

Maryland



Voice of the Chesapeake

Volume 19

Issue 3

June – July 2008

President's Message

Summer is here and I hope all of you are enjoying it.

The Maryland Chapter of IAWP has been busy. We had a most successful Spring Institute in Annapolis on May 22nd. We had great speakers and wonderful attendance. We had first time attendees and others that had been attending for many, many years. It is always so pleasant to see everyone from all over the great state of Maryland.



You will see articles about the Institute in this newsletter. I hope as you read them, you will make a promise to yourself to attend the Fall Institute. Everyone that attends enjoys the day and is happy to network with their fellow workforce professionals, partners, and friends, old and new.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ❖ Secretary Thomas Perez "Speaks" at the MD Chapter IAWP Spring Institute
- ❖ Workforce Makeup
- ❖ Vet Center Information

In June, eleven Maryland IAWP members traveled to Richmond, VA to attend the 93rd IAWP International Conference. Our next newsletter will contain highlights from that event.

We will soon begin to plan the Fall Educational Institute. Do you have an idea or suggestion for a speaker or activity? Please let Nancy Fink,

Education Chair, know. You will find her email address at the end of the newsletter.

Are you aware that we still have copies of our cookbook, Munchies, Morsels, and Main Courses? It is full of recipes from our Maryland Chapter IAWP members. It is great as a gift for yourself or someone else.

Enjoy the rest of the summer, and stay cool!
Suzette Snyder, President

Secretary Perez's Remarks on DLLR's Vision and Direction

Attendees at the Maryland Chapter's Spring Educational Institute got a chance to hear Secretary of DLLR Tom Perez talk about his vision for the agency and his perspective on new directions for DLLR in a conversational presentation that elicited many follow-up questions from the audience.

In his opening remarks, Secretary Perez noted workforce development may be at an "historic" juncture. Although there is consensus workforce issues have largely been ignored at state and federal levels—and primacy certainly not reflected in budgets—it is his view Maryland is elevating the importance of workforce development and realigning programs to reflect a new consciousness about the need for integrated programs.

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Secretary Perez Remarks (continued from page 1)

As evidence of the move toward investing more resources in workforce development, and an expanded role for DLLR in setting policy, Secretary Perez cited the following:

- Together with security issues and environmental sustainability/energy, the O'Malley administration recognizes **workforce creation** as one of its three key priorities.
- The Governor convened a workforce sub-cabinet and charged it with creating a new blueprint for workforce services.
- Expansion and renaming of the PreK-16 coordinating body to the P-20 Leadership Council of Maryland to include the agency heads from Dept. of Economics and Business Development and DLLR. *[Historically, the Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning, PreK-16 was an alliance of the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland.]*
- Recent meeting with the Gates Foundation that focused on the need to produce more STEM graduates to meet the workforce needs of employers. [As an example of the problem, Perez noted last year Maryland graduated only 1 physics teacher.]
- On the near horizon, the \$5 million proposal to “incentivize” local DSS and WIB agencies to work more closely together to develop models to serve residents receiving TANF, combining core competencies of Workforce and local DSS.
- The realignment of Adult Education programs under the umbrella of DLLR.

Secretary Perez spoke about expanding opportunities for the “middle skill economy,” those jobs which will not require a 4-year college degree, as well as addressing worker shortages, preparing ex-offenders to re-enter the workforce,

and better meeting the needs of the 21st century economy so no Marylander is left behind. Perez noted this will mean working in close partnership with community colleges and other higher education providers to expand opportunities, as well as building better linkages and better aligning services to serve Marylanders and provide opportunities for all to succeed.

Perez cited specific examples of opportunities:

- Legislation merging Adult Ed and Workforce Development in 2009 is a recognition Maryland needs to do more. Perez cited the statistics: 750,000 adults in need of adult education programs, yet we are only meeting the needs of 5% of that group which places Maryland in 46th place in the country in Adult Ed funding.
- Talks are underway with Secretary Adkins at Dept. of Veterans Affairs about workforce creation for Veterans. Veterans “bring a wealth of skills,” but “often aren’t able to utilize them.”
- Since correctional education will shift to DLLR’s umbrella, DLLR is working with top-level corrections staff and national experts to build a model of service delivery services “behind the fence.” The goal is to ensure success upon release and reduce recidivism. Pre-apprenticeship training, for example, is a linkage needed to provide skills and training.
- Introduced statistics about the higher education attainment of immigrants in Maryland, in contrast to national statistics, and the need to identify “with greater precision” work opportunities to alleviate worker shortages. Removing barriers to training is also needed.
- Cited the need for addressing worker shortages so Marylanders can achieve the most their talents and ambitions will allow. Mentioned the need to create greater access to credentialing for healthcare workers as a means to meet nursing shortage.

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Secretary Perez Remarks (continued from page 2)

In the Q&A portion, Secretary Perez fielded questions about credentialing issues for military healthcare professionals; whether correctional facilities could issue IDs so that ex-offenders have some form of transitional ID to ease the problem of obtaining birth certificates, etc.; and the general question of how do we convince employers to hire ex-offenders.

In response the Secretary said they are working on fixing the gap in credentialing for military healthcare personnel, and asked staff for specific cases where customers with military credentials are having trouble getting jobs. On the ID issue, he said talks are underway with Secretary Porcari of MDOT, and he acknowledged ex-offenders have to overcome many stigma issues. But, Perez noted, many employers are open to hiring—they simply may not advertise it. He also noted the need to “drill down into middle schools” to impress upon young students that “choices can have very serious long-term consequences.”

Submitted by Cindy Quail, Legislative Chair

Update on the Division of Workforce Development

Crystal Martin, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Division of Workforce Development of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), provided a brief on the status of a variety of DLLR initiatives, requirements, and programs. Topics included mandatory MWE registration for unemployment insurance (UI) claimants, the opening of an out-of-state BRAC transition center, new focus on apprenticeships, an ex-offender initiative, and new monies available through a partnership with DHR.

Crystal noted that one of the provisions of the Adult Education bill approved this past session by the Maryland legislature requires the Secretary of DLLR to make sure every UI claimant enrolls with the One-Stop system as a

condition of receiving UI. Towards this end, work is proceeding to develop a pilot project in Baltimore County.

She also mentioned that Maryland’s BRAC outreach is now extending beyond state lines, as the first “transition center” was opened in April in New Jersey to serve individuals and families affected by the impending move of Fort Monmouth, NJ operations to Maryland. That center will provide information about housing, workforce development, and related information. A second transition center is planned for Virginia to assist those affected by the move of the Defense Information Systems Agency to Fort Meade.

Other honorable mentions from her presentation:

- Application now is available on the DLLR website regarding a Pilot Program for ex-offenders involving tax credits for employers. [see “Individuals with Barrier to Employment” at <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/taxcredits.html>]
- New focus on Apprenticeship programs to increase jobseeker opportunities and knowledge of programs available. For example, Governor is working with Division of Labor and Industry to strengthen relationships; and meetings will be held to bring apprenticeship information to the One-Stops and designate a point person in each One-Stop; front page of MWE has been modified to feature an apprenticeship button.
- Hiring Freeze and Budget Rescission-- Regarding the former, it is a time-consuming process to fill vacancies; regarding the latter, the State was hit hard by the budget rescission, more so than the local areas. But for the first time in a long time, the appropriation isn’t as bad as was anticipated.
- Partnership between DHR and DLLR--DHR is making available \$5 million and local WIB directors are/will be submitting proposals. A program coordinator will come on board June 9th.

Submitted by Cindy Quail, Legislative Chair

UI Update

Unemployment Assistant Secretary Tom Wendel shared news of new legislation affecting UI, as well as current Maryland UI projects.

UI Legislative activity:

- Effective 10/3/08, individuals whose military spouses are transferred can receive Unemployment Insurance benefits to follow their spouse. This will be important as BRAC is implemented. There will be a five-week temporary disqualification due to time loss for relocation.
- Legislation has been passed to enable Maryland to collect its own FUTA taxes. However, this must be approved by the Senate and House. Four states are working on a five-year pilot program. The Federal Government has been reluctant to allow this because this money has been used to offset the federal deficit.
- A bill to increase Maryland's weekly benefit amount (WBA) by \$40 per week for three years did not pass. Maryland's WBA is \$380, which equates to a very low replacement rate for higher wage earners. At best, claimants receive 54% of what they earned. This money is taxable.
- A bill to allow UI benefits for part-time workers did not pass. Since 1949, the law has required claimants to be able and available for full-time work. However, the economy has changed since then. Many employers will not hire full-time workers. This bill is likely to pass next year.
- A bill related to the classification of independent contractors related to workers' compensation did not pass, and will probably come up again next year.
- A provision allowing extended benefits was included in the stimulus check legislation, but it didn't pass. This has been submitted at least four more times and is now sitting in the House. If passed, Maryland's UI benefits would extend an additional 13 weeks beyond the initial 26. Other states may get more than 13 additional weeks.

Senator McCain wants to overhaul the UI program, creating a voucher system where workers would pay into a fund that they would build up. They would tap into the fund when they are unemployed and contribute to it when they are working. There would be an incentive to build it up, because at retirement the worker would get the funds.

1. There are several special projects underway for Maryland UI:
2. The Internet claims program is being rewritten and will be implemented in late summer.
3. An e-filing program for employers is being developed; some new modules are on the internet.
4. Correspondence for employers is being converted to an electronic system. This will be cheaper and faster than regular mail. Employers can respond electronically as well.
5. Benefit Payment Control unit has a contract with ITSC for a case management system. Automating this unit will enable online imaging of documents.

By October 1 all new claims will have two payment options: debit card or direct deposit. This will be more secure for individuals, and will eliminate check cashing fees and lost check problems.

Submitted by: Sue Gallagher, Awards Chair

UI Benefit Payment Control Update

The morning started off on the right foot with a presentation by Linda Meads-Crandell, Program Manager of Benefit Payment Control Unit within the Division of Unemployment Insurance. This unit is comprised of claims investigation, post audit and recovery, and a legal section. The legal section has 7 attorneys to take UI claimants to court who owe money to Unemployment Insurance for UI benefit overpayments. This could result in jail time and/or garnishment of wages.

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UI Benefit Payment (continued from page 4)

One of the best ways to report fraud is the Fraud Hotline, a toll-free number; the caller can remain confidential. Another source of fraud/overpayment information is the Report of New Hire Registry. Federal and state law requires all employers who are covered under the Maryland Unemployment Insurance Law to report all employees who are hired or rehired to a central registry within 20 days of the employee's first day of work. Many people think they can continue to file for UI until they receive their first paycheck from their employer. This is not true. Claimants are required to report their wages when earned, not when paid. This program has been around since July 1, 1997. In 2008 alone, the Maryland New Hire program has given Maryland enough information to complete 1359 cases. In 2007, 6230 cases were completed which resulted in \$3.6 million in overpayments. These cases may only be overpaid 3 to 4 weeks at a time, but some of the fraud overpayments often stretch to several months.

The Cross-Match Audit Program uses wage records and compares wages earned to UI benefits received. This audit identifies people who were not reported by the New Hire Program. Over \$1 million in overpayments was discovered in the first 3 months of 2008 through this audit. In 2007, it was a total of \$4.5 million; and through investigations, \$610K. This money goes back into the UI trust fund once it is recouped.

Not all overpayments are fraud overpayments. Appeals can reverse decisions that were previously made at the adjudication center level, which can result in an overpayment. People also make mistakes, which can result in overpayments. Examples would be reporting net amount earned instead of gross amount, not reporting that they had returned to work and being overpaid only one or two weeks.

Benefit Payment Control also has oversight of the 1099 process, where persons who have received Unemployment Insurance are sent documents to file with the IRS for UI benefits

received during the past calendar year. Claimants must pay taxes on this money.

Forgery investigations are also handled in this unit. An example of forgery is if someone has filed a claim for Unemployment Insurance under another person's name, or steals someone's Unemployment Insurance check and cashes it.

Submitted by Faye Gossert, MD IAWP Treasurer

Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) Basics

Eric Seleznow, Executive Director of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, provided a quick "GWIB 101." Maryland's GWIB has 45 members; 51% represent business as is required by law. Other members include six Cabinet secretaries, the Maryland School Superintendent, the presidents of Towson University and several community colleges, and representatives from non-profit corporations such as Goodwill.

Functioning as a business-led policy board, the GWIB seeks to fulfill the needs of businesses and our most precious resource – our people. Governor O'Malley has placed an emphasis on workforce development. He understands that Maryland has one of the highest educated workforces in the country. BRAC will add to that. At same time, many members of our workforce are undereducated, have limited English proficiency, or are under-employed or unemployed. We must sustain the highly educated workforce while providing opportunities for other people to move up in the workforce.

The GWIB is working on aligning all workforce related services – education, workforce development, training, and economic development - to ensure that all Marylanders, from youth to old age, have the tools to meet the needs of businesses and succeed in the workplace. What is taught in high school must match what is needed in the workforce.

Competition in the global economy, changing

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(GWIB) Basics (continued from page 5)

needs of businesses, worker shortages, skills mismatch, connecting youth and untapped populations to the workforce – these are all issues that must be addressed.

The need for basic work readiness skills hasn't changed. Businesses still want workers who come to work on schedule, have a positive attitude and professional appearance, and are willing to work.

Our workforce system is part of a nationwide system. Funding comes from the US Department of Labor, to the State, to the local workforce investment boards, to the local One-Stops. There are 1900 One-Stops across America. In Maryland, 120,000 people visit the One-Stops each year.

Through its industry initiative process, the GWIB focuses on key industries to identify and seek solutions to workforce issues unique to those industries. After an analysis of the target industry, a summit centered on that industry is held, resulting in the creation and implementation of an action plan. The Energy industry is currently a priority. The Energy industry has employment challenges, including an aging workforce and worker shortages, especially in the electrical field. The GWIB has begun its Energy initiative with a meeting on June 6. For more information on energy workforce development check out www.cewd.org. Baltimore County has received a Community Based Job Training Grant from the Department of Labor, partnering Constellation Energy, the community colleges, and the One-Stop system.

The ultimate goal of the GWIB is to maintain a demand-driven, supply focused workforce development system comprised of business, government and education.

Submitted by Sue Gallagher, Education Chair

Congress Passes War Supplemental that Includes UI Extension

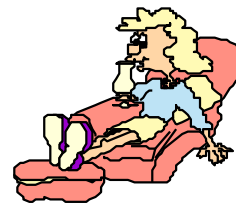
Recently the United States Senate passed HR 2642, the FY 2008 War Supplemental, by a vote of 92-6. In addition to appropriating \$165.4 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it would provide \$21.1 billion for domestic programs.

So how does this relate to workforce professionals? This bill impacts workforce professionals in two ways. First, by extending unemployment insurance benefits for 13 weeks for individuals who have exhausted their benefits, and second, by appropriating an additional \$110 million for the unemployment insurance system to fund increasing workloads that states are experiencing.

To find out more information about this bill check out <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.r.02642>:

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Submitted by Cindy Quail, Legislative Chair*

Retiree's Corner



Dear IAWP Friends:

Just before I retired, some friends gave me a basket of retirement gifts that included a Life is Good T-shirt. A tag sewn into the hem says "Do what you like. Like what you do." So for the past 4 months, I've been doing what I like - and it's wonderful

I eased myself into retirement by attending a two-month course to become a Master Gardener. I'd wanted to do it for several years but the classes were only offered during the day. Two mornings a week I went to classes to learn about ecology, entomology, botany, etc. I'd never really thought about how many disciplines are wrapped up in gardening. I passed the
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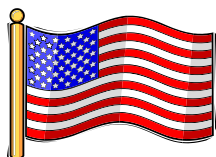
Retiree's Corner (continued from page 6)

certification test in April and am now an official Master Gardener. I've volunteer for plant clinics at the local Farmer's Market, answering questions about stink bugs, and at the local community college, putting in a native plant garden. Between the rain and the oppressive heat of late, I'm unfortunately not getting too much done in my own yard.

I love having time to read after spending years never reading more than a chapter or two in one sitting. My dog loves getting longer and more frequent walks. Daytrips and vacations are always on my to-do list. The travel will be increasing since Dave joined me in retirement on July 1st. I had visions of completing a ton of projects around the house but lunch with friends, birdwatching, or babysitting my great nieces somehow keeps getting in the way.

I'd recommend retirement to anyone. The only downside is that you never get a day off.

Shanon Wolf, Retired



Veteran Update

Governor O'Malley Signs Legislation to Support Maryland Veterans

Working together during the first 15 months of the O'Malley-Brown Administration, the State of Maryland and the Department of Veterans Affairs have:

- Implemented the \$125,000 State death benefit for the families of those killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Funded the Iraq and Afghanistan Scholarship Program at a time when the current federal G.I. Bill is lacking.

- Enhanced the status of veterans in the state workforce by providing added protection during reductions in the workforce.
- Established the Gold Star license plate so families of the fallen can honor their service by displaying this special tag.
- Established new full-time veterans service offices in Hagerstown, Bel Air and Charlotte Hall to better assist veterans in filing VA claims.
- Established the Veterans Behavioral Health Advisory Board and funded \$2.8 million in local behavioral health treatment for veterans who are unable to get needed care through the US Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Established a procurement preference program for small businesses owned by veterans and service disabled veterans pursuing contracts with University System of Maryland, the Department of General Services, and the Department of Transportation.
- Provided the ability for spouses of military personnel to collect unemployment insurance when they have to leave their jobs due to the transfer of their service member out of Maryland.
- Allowed credit for taxes already paid on motor vehicles purchased outside of Maryland when those service members return to Maryland and have to re-register their vehicles.
- Funded an \$800,000 re integration program for National Guard members to assist them in returning to their families, jobs and communities after difficult deployments.

Submitted by Zella Brown, Veteran Chair

Returning Warriors

Welcoming Home Maryland's Citizen-Soldiers

The challenges citizen-soldiers face on returning home and the ways the Maryland National Guard is assisting soldiers "beyond the yellow ribbon" was the subject of LTC Michael Gafney's (continued on page 8)

Returning Warriors (continued from page 7)
presentation on "From Warrior to Civilian: Successful Reintegration of the Maryland National Guard and Reservists."

LTC Gafney, a flight surgeon and Reintegration Coordinator with the Maryland National Guard, spoke about the reintegration needs of Maryland National Guard and Reservists as they return from military duty overseas. It is estimated that in the 6-month period from April – October, approximately 1500 Guard members will be returning from overseas deployments. Reintegration, he emphasized, is a process that involves the entire community. The Guard's mission is "to train and resource every combat vet and their family" for a safe, healthy and successful reintegration into their community, school and job.

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon

Armed with statistics on failed marriages, college dropout rates and mental health issues, Gafney pointed out sharp contrasts between Active Component and Reserve Component troops in successfully re-adjusting to life outside a war zone. Part of the difference is considered due to the type of conflict, and to the fact that returning troops today do not have opportunities - such as extended ship travel - to decompress from their wartime experiences before becoming civilians again. Reservists are also separated from military peers when they return to their civilian lives, adding to isolation and alienation.

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is designed to establish reintegration events at 30, 60 and 90-day intervals upon return. It also provides counseling and services for members and their families. While Active Duty units have reintegration and counseling services, returning Guard members have not had anything

comparable, even though Guard members and Reservists can face a higher reintegration burden than Active Duty troops.

LTC Gafney outlined 5 elements of "Reintegration" including: (1) Overcoming Alienation from family, friends, co-workers, and the larger community; (2) Moving from simple to complex thinking, e.g., "from survival to thriving"; (3) Replacing war with another high; (4) We were soldiers and young once...but what are we now? (5) Make peace with self, God and others.

All the Way Home

What can family, friends, co-workers and the community do to assist returning soldiers? Gafney provided the following short list:

- Welcome them home
- Affirm what they did for you
- Support them with patience
- Encourage them to reengage
- Give them opportunities to succeed

Our warriors deserve no less!
Submitted by Cindy Quail, Legislative Chair

Congratulations!

Four VISA gift cards, valued at \$25.00 each, were randomly selected in our annual Membership Appreciation Drawing at the May 22nd Spring Institute in Annapolis. This drawing included all individuals who began or renewed a 2008 Maryland Chapter IAWP Membership between July 1, 2007 and January 15, 2008. The prizes were in appreciation for their early renewals.

This year's winners were Stacy Lambert - Business Services Representative, Susquehanna Workforce Network; Yvonne Edwards - DLLR-Retired; Denise Carey - Employment Specialist, Anne Arundel One-Stop Career Center; and Mario Quilici - DVOP, Frederick County Workforce Services. Upon learning their good fortune, some of the recipients were heard to comment "Wow, Thanks a bunch" and "Awesome! Thank you so much!"

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Congratulations (continued for page 8)

A new campaign will be launched July 1, 2008 for the 2009 Maryland Chapter IAWP Membership drive for both renewing members and the recruitment of new and returning members. This popular prize contest will continue for the 2009 Membership year.

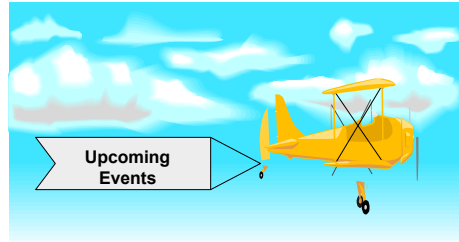
Submitted by Alexis Allenback, Membership Chair



Where are They?

Who Are They?

**Read the Next Issue
of the
*Voice of the Chesapeake***



District IV Fall Conference

Charlestown, West Virginia
October 10, 2008

Maryland Fall Educational Institute

Location TBA
November 20, 2008 (Tentative)

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Voice of the Chesapeake is the newsletter of the Maryland Chapter of International Association of Workforce Professionals (IAWP). 2006-07 Chapter President is Suzette Snyder. Denise Carey edits *Voice of the Chesapeake*. Articles should be submitted by the 15th of the month to Denise Carey, *Voice of the Chesapeake* Editor, DLLR, Anne Arundel One-Stop Career Center, 7480 Baltimore-Annapolis Boulevard, Suite 100, Glen Burnie, MD 21061 or dcarey@dllr.state.md.us.