



BWIB Memberandum

Week of July 27, 2009

- **2009 – 2010 Baltimore Regional Employer Awards Update**

Nominations are presently being solicited for the Third Annual Baltimore Regional Employer Awards. These awards will be presented to area businesses as a way to highlight their unique achievements in the field of workforce development. Businesses will be recognized in the following four categories: **Preparing Youth for the 21st Century Workplace, Competitive Advantage, Overcoming Barriers to Employment and Retention, and Creating Success in the Current Economy.** Winners will be selected by a panel, made up of representatives from the BWIB and the Baltimore County Workforce Development Council.

Honorees will be formally recognized at the third annual Baltimore Regional Employer Breakfast, which will take place in October 2009. Mayor Sheila Dixon and Baltimore County Executive Jim Smith will be on hand to acknowledge the winning companies. As a condition of accepting an award all winners will agree to participate in the Baltimore Regional Employer Institute where they will facilitate “peer to peer” learning experiences to promote and expand their promising workforce practices. Special webinars will take place monthly, from January until May of 2010. The success of this valuable initiative depends in large part on our ability to identify businesses that are engaged in innovative practices that help put people to work. Please note that all nominations packets must be received by no later than August 7th.

- **Federal Workforce Funding Bill Advances in Congress**

Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a \$160.7 billion FY 2010 Labor-HHS-Education spending measure, which is \$52 million below the President’s request. The bill essentially level funds the three Workforce Investment Act formula programs for youth, adults, and dislocated workers. It also would provide \$135 million for a Career Pathways Innovation Fund, of which at least \$65 million will support competitive grants to community colleges and partnerships with local adult education to train nurses, medical technicians and others for skilled jobs in the health industries; \$100 million for YouthBuild; \$45 million to prepare workers for careers in emerging “green” industries; \$50 million for a new research-proven Transitional Jobs employment

strategy to help hard-to-employ non-custodial parents and ex-offenders enter the workforce; and \$615 million for community service jobs.

The Senate still has to consider its own version of this legislation, and the initial deliberations are scheduled to begin this week.

- **Federal Green Jobs Grants Now Available**

Recently, the U. S. Department of Labor announced the availability of \$500 million in grant funding to support the creation of green jobs training programs. These funds are being made available to non-profit entities, public-sector entities, labor organizations, and educational institutions, through a series of five different grant solicitations. At present, the Baltimore Green Jobs Coalition is actively engaged in convening various stakeholders so as to coordinate Baltimore City's likely response to these unique opportunities. It is anticipated that applicants who demonstrate vibrant, broad-reaching partnerships will be most likely to receive favorable consideration for these grants.

- **Key Economic Indicators Show Progress**

A recent data release has shown that existing home sales jumped for the third straight month. A 3.6-percent increase in June 2009 home sales has investors hoping that the hard-hit housing market might be improving. The National Association of Realtors said sales came in at 4.89 million last month, above the 4.84 million analysts had been predicting. Coinciding with this trend, the Commerce Department announced today that June new home sales rose by over 11 percent, the highest growth rate in nine years.

Additionally, while the U.S. Labor Department indicated the number of new claims for unemployment benefits rose by 30,000 to 554,000, slightly above analysts' estimates for this point in July, total unemployment benefit rolls fell to the lowest level since mid-April. In its report, the Labor Department indicated that the new unemployment claims was distorted by the timing of auto plant shutdowns. As of June 2009, the national unemployment rate holds steady at 9.5 percent.

- **Dates of Interest**

Wednesday, July 29th (8:30 am) – BWIB Workforce System Effectiveness Committee Meeting

Thursday, July 30th (8:00 am) – BWIB Training and Postsecondary Education Committee Meeting

Tuesday, Sept. 8th (7:30 am) – BWIB Full Board Meeting

Thursday, Sept. 10th (7:45 am) – BWIB Youth Council Meeting

****If you would like additional information regarding any of the issues or events discussed throughout this publication, please feel free to contact Jeff Smith.****