



Shaping the Economy

A Monthly Newsletter from the Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas Board

January 2008

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Industry Clusters

The bottom-line of economic development today is about building prosperity—a high and rising standard of living. Productivity and productivity growth are the fundamental drivers of prosperity and innovation is the key driver of productivity...The dominant reality of economic development today is that we live and operate in a worldwide economy. Worldwide commerce means that American businesses must operate and cooperate with countries around the world. Consequently we must think regionally, avoid isolationist practices and build a strong economic platform for growth.

David A. Sampson, Assistant Secretary for Economic Development, U.S. Department of Commerce (2004)

An industry cluster is a concentration of businesses and industries in a geographic region that are interconnected by the markets they serve, the products they produce, their suppliers, trade associations and the educational institutions from which their employees or prospective employees receive training. While located in close proximity, these industry clusters are economic in nature and not geographically bounded. Clusters are considered to increase the productivity with which companies can compete, nationally and globally. In 2003, the Texas Legislature passed SB 275 calling for the development of strategies to strengthen the competitiveness of key industry clusters. The objective of the Industry Cluster Initiative is to stimulate long-term sustained growth and to foster cooperation and share information. The Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas Board has identified the Healthcare Cluster and Manufacturing Cluster as key industry clusters that will be the engines of job creation and economic development in the 21st century.

The Healthcare Cluster includes representatives from local hospitals and healthcare providers, nursing agencies, educators and community leaders. Recent activities of the cluster have included increasing awareness of healthcare shortages, development of a talent pipeline and participation in local job fair/career fair activities. They have shared information on scholarship initiatives and skill development grants. The Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas Board recently developed a scholarship in cooperation the Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals (TORCH) to provide grant funds for training and development and facilitate the need for continuing education of healthcare professionals for employees of rural hospitals in West Central Texas.

The Manufacturing Cluster includes representatives from metal and plastic fabrication, bottlers, advanced manufacturing, educators and community leaders. They have worked to develop talent pipelines and to sponsor career fairs at high schools within the region. They are also working to develop new training initiatives.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Healthcare or Manufacturing Cluster can contact Steve Collins, Business Resource Consultant, at (325) 795-4200 or email him at steve.collins@workforcesystem.org.

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.

Economic Indicators

West Central WDA			Texas			West Central WDA Average Weekly Wage			
	Dec 07	Nov 07	Dec 06	Dec 07	Nov 07	Dec 06	WDA	Texas	
Labor Force	158,207	158,588	158,958	11,637,497	11,658,167	11,592,664			
Employment	152,447	152,807	153,248	11,142,595	11,180,723	11,118,294	2nd QTR 07	\$575	\$826
Unemployment Rate	5,760	5,781	5,710	494,902	477,444	474,370	2006 Avg	\$560	\$871
	3.6	3.6	3.6	4.3	4.1	4.1	2005 Avg	\$536	\$823

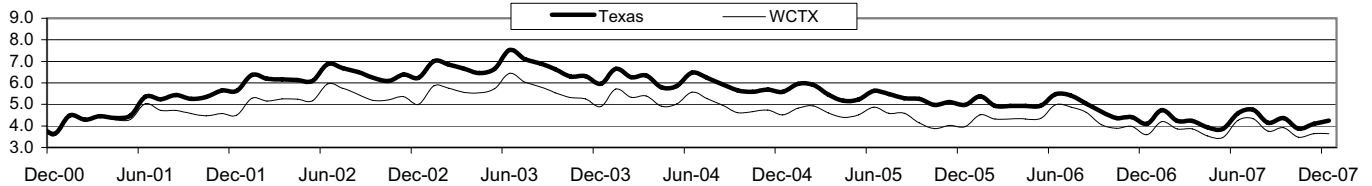
West Central Texas Workforce Development Area

December 2007

Civilian Labor Force Estimates (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

West Central Texas WDA					Texas			
	CLF	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	CLF	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Dec-07	158,207	152,447	5,760	3.6	11,637,497	11,142,595	494,902	4.3
Nov-07	158,588	152,807	5,781	3.6	11,658,167	11,180,723	477,444	4.1
Dec-06	158,958	153,248	5,710	3.6	11,592,664	11,118,294	474,370	4.1

Historical Unemployment Rates



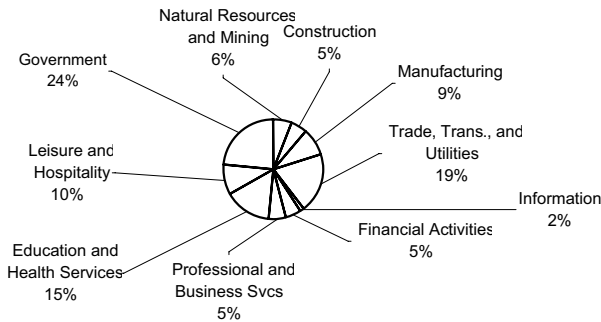
Total Claims

	Dec-07	Nov-07	Dec-06	OTY
Initial	511	467	662	-151
Continued	1,940	1,637	3,110	-1,170
Continued Claims for the Week of the 12th				
Continued	503	534	711	-208

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



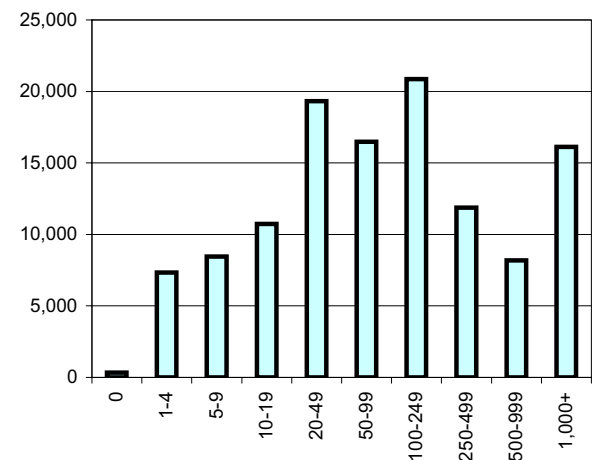
Top 10 Private Employers in the WDA 2nd Quarter 2007

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



WorkForce Investment Fund Success

By Les Oldham, Owner of Tel-IS

Every day a small business faces the challenge of improving how we use resources to serve our customers and to be more profitable. We must make difficult choices about how and where to make investments that serve the long-term future of our company. Experience has shown that employee training and development are one of the highest return investments that we can make. A grant from the Workforce Investment Fund created by the Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas Board to upgrade the skills of current workers was an exciting opportunity for Tel-IS and our employees.

Russell Altman, Business Development Specialist with the Abilene Small Business Development Center encouraged Tel-IS to apply for a grant from the Workforce Investment Fund. With the help and guidance of Robert Puls, Business Development Consultant for The Workforce Center of West Central Texas, Tel-IS filled out a five page grant application for a matching funds incentive to be used for formal training of Tel-IS employees to upgrade their skills which potentially would result in increased profits for Tel-IS and the ability for Tel-IS to increase wages for the employees with the new skills. The Tel-IS application to the Workforce Investment Fund was successful. Tel-IS signed an agreement with the West Central Texas Workforce Development Board to invest matching funds for training of \$11,000 in consideration of Workforce Investment Funds for training of \$25,615.

Within six months of the training, Tel-IS was awarded the largest professional services engagement of our seven year history, a \$160,000 consulting engagement for Cadbury Schweppes. Our primary mission for the Workforce Investment Fund application was to be able to better serve our customers and to increase our revenue and profits. In addition to generating more profitable business with one of our customers, we were able to increase employee productivity and improve employee morale as well as their wages.

Tel-IS has experienced first hand how an investment in employee training can be rewarding. To be able to leverage that investment with matching funds from the Workforce Investment Fund was truly a SUCCESS!

Tel-IS is a technology services company specializing in unified communication, messaging and collaboration solutions which simply communication processes for large enterprises.

Cadbury Schweppes is the world's largest confectionery company and has strong beverages business in North America and Australia. With origins stretching back over 200 years, today, Cadbury Schweppes products – which include brands such as Cadbury, Schweppes, Halls, Trident, Dr Pepper, Snapple, Trebor, Dentyne, Bubblicious and Bassett – are enjoyed in almost every country around the world. The Group employees over 70,000 people.

If you would like more information about the Workforce Investment Fund and other financial resources to grow your business through workforce training then you are invited to attend a brown bag lunch on February 21, 2008. Locations for the Brown Bag are the Workforce Center in Abilene, Western Texas College in Snyder, Winters High School in Winters, the Brownwood ISD Administration Building in Brownwood, and TSTC in Breckenridge. The cost is only \$10. Call Robert Puls or Steve Collins, Business Development Consultants, at (325) 795-4200 for more information.



WEST CENTRAL TEXAS WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT BOARD
400 Oak St. * Abilene, Texas 79602

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 \$105,890. Friends for Life and Receptor Logic received funds for the first time while Hendrick Medical Center has received money in the past. Friends for Life is a non-profit organization that works with counties in the region to help individuals with issues related to legal guardianship. They will use their funding to train new employees. Receptor Logic is a new biotech company, which develops and produces antibodies used for research with emphasis on cancer research. They will use their funds to upgrade the skills of their biologists. Hendricks Medical Center will partner with Texas Tech University to provide a 50-week training program for individuals who already have a college degree and who are interested in becoming Registered Nurses. The program will allow them to complete nursing school in one year rather than two. The Workforce Investment Funds was created by the Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas Board to provide funds for customized training, upgrading skills of current employees, developing new training programs, creating new 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 or labor organizations. Grants up to \$50,000 are awarded through a competitive application process. The deadline for the next grant cycle is March 31, 2008. Funding criteria and additional information may be downloaded at www.workforcesystem.org/wif.htm. Questions regarding the Workforce Investment Fund may be directed to Robert Puls, Business Services Coordinator, at (325) 795-4200 or Robert.puls@workforcesystem.org.