

**JOINT PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE****AUGUST 13, 2014****MINUTES**

The Joint Performance Review Committee met Wednesday, August 13, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. in the S. J. P. Extension Complex, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, at Pine Bluff, Arkansas. This meeting was held during the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) Summit.

Committee members present were Senators Jane English, Senate Co-Chair, Stephanie Flowers, and Representatives Debra Hobbs, and Douglas House.

Other members present were Representatives Ken Bragg, Karen Hopper, Frederick Love, and Jim Nickels.

**Call to Order**

Chris Massingill, Chairman, Delta Regional Authority, welcomed the legislators to the Summit. He then facilitated a panel discussion on the challenges, needs, and opportunities necessary to strengthen the region's workforce training systems.

**Presentation on the State of the State on Arkansas Workforce Development**

Randy Zook, President, Arkansas State Chamber, and Associated Industries of Arkansas, provided information based on current and future data concerning the state's workforce population. There are 75,000 Arkansans currently receiving unemployment benefits. The population of these unemployed individuals do not have the skills that businesses and industry needs. Mr. Zook said this problem is referred to as "The Skills Gap". Future job-availability data predictions indicate a high demand for computer programmers, but the same data shows that by the year 2020, there will be a shortage by one million people who have computer programmer training that is necessary to fill these jobs. Additional data estimates that by the year 2025, jobs requiring a four-year degree will account for 23% of the workforce population. In comparison, jobs requiring post-secondary education or workforce education, is estimated to be 77% of the population.

Shane Broadway, Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and member of the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, was recognized. Mr. Broadway said that Workforce Cabinet members have held discussions regarding recommendations on improving workforce training to be provided to the legislature. The Cabinet is reviewing all aspects and initiatives of workforce training to determine what are the best programs and how can they be developed on a statewide level. He described the Career Coaches program, which utilizes employees at two-year colleges who work with high schools students as they enter the eighth grade. The program is currently in 27 counties. Mr. Broadway said this program is funded under a federal grant, but its funding may not

be renewed in 2015. He believes this is a successful program and needs to be sustained and expanded throughout the state. He then described the Career Pathways Program, which the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) administers through the two-year colleges. Program funding comes from the Department of Workforce Services. Mr. Broadway said this program provides assistance to low-income TANF eligible adults and welfare recipients. The program was initiated in 2007. 29,000 individuals have completed this program. Mr. Broadway said the program is funded by federal dollars. He believes the challenge for improving the training of Arkansas's workforce will be sustaining the existing successful programs, and work more effectively with parents and students at early grade levels.

Senator English discussed a program the State of Montana developed with the Montana State Association of Computer Programmers. The state purchased a computer programmer curriculum from Stanford University and it is currently being taught in the state's high schools. Senator English said this illustrates the type of opportunities the state of Arkansas can use to build concurrent credentials for students to earn, beginning in high school.

Randy Zook announced that a State Chamber of Commerce Summit on workforce training will be held Tuesday, September 23, 2014 at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock, Arkansas.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.