this research should be available in November 2022.

- The County Direct Connect, beginning in Laurens County, is an active initiative to address labor force participation.

**Rural Workforce Analysis ..... Dr. Joseph Von Nessen**

Dr. Joseph Von Nessen reviewed the Workforce Analysis commissioned by the Board. The Analysis indicates the impact of rural residency on the likelihood of long-term unemployment in South Carolina.

Dr. Von Nessen noted the following key findings of the Analysis:

- Workers who were laid-off as a result of the pandemic-induced recession living in rural areas of South Carolina were more likely to still be unemployed one year later than those living in more urbanized regions.
- This increased likelihood of “long-term unemployment” holds even when accounting for differences in race, gender, age, income and education levels, prior industry of employment, and occupation. This implies that residing in a rural location should be considered a risk factor for long-term unemployment alongside these other worker characteristics.
- South Carolina’s rural workforce continues to face significant challenges, including higher unemployment compared to the state average. It is important to prioritize these communities in order to both improve employment opportunities for individuals and to increase long-run rates of economic growth across all of South Carolina’s 46 counties.

**SC Works Virtual Engagement Center Demonstration.....Ms. Kelli Grant**

Ms. Kelli Grant provided an update and overview of the Virtual Engagement Center (VEC). The VEC expands the reach of workforce services, including services to our rural communities, through an online platform in which employers and job seekers would receive virtual services.

**SC Works Outstanding Employee Recognition .....Mr. Freeland**

Mr. Freeland acknowledged that Workforce Development Month is a time to highlight the State’s workforce development activities and recognize the individuals that make those activities possible. Staff asked each of the Local Workforce Development Boards to nominate one high-performing workforce development professional from their local area for state recognition. Mr. Freeland and Ms. Richardson presented awards to the honorees, thanking each for their hard work, which is critical to ensuring a strong workforce system.

- **WorkLink:** Chipper Williams – Workforce Specialist
- **Upper Savannah:** Karen Lawson – Workforce Specialist
- **Upstate:** Johnnie–Lynn Crosby – Regional Business Solutions Director
- **Greenville:** Rose Cortes –Talent Development Specialist Lead
- **Midlands:** Tevin Spruill – Youth Career Advisor
- **Trident:** Corina Williams – Workforce Specialist
- **Pee Dee:** Sheila Glenn – Veterans Consultant, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program
- **Lower Savannah:** Sally Sharpe – Supervisor of Contracts & SC Works Center Activities, EO Coordinator

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**Governor’s State Workforce Development Board**  
**September 28, 2022 State Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes**

- **Catawba:** Elzanah Conradie – Re-Entry Navigator/Career Advisor
- **Waccamaw:** Eva Porchea – Youth Career Specialist
- **Lowcountry:** Tony Pollen – Business Services Coordinator

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

Mr. Freeland reminded honorees and Board members of the opportunity take profession headshots after the meeting, as well as the opportunity to experience the virtual reality headsets used by the Upstate Local Area with both employers and youth.

Mr. Freeland adjourned the meeting at 12:31 p.m.