



BWIB Memberandum

Week of October 10, 2008

- **Congress Passes; President Signs Temporary Spending Bill**

On September 30th, President Bush signed a Continuing Resolution (CR) (H.R. 2638), to fund the federal government through March 6, 2009. Set at over \$600 billion, the CR funds most federal programs at FY08 levels, allocates money to three FY09 appropriations bills, and provides \$22.9 billion for disaster relief. It includes the following spending bills -- Defense, Military Construction-Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security, and extends activities authorized under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA). Additionally, the bill increases Pell Grant funding to \$18 billion, \$2.5 billion more than the previous level. Level funding for FY 09 workforce development programs housed within the Dept. of Labor should mean that Baltimore City will receive about the same amount in federal support as the current year, perhaps a bit more, since no prior-year rescissions are included within this legislation.

- **Nationally, Employers Cutting Jobs, Unemployment Rates Rise**

During September, employers cut 159,000 jobs, the biggest drop in more than five years. The data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics exceeded economists' expectations of 100,000 jobs lost. Overall, the national unemployment rate remained unchanged last month at 6.1 percent, after jumping from 5.6 percent in August, according to the Department of Labor report, and the number of unemployed people was little changed at 9.5 million. In the last year, the number of unemployed individuals has increased by 2.2 million and the unemployment rate has risen by 1.4 percent.

Maryland's unemployment rate in August rose to 4.5 percent, a significant increase from 3.5 percent last year. And, Baltimore City's unemployment rate, which through May 2008 was averaging at 5.7 percent – its lowest rate in fifteen years – rose to 7.5 percent.

Eleven areas recorded jobless rates of 10 percent or higher, with El Centro, Calif. and neighboring Yuma, Ariz., the highest at 24.7 and 22.7 percent respectively.

- **Baltimore City Schools Make Progress on Re-enrolling Dropouts**

The Baltimore City Public Schools System has broadened its efforts to encourage recent high school drop-outs to return to school. Most recently, two resource fairs were held to offer potential returnees assistance in determining how best to resume their formal education. According to BCPSS, a total of 198 drop-outs have re-enrolled since City schools CEO and BWIB member Dr. Andres Alonso announced Baltimore's high schools coordinated effort to reach out to students who left during 2008.

Of the 925 students who have dropped out since the beginning of the calendar year about 400 have not been located because their phone numbers or addresses on record are outdated. Officials say efforts to reach these individuals will continue. Of those who have been contacted, more than a third re-enrolled. The majority of these 198 students, 123, are returning to City high schools; the others have enrolled in alternative and GED programs. In response to the overwhelming interest in the first two resource fairs, six additional fairs will be being planned for later this month.

- **YouthWorks ... Celebrating Recent Success, Looking to the Future**

Last month, Mayor Sheila Dixon and more than 250 YouthWorks supporters, worksite supervisors, and program participants celebrated the success of the 2008 summer jobs program at a reception at the new Hilton Baltimore Hotel. YouthWorks exceeded its goal of connecting more than 6,500 young people to a wide variety of public and private sector jobs.

Plans for the 2009 YouthWorks campaign are already underway. As part of this celebration, Mayor Dixon announced that Ron Peterson, president of Johns Hopkins Hospital and Health System and Bishop Douglas Miles of Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) will serve as her YouthWorks 2009 chairpersons. Setting to work immediately, the Mayor encouraged the audience to complete 2009 pledge cards and worksite request forms now for next summer's program.

- **Dates of Interest**

Tuesday, Oct. 14th (12:30 pm) – BWIB Public Policy Committee Meeting
Friday, November 7th (8:30 am) – BWIB Workforce System Effectiveness Committee Meeting
Thursday, Dec. 4th (8:00 am) – BWIB Training & Postsecondary Education Committee Meeting
Wednesday, Dec. 10th (7:30 am) – BWIB Full Board Meeting
Thursday, Dec. 11th (7:45 am) – BWIB Youth Council Meeting
Tuesday, Dec. 16th (10:00 am) – BWIB Mature Worker Task Force 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.****