

Issues and Answers Network Comes to Escanaba

Issues & Answers Network began 14 years ago with a twenty two seat call center and has since grown to seven locations with the ability to provide their services throughout sixty percent of the world. The newest location for this exciting company will be in Escanaba with an anticipated opening date in May of 2002. Michigan Works! helped to bring Issues & Answers to the area by providing them with the necessary labor market information, and with services that make it easy for businesses to develop in our area, such as assisting in recruitment of a local management team and by provid-



Linda Hirvonen of the EDA, Jean Rose of the Delta Chamber, and Orrin Bailey of Michigan Works! during the press conference announcing Issues and Answers decision to create a facility in Escanaba

ing space for interviewing applicants.

The company had several goals in mind when they chose Escanaba for the 60-station call center. First, to identify an area where the population speaks articulately and has strong work ethic. Second, to move the call center completely away from traditional telemarketing which involves selling. Third to become closely associated with a college.

All three goals have been achieved and the most exciting one may be the partnership with Bay College. This partnership will allow for a steady influx of a student workforce that the company will support with flexible hours in order to allow for work without overwork or lack of time for school. Additionally the partnership will allow students to receive partial credit for classes involved with the marketing program. The positions at the call center expose team members to a wide variety skills and information that can be valuable for many different careers. The interviewers at Issues & Answers learn about successful sampling, data collection, questionnaire formation, high-tech hardware and software and a wide variety of industries and how they market.

Issues & Answers will provide an excellent opportunity for Bay College students to connect with the populations of 50 states and a broad array of business executives and other professionals.

Some of the types of research done by Issues & Answers Network include: advertising research and concept testing; awareness and usage; customer/employee satisfaction; customer retention; political polls; mail surveys; and polls with executives and medical professionals. In addition, Issues & Answers has over a dozen partners worldwide. Most polling is conducted by telephone, however, Issues & Answers also conducts focus groups for in-depth insight into marketing issues and conducts surveys via the web through its unique software.

Each project is supervised by an experienced project director, which allows customers the convenience of having all their questions and information needs addressed through one person.



The Issues and Answers Network is on the leading edge of technology with:

- Over 350 telephone stations in five locations
- Customized State-Of-The-Art Software
- AT&T and Northern Telecom Meridian telephone systems for least cost routing of long distance calling
- AT&T Megacom and MCI Prism inbound & outbound service with fiber optic lines for clarity of the highest degree
- All stations are equipped with toll free service for creative marketing and market research applications
- Capability of remote and internal monitoring and the ability to download executable files for client questionnaire review
- Briefing rooms with speaker phones and state-of-the-art video conferencing equipment at each office for remote interviewer training
- Internet web server for On-Line date collection
- Focus Group facilities with state-of-the-art audio and visual equipment in three offices
- Interactive Voice Response technology

The team at Issues & Answers Network works with all of their clients and respondents to collect information that will be beneficial to everyone in a constantly changing world. The information and data they collect helps to move companies in a direction of quality and continuous improvement based on what is important to people. Michigan Works! looks forward to a long and productive partnership with the team at Issues & Answers. Peter McGuinness, President of Issues & Answers Network says "Escanaba will provide Issues & Answers with a professional staff coupled with an excellent environment. We at Issues & Answers look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with the community"

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President's Corner: Strategic Planning

In March of 2000, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board (JFB) and its Career Connections Group (CCG) embarked upon an extensive community-based strategic planning process involving key community stakeholders. This initiative began in response to the Michigan Department of Career Development's challenge to local Michigan Works! Workforce Development Boards and their Education Advisory Groups to create a Career Development System that is effective and responsive to local and regional needs along with supporting the Mission of the Department of Career Development (MDCD) "To develop a system that produces a workforce with the required skills to maintain and enhance the Michigan Economy."

The purpose of this strategic planning process is to identify strategies, actions, tasks and measurements to create and maintain a healthy and growing economy, with an equipped local workforce that has the knowledge and skills needed by business in a technological and competitive market



Faye Steadman, Business Development Consultant with Michigan Works!, presenting during the Marquette County Management Training

place. The process will identify and strengthen partnerships in which coordination of career development services will be enhanced, allocation of available resources will be optimized, and the career development system will successfully meet the needs of both business and workers.

Within the strategic plan, the Job Force Board and its Career Connections Group has developed goals that will be pursued in addition to existing career development initiatives under the MDCD Career Preparation System. The goals augment the strategic planning and implementation efforts already undertaken by the Career Connections Group.

One of the five goals set by the Job Force Board and its Career Connections Group is to create multiple opportunities for employers to access skill training for existing employees. An example of one way that Michigan Works! The Job Force Board is working to reach this goal is seen in a recent opportunity to provide management training for supervisors of Marquette County. The training was provided at the Marquette County Michigan Works! Service Center, located at 1498 O'Dovero Drive in Marquette, which was beneficial because the location proved to be highly accessible to all those attending.

The Marquette County Management Training for Supervisors was separated into two sessions that were presented over a five-week period. The first session was presented every Wednesday morning from 8 am to noon, and the second wound up the training with a full two-day session. During this time, the team was presented training modules that discussed

the role of a manager, fostering open communication, communicating effectively, contract grievance and discipline administration, managing conflict and change, and conducting effective performance appraisals.



Will Carne

The overall intentions for this training were to improve the management style for Marquette County, and in turn, for area businesses. Because the training was held at the Michigan Works! Service Center in Marquette County, the costs, which would have been enormous had an outside training source been brought in, were minimal. It also provided the benefit of having local people discussing applications and answers to our own local Human Resources situations.

It is one of our goals create multiple opportunities for employers to access skill training for existing employees, and we were therefore happy to be able provide services to Marquette County. Hopefully, The Job Force Board's continued involvement in our region will help to ensure a quality workforce, and the economic well being of our area.

If you would like to know more about the services provided by Michigan Works!, please view our website at www.jobforce.org, or give us a call at 1-800-285-WORKS. The addresses and phone numbers of each of the service centers are listed on the back page of this issue.

Michigan Works! System Profile of the Month: David Rivard

Mr. David John Rivard, recently retired from Michcon, has been a Job Force Board member for over 5 years, and as a member of the Job Force Board, Rivard also serves on the Marketing and Membership Education Committees. Rivard began his involvement with Michigan Works! by serving on the Six County Employment Alliance.

According to Rivard, the professional accomplishment that he is most proud of is the fact that he has been serving his company and community for over 39 years with volunteer services. Indeed, his volunteer services are much more far reaching than just his work with The Job Force Board. Besides being a member of The Job Force Board, Rivard is also on the boards of UCAP, and Bay Bank.

Rivard states that the most satisfying aspect of

being a member of the Michigan Works! System is finding work for people, and helping employers to better their businesses. During his time with the Job Force Board, Rivard sees the development of the M-Tec center as the accomplishment that stays the most vivid in his memory.

While at Michcon, a supplier of Natural gas in the state of Michigan, Rivard worked in Corporate and Government affairs. He was employed at this position for 33 years, and found the most challenging aspect for his industry to be lowering the cost of bringing low cost, efficient fuel to its consumers.

Rivard has also traveled extensively. He once lived in Italy for two years. Some of the more interesting experiences from his travels were that he was able to see two Popes (John the 23rd and

John Paul the 2nd) and 2 U.S. Presidents (Jerry Ford and Ronald Reagan).

Yet, through his travels, Rivard returned to his birthplace, Escanaba, because he sees the Upper Peninsula as a clean and beautiful place to live.

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board would like to thank David Rivard for his dedication and helping to enhance the workforce of the Central Upper Peninsula.



Mr. David Rivard

Regional Educational Institute Focuses on Tools for Measuring Success

More than 75 business and education leaders from northeast and north central Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula gathered in Green Bay earlier this month for a business-education partnership conference to learn how they can help their partnerships and communities measure their success against federal, state, and local initiatives.

Members from each local business-education partnership (BEP) had the opportunity to give presentations on behalf of their area. Participating locally was Deb Doyle, of Michigan Works! The Job Force Board. Doyle gave a presentation to the group on behalf of the Delta County Partners in Education. Doyle also helped to represent the Lake Superior Partners in Education at this event.

Gene Bottoms, Ph.D., a founder of the "High Schools That Work" program and senior vice president of the Southern Regional Education Board was the keynote speaker at the March 7 institute, co-sponsored by Wisconsin Public Service, a subsidiary of WPS Resources (NYSE: WPS), and the Utility Business Education Coalition

(UBEC). He spoke about how focus, effort, structure, quality standards, and data can be used effectively to raise student achievement.

"We were very excited to have Dr. Bottoms share his insights with us," said BJ Cassidy, education affairs leader for Wisconsin Public Service. "His 'High Schools that Work' program is the nation's first large-scale effort to involve the total community in improving the way all high school students are prepared for work and further education. The program is active at more than 1,100 sites in 26 states and more than 7,000 educators participate in its summer staff development conference each year.

"Their belief is that most students can learn complex academic and technical concepts if they're in an environment that encourages them to make the effort to succeed," Cassidy continued.

The Utility Business Education Coalition (UBEC) is a national, CEO-driven alliance to transform community work force development initiative and



Pictured from left to right are; Larry Wyers, BJ Cassidy, Dr. Gene Bottoms, and Deb Doyle

position youth for future success. Larry Weyers, president, chairman and CEO of WPS Resources is chairman of the UBEC board of directors for 2002. UBEC was established in 1995 by the nation's electric and natural gas utility companies. By engaging companies with community schools, UBEC's intent is to produce bottom-line results for businesses and schools. More information is available online at www.ubec.org.

Partnership For Adult Learning

The Partnership for Adult Learning (PAL) is showing itself to be a great success throughout the Six County Region of the Central Upper Peninsula. PAL, which was launched by Michigan Works! The Job Force Board is focusing on improving basic literacy skills among its students, while providing employers with a quality workforce.

Individuals who enroll in PAL are those that want to improve their literacy skills in either reading or math, or both. Students of PAL are generally looking to earn a high school diploma, or to increase skill levels to be better suited for their job. Each person, with the help of PAL coordinators, develops an individual learning plan geared toward his or her needs. Students are able to work at their own pace using computer software which makes it possible for them to start, work on, and finish their learning sessions whenever and wherever it is convenient to their work schedule. It also gives the students the ability to revisit topics so that they can completely understand everything before moving on.

Because PAL is targeting areas of opportunity for each individual, the students are able to set a goal of what literacy level they would like to achieve in order to become a productive employee. Usually, students reach their predetermined goal, and set a higher goal for themselves. "There has been a good response from the people using the PAL services because

they like the self pace," said Will Carne, the President of The Job Force Board. "People will bring their skills up to their desired level, and then they often decide to continue to use the service because they like it and want to improve their skills as much as possible."

Teresa Bowen, who is currently using the Partnership for Adult Learning to obtain the knowledge needed to get into a non-traditional occupation or trade has had a great experience with the service. "When I needed help, I received it from PAL. It is truly a wonderful program. Everyone works at their own pace...but you must put forth the effort if you want to succeed," said Bowen, who has been working diligently with PAL to improve her skills in preparation for a career as an electrician.

If you would like more information, contact your nearest Michigan Works! Service Center.



Teresa Bowen

Bailey Selected as Board Member

CEO Orrin Bailey has been selected as a Board member of the National Workforce Association (NWA). The National Workforce Association is a membership organization dedicated to strengthening the nation's workforce development system. NWA plays a key leadership role in the nation's workforce development system by:

1. Providing expertise and input to federal, state and local elected officials to enable them to make sound policy decisions about the workforce system; and
2. Promoting innovation and excellent performance in locally based workforce programs through conferences, training sessions, publications and peer-to-peer exchanges.

Bailey, a resident of Gladstone, Michigan, was hired as the CEO for Michigan Works! The Job Force Board and the Six County Employment Alliance in 1993. Since then, Bailey has provided the executive leadership support to the Boards in the areas of strategic planning and oversight of the Michigan Works! Service Centers in the central six counties of the Upper Peninsula.



Youth Works! and the Lake Superior Community Partnership Develop Workshops For Area Youth

Youth Works! is designed to tap the unlimited potential of our regional youth to successfully meet the needs of the business community as a better-prepared job applicant and employee.

The Lake Superior Partners in Education,



Karen Johnson, Deb Doyle, Sandy Spoelstra, Sandy Meyskens, Catherine Dunn

Marquette/Alger Resource Education Agency and Michigan Works! The Job Force have developed a series of workshops that will provide youth with competencies to succeed in the workplace. As youth successfully complete the series of workshops they will receive a certificate that can be taken to area businesses who support the Youth Works! initiative. This certificate will enhance the interview process by showing the interviewer that the youth in question has gone above and beyond other regional youth, and has received instruction on basic workplace skills from Michigan Works!

Youth who have not attended these workshops, and as a result, do not successfully demonstrate competencies in

these workplace skills will be referred to Michigan Works! Service Center personnel to work on the deficient areas and then to be reassessed as to their competency level.

Youth Works! services might potentially be provided in schools and all schools are welcome to schedule Youth Works! activities at their local Michigan Works! Service Center. North Star Academy, Superior Central Schools, Marquette Senior High School and Gwinn Area Schools are already participating in Youth Works!

For more information, please call the Lake Superior Partnership at (906) 226-6591 or the Marquette County Michigan Works! Service Center at (906) 228-3075 and ask for "Youth Works".



Fazoli's opens in Escanaba

Fazoli's Restaurant officially opened its doors to the public in Escanaba on April 15. Members from the Delta County Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board, and from Fazoli's all gathered to celebrate the opening of the fast food restaurant that prepares high quality Italian food for its patrons..

Michigan Works! was proud to be able to provide services to the Fazoli's Restaurant in Escanaba. During construction of the new building, Michigan Works! collected resumes for Fazoli's, and provided valuable meeting space.



Representatives from the Delta County Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Works! and Fazoli's all celebrated the opening of the new restaurant.

Bringing Youth & Business Together Imagine the Possibilities...

Youth Works! for BUSINESS

We provide your business with:

- ✓ Motivated Youth
- ✓ Applicant Screening
- ✓ Labor Market Information
- ✓ Employment Regulation Information
- ✓ Save your Business Time and Money
- ✓ Placement Services



Our Youth Applicant Pool:

- ✓ Attends a soft skills pre-employment workshop
- ✓ Are screened by a professional Michigan Works! staff member
- ✓ Are talented, motivated and responsible
- ✓ Possess a wide variety of skills
- ✓ Ages 16-21

Youth Works! for YOUTH

We help youth with:

- ✓ Job Information
- ✓ Applications to local business
- ✓ Career Exploration
- ✓ Education Opportunities
- ✓ Access to Computer Lab
- ✓ Employment Career Resources
- ✓ Soft Skills Training

Contact your Nearest Michigan Works! Service Center-
(Contact information is on the back)
for more details. 1-800-285-WORKS

Sponsor a page in the Michigan Works! Business is UP-Date

The Michigan Works! Business is UP-Date is a respected area newsletter providing local business, economic, and educational information to over 3,500 business professionals throughout the Central Upper Peninsula.

There are various sponsorship opportunities for the Michigan Works Business is UP-Date Newsletter insuring that all businesses can find the publicity that they are looking for within our pages.

For sponsorship information contact Rob Carviou at:

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