

MEETING SUMMARY

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON  
WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

Wednesday, August 22, 2018  
9:00 A.M.  
Association of Arkansas Counties Building  
Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Jane English, the Senate Co-Chair of the Legislative Task Force on Workforce Education Excellence, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN ATTENDANCE:** *Senators:* Jane English, Senate Co-Chair; Lance Eads; and Blake Johnson. *Representatives:* Rick Beck; Dan M. Douglas; and Dan Sullivan.

**NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr. Kenneth Calhoun; Mr. Randy Henderson; and Mr. Mike Rogers.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** *Representatives:* Ron McNair; Johnny Rye; and Carlton Wing.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of June 21, 2018, were approved as written.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C – 06/21/2018 Minutes

Presentations Regarding the Future Skills Development, Education, and Training Needs of Arkansas's Agriculture, Building and Construction, Information Technology/Cybersecurity, and Transportation Industries

Senator English stated the Task Force has gained an understanding of current workforce needs. In today's meeting, she looked to panelists from various industries to present reports on future workforce needs in Arkansas, both short and long term.

Following introductions by Task Force members, panelists introduced themselves and made presentations.

Presenters – Transportation

**Mr. Eric Airola**, Senior Director of Human Resources, J. B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc., was recognized. Mr. Airola's discussion included the organizational structure of J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc., reaching \$10 billion in revenue by 2020, increasing the workforce, top job profiles, expanding technology and hiring employees who understand programming and applications development, developing partnerships, and internships.

Handout 1: Welcome to J.B. Hunt

**Ms. Malea McElyea**, Vice President Business Development, CalArk, Inc., was recognized. Ms. McElyea presented a historical background for the family-owned warehouse and distribution business. She stated the business has 20 locations around the county, 1,000 employees, and has been at 200% growth in the last five years. She said expansion into the e-commerce market is imperative. Ms. McElyea commented that the ultimate goal of CalArk is to provide opportunity across the board and secure the supply chain.

*Handout 2:* CalArk, The Wheels of American Business

Presenters - Information Technology/Cybersecurity

**Mr. Ajay Chatlani**, Senior Director, Engineering, Tyson Foods, Inc., was recognized. Mr. Chatlani discussed the in-house engineering team, project management, advancement in use of technology, and developing safer, sustainable designs that will need the support and management of a skilled workforce.

**Mr. Mike Tubb**, Managing Director, Engineering, Tyson Foods, Inc., was recognized. Mr. Tubb discussed specific workforce needs at Tyson: engineers, maintenance workers, technicians, PLC programmers, and drafters. He noted Tyson employs about 7,500 maintenance technicians; but has many open spots. He said Tyson, as a company, has to slow down when qualified people cannot be found. He stated Tyson, and industry as a whole, along with help from legislation, needs to have skills developed in students starting from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade; if students come to us with some skills, Tyson can finish their education.

**Ms. Yessica Jones**, Director, Arkansas Department of Information Services (DIS), was recognized. Ms. Jones presented an overview of DIS services and customers. She discussed transforming the agency to improve services and to keep up with emerging technology. She commented on availability of positions, desirable qualifications of candidates, and recruitment.

**Mr. Johnny Burgess**, President, Mainstream Technology, was recognized. Mr. Burgess presented an overview of Mainstream Technology, an information technology services company. He paraphrased Mr. Gordon Moore, one of Intel's founders, and said the power of the computer would double every eighteen months. Mr. Burgess said this created an industry with accelerated operating tempos and constantly changing career paths. In order to meet requirements necessitated by this change, he said arbitrary education cycles must be broken down to more align with business cycles. He emphasized the increasing importance of starting early to educate people to have a flexible, agile mindset, to have entrepreneurial thinking for the analysis of problems and ideas, to know the basics, and to understand the ramifications of change. He said Artificial Intelligence (AI) is here and will cause the next seismic shift in all industries. He stressed the importance of introducing AI to students at an early age.

**Major Scott Anderson**, Director of Operations, 189th Operations Group, Arkansas National Guard, was recognized. Major Anderson discussed the cyber school, for which he is the Commander. He said the school is involved with the training of people, both in the military and in the private sector, from across the nation, capitalizing on their earned and learned skills, giving them validation, and graduating them as cyber operators. His discussion focused on training, working with universities and the private sector, and the importance of cyber to all industries. He said there will not be enough people to hire in the next five years to fill emerging jobs.

Presenters - Building and Construction

**Mr. Randall Palculict**, Vice President and Principal, Jackson Brown Palculict Architects, was recognized. Mr. Palculict said he is the current Arkansas chapter president of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). He presented an overview of the responsibility of architects, and how teams of architects and engineers, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, structural, and civil, work together on projects. He said twenty to thirty people may work on a single project. He stated the primary goal of the architect is to be mindful of the health, safety, and welfare of the public throughout the design process.

**Mr. Brandon Ruhl**, Project Architect and Manager, Taggart Architects, was recognized. Mr. Ruhl discussed current issues in the profession. He said he is seeing a generational shift and lack of leadership. He noted that 40% of baby boomers who are founders of firms are getting ready to exit and do not have successors. He said this results in fewer firms which are larger in size, and a less competitive marketplace. He said another issue is technology. He noted the growing use of digital fabrication and 3D printing in the industry. He stated things are moving faster and faster in order to keep up with new technologies.

**Mr. Bill Roachell**, President, Arkansas Chapter, Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., was recognized. Mr. Roachell said the Arkansas Chapter is one of seventy chapters around the country that deal with commercial construction. He stated one of the big things the chapter provides members is education and training. He said the chapter provides small- to medium-size members with training, safety, and HR departments. He noted the chapter has apprenticeship programs approved in electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and has been requested to start a masonry program. He commented that, since the apprenticeship program lasts four years, it does not resonate with the unemployed, the underemployed, those transitioning out of prison back into society, and kids aging out of foster care. He stated the chapter is looking at other programs to bring to Arkansas, such as Project JumpStart in Baltimore, MD, a construction-training program for those with a high school diploma or GED. Mr. Roachell commented that for every five craftsmen aging out of the workforce, only one person comes in to fill the void. He said the chapter is trying to fill that void with “community-based training.”

*Handout 3: ABC Construction Career Path*

Presenters - Agriculture

**Dr. Tim Burcham**, Dean, College of Agriculture, Arkansas State University (ASU), was recognized. Dr. Burcham discussed agriculture today, use of robotics, and transforming data into knowledge. He stated the need for having people qualified in agriculture coming out of high school, and out of 2-year and 4-year institutions. He said agriculture is moving into a whole new realm from the genetic side of things. He said CRISPR-Cas9 and other digital gene editing technologies will keep us moving forward with the regard to yields needed to feed 9.3 billion people. Mr. Burcham briefly discussed how ASU is moving toward data analytics programs. He emphasized the reality going forward is change, and entrepreneurial skills are a critical component for excellence in the workforce.

**Mr. Rick Bormann**, Senior Vice President, Greenway Equipment, was recognized. Mr. Bormann stated Greenway Equipment is a John Deere dealer, headquartered in Weiner, Arkansas, with multiple locations throughout Arkansas and Missouri. He said the company’s business is agriculture, which today is a highly sophisticated industry, extremely focused on technology. He discussed the need for technicians and other qualified people, and the challenge of recruiting employees. He commented that since many individuals do not want to work in rural Arkansas, the John Deere company partnered with Arkansas State University (ASU)-Beebe to design the John Deere Agriculture Technology (AgTech) program. He said the program advances the skill level of new service technicians and certifies them in all the basic requirements for working on John Deere equipment. He said students graduate with an associate’s degree, work for John Deere for three years, and receive a paid education.

**Mr. Jason Kinzey**, Territory Customer Support Manager, John Deere, was recognized. Mr. Kinzey said he is a graduate of the John Deere AgTech program. He discussed specifics of the program, including partnerships with dealers and colleges, locations, student enrollment, recruitment, investments, scholarships, and training technicians in order to meet the workforce needs of the future.

Contributors to the Discussion:

**Mr. Chris Lynch**, STEM Coordinator, Arkansas Department of Career Education

**Mr. Cody Waits**, Deputy Director, Office of Skills Development, Arkansas Department of Career Education

**Dr. Jake Walker**, Projects Director, Arkansas Research Center

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ⇒ opportunities or barriers to recruiting candidates,
- ⇒ grasping the concept of critical thinking in a digital format,
- ⇒ overcoming negative stereotypes of industry,
- ⇒ early exposure in K-12 to all kinds of technology,
- ⇒ formal process to transition soldiers leaving the military into jobs,
- ⇒ attracting young people to career paths in industry,
- ⇒ expanding vision of career education curriculum taught in high schools,
- ⇒ providing student access to programs in career centers throughout the state,
- ⇒ campaigns to communicate optional career pathways and opportunities available to students,
- ⇒ talent as the most important issue in driving economic development in Arkansas,
- ⇒ roadblocks to careers on the military side, including pay, trust, and negative perceptions about Arkansas,
- ⇒ pilot programs in cyber security in high schools throughout Arkansas,
- ⇒ effect of shortages in truck drivers on meeting customer needs,
- ⇒ recruitment of truck drivers; understanding truck drivers' needs,
- ⇒ educating guidance counselors to present options to young people about jobs in industry,
- ⇒ using social media to highlight success stories and to recruit workers for industry, and
- ⇒ access to data regarding occupations, pay scales, and earnings in Arkansas.

Next Scheduled Meeting:

Wednesday, September 26, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. at the Association of Arkansas Counties Building, 1415 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

*Approved: 09/26/2018*