**GO Virginia Kickoff meeting –Talent development session**

**8/25/2021**

**Participant List**

1. Nathaniel Bishop, Senior Vice President with Carilion Clinic & Senior Associate Dean at the Virginia Tech School of Medicine

2. Pat Huber, President at New River Community College

3. Steven Layman, Vice President for Graduate Programs and Continuing Education at Hollins University

4. Rebekah Gunn, Director of Government Relations and Roanoke Community Relations for Virginia Tech

5. Scott Weimer, Executive Director for Roanoke Regional Initiatives

6. Paul Denham, President of Southern Air, Inc.

7. Morgan Romeo, Executive Director of the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board

8. Jason Clayton, Director of Career and Talent Development at Radford University

9. Kristi Snyder, Rainbow Riders Childcare Centers at Blacksburg

10. Melinda T. Leland, Director of Youth Success at United Way of Southwest Virginia

11. Sara Dunnigan, Deputy Director, GO Virginia and Economic Development at Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

12. Beth Simms, Director of Economic Development at Franklin County

Q1. The general reactions to the presentation

- We **need to think about new/replacement jobs for individuals in the manufacturing industry**, labeled as a very large decline – there will be huge gaps that need to be filled

- Childcare is critical

Q2. Thoughts and opinions on the talent development strategies?

**Career coaches in high schools**

- The career coaches within the high schools in New River Valley make a positive difference

- At New River, we have a career counselor in every high school in the service range (9 high schools – smaller schools share them)

- Career counselors are on the Community College payroll, but they go into the high school to connect with students to help them on setting goals and finding careers opportunities and funding for college (working with all grade levels starting in high school)

(Jason: Roanoke County Public Schools used to have a career coach through VWCC a few years ago but the person was pulled when the grant dried up. It would be helpful to have that position back in the schools)

Q3. Example of successful/unsuccessful strategies?

**Stackable credentials**

* Community College on the CTE (Career and Tech Education): Spent the last two years building stackable credentials with the skill component as the first part

Example: Cybersecurity

Begin with a skill set certificate in cybersecurity with four or five courses (Certificate 1)  
Then come back and take cybersecurity certificate 2 => Then get a job

Then come back and get another certificate that stacks on top of that => Promotions/move to another segment of the industry

Come out with an associate degree later=> That associate degree can transfer to a four-year institution

* Employer side: the whole notion about these stackable credentials is really important for employers in healthcare – there are so many opportunities in so many departments => allow the employer and the individual to make significant advancements inside the organization

Q4. Example of success/Challenge related to connectivity between the elements of workforce system?

**Connectivity with middle school students**

* The funding from GO Virginia allowed us to connect with middle school students - which we have learned is really where you need to start the career pathway conversation - our Career Quest events were a huge success and now we can keep them going.
* Workforce development needs to be a comprehensive/cohesive program that begins with students in the latter elementary/middle school years. Schools begin Academic and Career Planning with students at the middle school level and Career Quest is a positive regional effort to help students explore career possibilities with companies in the region

**Virginia Tech opened up for Work-Study Students**

* VT is Getting to tap into a bunch of part-time staff to help at our childcare centers, which is a great kind of internship for them
* It's allowing us to have to pay a fraction of the cost of them as employees - a really creative and very helpful kind of partnership

**Ignite Program**

* GOVA grant allowed us to expand our Ignite program into the high schools
* We were already starting middle schools during a Career Expo, taking teachers to business and industry to do tours, and doing some financial work with eighth-graders.
* We expanded into the high schools in 2018 and 2019
* Began using our core software, with high school students, as well as developing them to apply for regional internships
* This past summer we had 52 High School interns throughout southwest Virginia, who were paid by a company, who were mentored by a person at their company, and who worked 80 hours plus this summer with an organization that signed on to do that
* What United Way has built in the last four years is a comprehensive program that begins in the middle school, and expands to our high school students all about career exploration, all about connecting to jobs in southwest Virginia, and employers in southwest Virginia, and about educating our teachers about those opportunities to
* Our region to grant just ended. And we're in the process of working on our closeout.
* We currently still have a regional language that will end in December. And we are looking at the next steps for how to expand Ignite beyond our 19 localities and how to continue to make workforce connections for students in southwest Virginia

Q5. One of the strategy – ‘Increased completions of degrees applicable to target industry sectors’ – Underdelivered? Thoughts?

**Target occupation changes?**

**G3 Initiative – Get skilled, get a job, get ahead**

* Investment in community college programs (targeted programs, high demand occupations)
* Students can receive financial assistance to complete programs
* Stackable credential helps students move from one to another

Q6. Any challenges?

**(Particularly localities) not connecting dots of siloed**

* Example:   
  CTE programs in Franklin County – the locality wanted to spend money to survey what employers need when the economic development director (Beth Simms) already know them, going out to the employers and asking those questions  
  Employers also didn’t know the schools were willing to train people for their jobs
* This echoes the connectivity priority

**Need to broaden education to include early childhood**

* Early childhood education and childcare plays into the talent side of the GO Virginia priorities – we miss that opportunity
* The current GOVA program guidelines in the talent development category are restricted to activities that are occurring in grades 6 through 12 and beyond – it’s a constraint for us and need to advocate for solutions at the Council level

(going back to the connectivity issue) **Colorado example of a career coach core**

* An interesting model to use to train your intermediaries that are interfacing with members of the public
* How to mobilize the career coaches – how to share the same information about the training opportunities that are available and uniformly deliver the information and catalog

Q7. Impact of COVID-19 on employment – how can we leverage GOVA to address these COVID-related challenges?

**Mitigate the economic impacts**

* Need to recognize the impacted industries as well as unique industries continuing to grow
* Rescaling and upskilling – to get individuals from impacted industries to targeted industries
* Economic developers in the regions know and understand where companies and how to find qualified candidates at least in the short to mid-term
* Pre-employment training that region 5 has been doing effectively – get folks quickly transitioned into entry-level roles with a pathway to help them
* Finding those entry points and unmet demand - priority

**An interesting phenomenon with COVID-19**

* Traditionally when unemployment is high, community college enrollments tend to skyrocket – that is not the case during the result of COVID
* There is a sense of unemployment but not a rush back to for training – need to consider

**Workforce resilience**

* How do you build industries and pipelines that are more resilient to disruption? And how do you create individuals who have skillsets that are more resilient and repurposed?
* Virginia could come up with some strategies to think about how they build that resilient workforce
* It’s not just about looking at industry sectors. It’s looking at a sort of higher level, to think about what kinds of skills are necessary

Q8. Any challenges or opportunities that we should consider as we move towards creating new strategies?

**Talking to employees**

* We are not talking to 10-15 hour employees
* Exit interviews across the region to know why people are moving or taking remote jobs – for data

**CTE program**

* An apprenticeship initiative – it’s proving beneficial and has some positive results already
* More companies coming to sign on with the apprenticeship program