



Shaping the Economy

A Monthly Newsletter from the West Central Workforce Development Board

November/December 2007

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MISSION

Our mission is to provide an effective local service delivery system to place Texans in jobs and to equip workers with skills needed to foster economic development.

Workforce Summit 2007

A one-day event for business, education, economic development and community leaders was held on November 8, 2007. The Workforce Summit 2007 was hosted by the West Central Texas Workforce Development Board in partnership with Abilene Christian University, Hardin-Simmons University, Howard Payne University, McMurry University, Brownwood Economic Development Corporation, Development Corporation of Abilene, Development Corporation of Snyder, Sweetwater Enterprise for Economic Development, Cisco Junior College, Ranger College, Texas State Technical College – West Texas, Western Texas College and Region XIV Education Service Center.

The Summit, held at the Abilene Civic Center, attracted more than 130 local and regional professionals interested in growing and retaining a highly skilled workforce for West Central Texas. The Summit provided attendees with information on Identifying and Developing a Talent Pipeline; Creating a Skilled Workforce; and Preparing for Tomorrow's Jobs Today. Bridgestone Bandag's Valentin Hernandez and Greg Alcantar described how they have developed and utilized a talent pipeline for their maintenance department. Robbie Dewberry, representing Stephens Memorial Hospital, provided details on how the same tool was

used to secure applicants for Certified Nurse Aides.

Tim Manley of WindClean Corporation introduced attendees to WorkKeys™, a nationally recognized job readiness assessment and certification tool. Mr. Manley shared details on how WindClean is using this product to help determine the job readiness of an applicant, as well as how the city of Coleman is using the product to measure and enhance the skills of their workforce.

Dr. Monty Lynn, Abilene Christian University and Director of the Center for Business and Economic Research, shared information on emerging and declining industries in the West Central Texas area and which skills are transferable between industries.

Barton Cromeens, Editor of the Abilene Reporter News, moderated a forum discussion with Rep. Jim Keffer, Rep. Susan King, Samuel Garcia, Randall Conner, Dave Dalzell, and Dr. Tom Winter. The discussion addressed a variety of topics on how, together, West Central Texans can ensure a highly skilled workforce to meet tomorrow's workforce needs.

Economic Indicators

West Central WDA				Texas				West Central WDA Average Weekly Wage		
	Oct 07	Sep 07	Oct 06		Oct 07	Sep 07	Oct 06		WDA	Texas
Labor Force	156,903	157,996	158,117	Labor Force	11,572,256	11,584,939	11,576,102	2nd QTR 07	\$575	\$826
Employment	151,440	151,803	151,975	Employment	11,123,864	11,078,888	11,071,401	2006 Avg	\$560	\$871
Unemployment	5,463	6,193	6,142	Unemployment	448,392	506,051	504,701	2005 Avg	\$536	\$823
Rate	3.5	3.9	3.9	Rate	3.9	4.4	4.4			

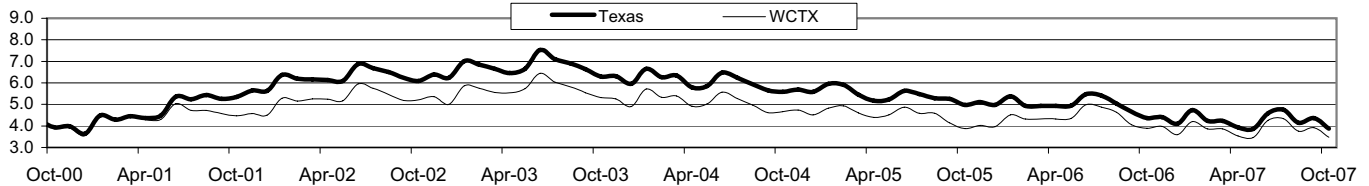
West Central Texas Workforce Development Area

October 2007

Civilian Labor Force Estimates (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

	West Central Texas WDA				Texas			
	CLF	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	CLF	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Oct-07	156,903	151,440	5,463	3.5	11,572,256	11,123,864	448,392	3.9
Sep-07	157,996	151,803	6,193	3.9	11,584,939	11,078,888	506,051	4.4
Oct-06	158,117	151,975	6,142	3.9	11,576,102	11,071,401	504,701	4.4

Historical Unemployment Rates



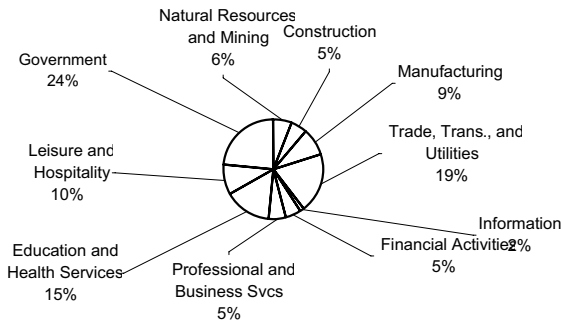
Total Claims

	Oct-07	Sep-07	Oct-06	OTY
Initial	468	407	662	-194
Continued	1,990	1,872	2,215	-225
Continued Claims for the Week of the 12th				
Continued	524	510	519	5

Average Weekly Wage

	WCTX	Change	Texas
2nd Qtr 2007	\$574.63	14.88	\$826.28
2006 Average	\$559.76	23.79	\$871.00
2005 Average	\$535.97		\$823.02

West Central WDA Industry Composition 2nd Quarter 2007



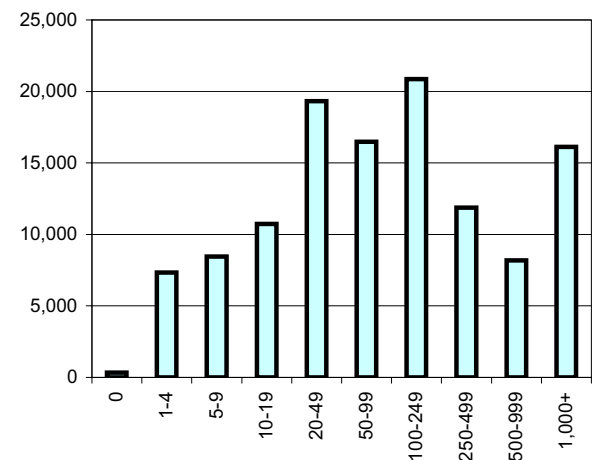
Top 10 Private Employers in the WDA 2nd Quarter 2007

3M COMPANY
 MANUFACTURING COMPANY
 ABILENE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
 AMS BUSINESS SOLUTIONS & STERLING PERSONNEL
 BRUMLEY PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYER SERVICES
 GIRLING HEALTH CARE INC
 HEALTH CARE SERVICE CORPORATION
 HENDRICK MEDICAL CENTER
 KOHLER COMPANY
 UNITED SUPERMARKETS LTD
 WAL-MART ASSOCIATES INC

NAICS COVERED EMPLOYMENT QUARTERLY DATA 2nd Quarter 2007

SUPER SECTOR	Total	Change Quarter	Year
Natural Resources & Mining	7,059	439	-289
Construction	6,256	467	496
Manufacturing	10,104	69	-169
Trade, Trans., and Utilities	22,238	432	331
Information	1,744	47	82
Financial Activities	5,771	722	652
Professional and Business Svcs.	6,353	299	136
Education & Health Services	17,901	-420	-108
Leisure & Hospitality	11,267	683	222
Other Services	3,433	150	31
Federal Government	1,976	-7	-52
State Government	5,958	-133	19
Local Government	19,436	13	873
Nonclassified & Confidential	186	-179	-115
TOTAL	119,682	2,582	2,109

Size Class Employment Composition 2nd Quarter 2007



Former Secretary of Labor Addresses Workforce Summit

Former Secretary of Labor, Dr. Ray Marshall, addressed the audience of Workforce Summit 2007. Dr. Marshall provided an overview of *Tough Choices or Tough Times, The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*. The report is a product from the National Center on Education and the Economy, of which Dr. Marshall is the Chair of Trustees, and is a follow-up to the first Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, *America's Choice: high skills or low wages*, released in 1990.

In 1990, the globalization of the world's economy was just getting underway. The earlier report predicted that a worldwide market was developing for low-skill labor and that the related jobs would go to those countries with the lowest labor costs. If the U.S. wanted to continue to compete on the basis of wages, it would be looking forward to a continued decline in wages and long working hours. Alternatively, the U.S. could concentrate on the worldwide market for high-value-added products and services. In order to do this, however, the U.S. would have to adopt internally benchmarked high standards for educating its students and workers, if they hoped to be competitive and successful. What changed in the seventeen years between the first report and the new report? The first Commission never dreamed that the U.S. would end up competing with countries that could offer large numbers of highly educated workers willing to work for low wages. Today's world is one in which a very high level of preparation in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, science, literature, history, and the arts is an indispensable foundation for most members of the workforce. The best employers in the world will be looking for the most competent, most creative, and most innovative people on the face of the earth. What's more, these companies will be willing to pay top dollar for these employees. This will be true for professionals and managers, as well as all levels of the workforce – top to bottom. Strong skills in English, math, technology, and science will be critical. Additionally literature, history and arts will be essential for many. Job candidates will need to be comfortable with ideas and abstractions, good at both analysis and synthesis, creative, innovative self-disciplined, well organized, able to learn quickly, and, work well as a member of a team with the flexibility to adapt quickly to frequent changes in the labor market as shifts come faster and more dramatic.

Is our current educational system able to produce these workers? How can we educate current workforce with the skills required to compete globally? Dr. Marshall shared recommendations from the report with the hopes that it will stimulate conversation, ultimately resulting in changes in how we provide education to our children as well as our working adults. The only wrong decision is to do nothing –our education system was built for another era in which most workers needed only a rudimentary education. We must make decisions that may be uncomfortable but that can keep America competitive.

For more information about the Commissions report, or information on how to receive a copy of the Executive Summary of the report, contact Robert Puls at (325) 795-4302, robert.puls@workforcesystem.org or Steve Collins at (325) 795-4305, steve.collins@workforcesystem.org.



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The Workforce Center is an equal opportunity employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request in individuals with disabilities. For TDD call 1-800-735-2898 or voice accessible communication at 1-800-735-2988

Workforce Investment Funds Awarded

Three local businesses have been awarded funds through the Workforce Investment Fund for a total of \$61,790. Selkirk and Zoltek received grants for the first time while PWP Industries has received funds in the past. Selkirk is the largest industry in Winters, Texas and will use their WIF grant for skills development for their employees. Zoltek will use their grant to train supervisory level employees in management and communications. PWP Industries will use their grant to train new employees in on-site inspectors/packers positions. If you would like more information on the Workforce Investment Fund, please contact Robert Puls, Business Development Coordinator, at (325) 795-4200 or robert.puls@workforcesystem.org.

New Workforce Investment Fund Information Now Available

New printed material and DVD are now available to provide an overview of funding criteria and the application process of the Workforce Investment Fund. The Workforce Investment Fund was created by the West Central Texas Workforce Development Board to provide funds for customized training, upgrading skills of current employees, developing new training programs, creating high-skill or high-wage jobs, or retraining employees for new or emerging occupations. Primary applicants for grant funding include small and medium sized businesses, chambers of commerce, economic development entities, and community colleges. Grants up to \$50,000 are awarded quarterly through a competitive application process. If you would like more information on the Workforce Investment Grant, please contact Robert Puls, Business Services Coordinator, at (325) 795-4200 or robert.puls@workforcesystem.org. Information is also available online at www.workforcesystem.org/wif.