

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| What's New at Opp Inc.? | 1 |
| Transitional Jobs Project | 1 |
| Upcoming Events | 1 |
| Legislative Update | 2 |
| Featured Board Member | 2 |

What's New At Opp Inc.?

Opportunity Inc., through a partnership with the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, is funding a series of programs to help local employers understand regional workforce challenges as they relate to their employment needs. Employers will have the opportunity to learn how to positively impact their bottom line through workforce planning and development. These efforts will ultimately improve the quality of our regional workforce.

Two seminars and a summit have been planned for 2004. The goals of this series are:

1. To inform employers about labor market trends, resources and research-based best practices.
2. To engage employers by showing them how to be active participants in finding local solutions to workforce challenges.
3. To provide feedback to the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board,

educational administrators, and economic development planners with the goal of creating a workforce strategy that will meet the employment needs of the region.

In addition to the seminars and summit noted above, employer groups have been meeting to discuss workplace issues and needs. Feedback from the employer groups will assist Opportunity Inc. and the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board in further defining a regional workforce strategy.

Opportunity Inc. Delivers... Partnerships that Work! Transitional Jobs Project

For many ex-offenders, job prospects can be bleak. But, for those ex-offenders between the ages of 18-21 who are parents as well, the prospect of full-time employment may seem nearly impossible. A new program, the Transitional Jobs Project is aimed at helping these young offenders become responsible working adults, able to provide a better life for their children.

30 hours of paid work experience per week. The City of Virginia Beach has worked with the Department of Corrections and Court Services to identify eligible applicants. They are also providing assessment, mentoring and GED classes and testing. In addition, all participants will be provided with skills, education, jobs and support to reduce their risk of returning to the juvenile court system and provide opportunities to contribute to their community. Nine young offenders will be served.

The partnership reflects the commitment of Opportunity Inc., the City of Virginia Beach and the Tidewater Builders Association to work collaboratively to leverage resources to promote the well-being of youth and provide them with a much-needed "second chance."

The program, which kicked off in October, is a partnership between Opportunity Inc., the Virginia Beach Youth Opportunities Office and the Tidewater Builders Association. Funds for the project, totaling \$92,500 are provided by the State Department of Social Services Opportunity Knocks grant via Opportunity Inc., which provides \$42,500 to the project and by the City Of Virginia Beach which has committed an additional \$50,000.

On December 19, Jerrauld C. Jones, Director of the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, visited with four participants who are currently enrolled in the program to ask them about their experience thus far. The four young men, two of them brothers, expressed their sincere thanks for the opportunity to be in this program and shared how grateful they were for a second chance. "These young men have made mistakes, but that doesn't mean their lives are over," said Jones. "Through programs like this they are given the opportunity to become productive citizens and role models."

Tidewater Builders Association is providing job readiness and life skills training, community service projects, hands-on training in carpentry, HVAC and plumbing skills. Opportunity Inc. provides all participants with an opportunity for

DID YOU KNOW?

◆ Hampton Roads' unemployment rate for December 2003 was 3.7%, down from 3.8% a month earlier. Hampton Roads' unemployment rate was slightly higher than the state's December unemployment rate of 3.3%, but well below the national rate of 5.4%.

◆ According to a recent U.S. Census Bureau study, Virginia Beach, with a median income of \$53,540, ranked fourth in median household income in 2002 among cities of 250,000 residents or more.

Upcoming Events

- February 19, 2004**
 1:30 a.m. — 3:30 p.m.
Orientation Session 1*
 Location: Opportunity Inc. Board Room
 500 East Plume Street, Suite 201, Norfolk
- February 24, 2004**
 8:30 a.m. — 10:30 p.m.
Orientation Session 2*
 Location: Opportunity Inc. Board Room
 500 East Plume Street, Suite 201, Norfolk
 *If you are interested in attending one of the two orientation sessions, please RSVP your date of choice to Shawn Avery via email at savery@oihr.org.
- March 10, 2004**
 8:30 a.m. — 2:30 p.m.
Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board Retreat
 Location: TBA
- March 16, 2004**
 11:00 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.
Tax Credit Seminar
 Location: Opportunity Inc. Board Room
 500 East Plume Street, Suite 201, Norfolk
 For more information contact Faith McArdle via email at fmcardle@oihr.org.

Legislative Update

Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization

The Workforce Investment Act, which is the federal legislation that governs the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board, is currently in the process of being reauthorized. The House of Representatives has passed HR 1261, *Workforce Reinvestment and Adult Education Act of 2003*, and the Senate has passed its version, *Workforce Investment Act Amendments of 2003*, S 1627. The House and the Senate are currently in conference to work out the differences between the two bills. It is expected that a final version of the bill will be introduced this spring. The following is a comparison of key points within the two versions:

1. **Local Workforce Investment Board** – Both the House and the Senate versions streamline membership by removing the requirement that One-Stop partner programs have a seat on the local board, as well as, eliminating the requirement for the establishment of Youth Councils.
2. **One-Stop Infrastructure Funding** – The House and Senate versions all have some form of required partner One-Stop Infrastructure funding, as well as a dedicated One-Stop Infrastructure funding.
3. **Youth Eligibility** – In the House version, both out-of-school and in-school youth are eligible, but not more than 30 percent of funds may be expended on in-school youth. In the Senate version, both out-of-school and in-school youth are eligible, but places a 60 percent limit on state and locally allocated

funds spent on in-school youth. Each proposal has varying changes on the eligibility requirement.

4. **Consolidated Funding Streams** – The House version proposes that the WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and Wagner-Peyser funding streams be consolidated into a single formula grant. The Senate version retains the current separate funding streams but requires co-location of employment service offices with One-Stop centers.

Omnibus Appropriations Bill

On Friday, January 23, the President signed H.R. 2673, the "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004", which includes all remaining appropriations bills for FY 2004, including the Labor-HHS-ED appropriations bill. Funding levels for employment and training programs for FY 04 are consistent with FY 03 levels with slight increases in Adult and Youth funding and a slight decrease in Dislocated Worker funds. Also included in the Omnibus Appropriations Bill was a rescission of the Welfare-to-Work funding, effective on the January 23, 2004.

Commonwealth of Virginia

Currently in the Virginia General Assembly, there are two significant pieces of legislation that affect workforce development: HB 526 Creation of the Department of Workforce Development sponsored by Delegate Clarke Hogan and SB 460 Special Advisor for Workforce Development sponsored by Senator Mary Margaret Whipple.

HB 526 creates a Department of Workforce Development which would serve as the administrator and fiscal agent for the "Workforce Development Program," and includes nearly every federal and state workforce training program and resource available to the Commonwealth and now being administered within several different state agencies. The bill would not affect the structure of program delivery at the local level, instead, it provides for coordinated planning, funding, and reporting at the state level. This state-level program and policy coordination is intended to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the myriad workforce training programs now being administered in the Commonwealth. On February 10, 2004 the Committee on Commerce and Labor voted to hold over HB 526 until the 2005 session of the General Assembly.

SB 460 creates the position of Special Advisor for Workforce Development, which reports directly to the Governor. The Special Advisor will have policy and program responsibilities for several federal and state workforce training programs and resources administered within several different state agencies.

The 2004 session of the Virginia General Assembly convened on January 14, 2004 and will be in session until March 13, 2004.

Featured Board Member



Steve Fuschetti
Chairman, HRWDB
President & CEO
Gannett Media Technologies International

Steve Fuschetti heads Gannett Media Technologies International (GMTI), an operating unit of Gannett Co. that offers technology solutions and services under the Celebro, InfiNet and Digital Collections brands. GMTI services include InfiNet managed hosting and InfiNet managed applications for traditional media on-line businesses. They also include web based Celebro real estate and automotive reverse publishing solutions. GMTI offers and supports a digital asset archive solution under the Digital Collections brand. Steve moved into this role upon the merger of InfiNet Company and GMTI in May 2003.

Steve joined Gannett Co, Inc. in 1986 as CFO for Louis Harris and Associates in New York City. He transferred to the Outdoor Advertising Division in 1989 as Division Controller. After leading a number of business process improvement initiatives with cross-functional teams from within the Division, he was promoted to President and General Manager of Gannett Outdoor of New Jersey. Following the sale of the Outdoor Advertising Division, Steve joined InfiNet Co., a Gannett, Knight-Ridder and Landmark Communications Co. partnership focused on meeting the internet and web technology needs of the partners' operating units. Initially responsible for InfiNet's overall financial administration and the sales and operations of the InfiNet consumer ISP, Steve was promoted to President and CEO of InfiNet in 1999.

Steve received his Bachelor of Arts degree in International Affairs from Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania and his MBA from New York University Graduate School of Business.

Steve currently serves as Chairman of the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board. The Board and its staff organization, Opportunity Inc. are responsible for workforce training and development for the communities of South and Western Hampton Roads. He also serves on the Downtown Norfolk Council Executive Committee and the Metropolitan Board of Directors of the YMCA of South Hampton Roads.

Steve and his wife Nancy have three children and live in Virginia Beach, Virginia.