



SIWIB NEWS

NEWSLETTER FOR BOARD MEMBERS

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Visit our Web site at
www.siwib.org

Featured Business Partner CROSSWALK CAA

In 1964 the Federal Government created The "Economic Opportunity Act". Within that act, was the following statement, "It is now therefore the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty by opening to everyone the opportunity for education, training, opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."

Community Action Agencies (CAA's) were created all across the Nation, and very quickly became front-line troops fighting the 'War Against Poverty: All CAA's are not identical. They are created and designed locally to address local issues and problems, with locally devised solutions.

Crosswalk Community Action Agency was created on January 1, 2000, as the result of the consolidation of Big Muddy Community Action Agency and Volunteer Services Incorporated. The Board of Directors of BMCAA and VSI thought that services to clients could only be improved if the two organizations, which already had very similar missions, joined forces. Crosswalk CAA is a private not for profit corporation which was established for the purpose of eliminating the causes and effects of poverty, by improving the conditions in which people live, work and learn.

Crosswalk CAA administers a variety of programs which assist low-income and disadvantaged individuals and families. The intent is to provide services that promote and improve the level of self sufficiency, while at the same time, addressing day to day needs.

Eligibility for Crosswalk assistance and services is generally based upon household income. CCAA receives funding from a variety of state and federal sources, and the income eligibility level may not be exactly the same for all programs. The Crosswalk programs include energy assistance, home repair, rehabilitation and weatherization, emergency services, homeless prevention services, small business loans, scholarships.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to help low-income households pay for winter energy services. The amount of assistance received is determined by a number of factors; including number of people in the home, household income, type of fuel used for heating and geographic location.

An applicant does not have to own their home or even pay energy bills directly to get assistance. An over-due bill or shut-off notice is not required. Emergency assistance is also available if the household is disconnected from any energy source needed for heating and/or a delivered fuel supplier has refused to deliver and the tank contains 25% or less.

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Message from Our Chair...



MARY M. ROE

The administration of our 44th President is into its first 100 days in office and we await many policy changes from Washington. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (H.R. 1) is one of the many policies which will have a profound effect on ours and the lives of our neighbors. One very important part of this bill provides for additional funding for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs. This bill increases funds for WIA adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs. It allows for an increase in age for WIA eligible youth from 21 years of age to age 24. It also promotes training in the health care professions and "Green Jobs".

Many of our partners will receive additional funding from this bill as well. Community Service Employment for Older Americans will receive increased funding in order to train and place older workers in the labor force. The State Unemployment Service and Employment Service operations will receive additional funding. The Job Corps will receive funds for the expansion and rehabilitation of Job Corps Centers. The Department of Health and Human Services will receive additional funds for the renovation and repair of health centers and the acquisition of health information technology systems. H.R. 1 has passed the House of Representatives on January 28th. The Senate version of the bill passed on the Senate floor on February 10th. The bill went to conference committee to iron out funding differences in the two versions of the bill.

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Featured Business Partner *(Continued from page 1)*

In addition, if the home does not have any heat, due to an inoperable or unsafe heating unit, assistance is available to inspect and remedy such problems. To be considered unsafe, the heating unit must be red-tagged by a utility or qualified heating contractor.

The Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) is designed to help low-income residents save fuel and money while increasing the comfort of their homes. Although most dwellings waste energy, different types of houses and apartments have different energy problems. Depending on the circumstances and condition of your dwelling, some weatherization work may be done, including, sealing cracks with weather stripping and caulk, insulating attics and walls, and repairing windows and doors.

Weatherization Services include having an experienced heating contractor examine your heating system. This contractor will make sure the heating system is safe and in good working order. Work on your furnace may include such things as cleaning and tuning, repair, retrofitting, and in some cases, replacement of the unit.

For the past several years, Crosswalk staff have written and administered several housing rehabilitation grants on behalf of local units of government. Eligible homeowners within designated areas can receive financial assistance in the form of deferred loans and grants. This program is designed to rehabilitate substandard homes with an emphasis on health and safety issues. Some typical repairs under this program include, but are not limited to, plumbing and electrical upgrades, door and window replacements, roof repair, and new heating systems.

There are limited funds available for emergency home repairs. This is to help low-income homeowners, who are not eligible for the home rehabilitation program, pay for small emergency repairs.

The Emergency Services program is funded from a number of different sources and is intended to provide onetime only assistance to individuals and households who are truly experiencing an emergency situation and who are in need of immediate life necessities, such as shelter, medicine, etc. Outreach sites for emergency services are available in all four counties.

Crosswalk Homeless Prevention Services are targeted toward those individuals and families who are actually homeless or are about to become homeless. Assistance could include a number of different approaches, including help with rent or mortgage payments. The intent of the program is to either assist in moving people out of a homeless situation or, if possible, prevent a homeless situation from occurring.

Crosswalk's Small Business Loan Program is funded by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program. It provides long-term, fixed rate financing to new-or-expanding businesses in exchange for job creation and employment. Under the "microloan" program, Crosswalk can finance 100% of a business creation or expansion up to \$20,000. When project costs exceed the \$20,000 threshold, the "revolving-loan" program can finance up to 49% of a business creation or expansion. Certain guidelines and restrictions do apply.

Crosswalk Scholarships are funded by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program. The scholarship program is designed to provide financial assistance to low-income and disadvantaged persons of high academic attainment or potential. These scholarships can be used to provide formal education or occupational training at an accredited Illinois institution, with particular consideration given to fields of study in high technology areas or other growth occupations.

For questions and more information, please visit www.crosswalkcaa.com or call (618) 973-3581. Residents of Perry County can contact the Western Egyptian Economic Opportunity Council, a similar organization that provides a range of services and activities which utilize all available resources to deal with problems of the low income and disadvantaged residents. WEEOC can be reached via its website at www.weeoc.org or by calling (618) 965-3458. ■

Board Development Meeting Notes

Chairman Milton Maxwell convened a meeting of the Board Development Committee on Thursday, January 22, 2009 at the Family Opportunity Center in DuQuoin. The committee conducted an election of committee vice chair. Ms. Lively reminded the committee, while the SIWIB Chair appoints the committee chairs, each committee is charged with electing their vice chair. Dr. Struck was elected vice chair of the Board Development Committee by acclamation. Everyone congratulated Dr. Struck on his election.

Chairman Maxwell asked that the SIWIB members be surveyed to determine their training needs and preferences. The committee discussed surveying the SIWIB members to determine what training to offer at the March SIWIB meeting. Some topics discussed included an overview of Connect SI, an overview of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and an update on the economic stimulus legislation. The committee determined a survey would be constructed on Survey Monkey and the web address would be emailed to all the SIWIB members.

Ms. Lively informed the committee she had met with the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) of Local Workforce Investment Area (LWA) # 25. They [CLEOs] discussed and approved the appointment of Mr. Wayne Bigham to the SIWIB. The committee discussed the composition of the SIWIB in relationship to the local labor market of LWA # 25 and the possible repositioning of SIWIB members to more closely represent the local labor market composition.

The committee discussed the U. S. economic stimulus bill and its possible implications for local workforce area (LWA) # 25. The committee concluded the SIWIB would be the best conduit for coordination and collaboration of partner programs and resources.

Before adjourning, the committee also discussed the possible funding increases the stimulus bill might bring and the possible need for SIWIB training at the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) conference in May, should funds become available. ■

Message from Our Chair...

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Congress passed the final version of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and President Obama signed the legislation into law on Tuesday, February 17th. This historic law provides \$3.95 billion in increased funding for Workforce Investment Act programs. Check the link on www.SIWIB.org for more details of this legislation.

I have appointed Mr. Rex Cusumano to the Business and Economic Development Committee. Rex is CEO of Cusumano & Sons and Cusumano Construction in Mt. Vernon. As a business owner and a member of the Jefferson County Development Corporation, Rex brings his vast business and economic development expertise to the committee.

Time is fast approaching when you will find your Economic Interest Statement in your mail box. The Williamson County Clerk's office will mail you your statement shortly. Please remember to respond quickly as there are fines and penalties for filing late. These statements are required by the Governmental Ethics Act. ■

Spotlight on...

BOARD MEMBER ROBERT L. MEES

Dr. Bob Mees is currently President on John A. Logan College which serves close to 20,000 students each semester in its career and transfer programs, continuing education program, adult education programs and its center for business and industry.



Bob has over 40 years of service in his educational career as a community college president and vice president, public school superintendent, principal and math teacher. With that type of experience, he is very committed to P-20 initiatives which focus on articulation and cooperation from pre-school through higher education. Bob is a member of several regional and statewide organizations that focus on P-20 initiatives and is also executive secretary/treasurer for both the Southern Illinois Schoolmasters and the Illinois Association of School Administrators Shawnee Division.

Dr. Mees is very involved at the state level with the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents. He is currently the 2008-2009 president for this organization. He also works very closely with the Illinois Community College Trustees Association and was one of the first presidents to receive a Trustee Education Award from ICCTA in 2007. He is also past president of the Illinois Community College Chief Academic Officers Organization.

Bob is also very involved with economic development in southern Illinois as vice president of the REDCO (Regional Economic Development Corporation), secretary of the Carterville Planning Commission, SI-Edge and a member of all chambers of commerce in the John A. Logan College District.

Bob initiated the development of Logan's first strategic plan in April 2006 and after involving 160 campus employees and community members, **Logan at 50: A Strategic Plan for 2017 and Beyond** was completed in September of 2007.

Dr. Mees has also provided leadership in the planning and construction of four major building projects at JALC including the Community Health Education Complex which serves close to 4,000 people each semester and the Workforce Development and Construction Management Technology facility which serves close to 8,000 people each semester.

Dr. Mees has also collaborated with education and government leaders in China on developing a community college system in their country. This six-year project included doing a series of lectures in China on the American and Illinois Community College systems and having two papers published in China on the American Community College System.

Bob has also been involved with many community service organizations and initiatives. He was chair for the 2006 Southern Illinois Heart Walk, Honorary Chair for the 2004 American Red Cross "Heroes for American Red Cross" campaign, a member of the Greater Egypt Leadership Council for Alzheimer's Association, the Board of Directors for the Spirit of Attucks, "I Can Read" Reading Enhancement Program, a member of the Egyptian Advisory Council for the Greater St. Louis Area Boy Scouts of America, past president of the Southern Illinois University Alumni Association, charter member of the Carterville Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Carterville Lions Club, a member of the Marion Rotary Club, and a member of the Carbondale Elks.

Dr. Mees has also received many awards, including: Leader Among Us from the Southern Business Journal, Friend of Education from the Shawnee Region of the Illinois Principal's Association, Outstanding Education Award from the Phi Delta Kappa Chapter at SIU, the Williamson County SIU Alumni Association Distinguished Service Award, the Service to Southern Illinois Award from the Jackson County Chapter of the SIU Alumni Association, twice the Carterville Chamber Member of the Year, the Frank Samuel Community Service Award, and the Award of Merit from the Education Council of 100. ■

Youth Council Update

The Youth Council met at the Marion Man-Tra-Con office on February 11, 2009. Copies of the revised monthly report format incorporating the original *Numbers Report* were distributed to the members for review. Moving forward, these spreadsheets will be emailed to the members prior to the meeting date. Clarification was provided by Chairman Young on the length and content for the providers' verbal reports that occur each quarter. The council members recommend reports be only three to five minutes in length and vary from the written report content. The oral summary should profile a youth or recap a significant activity or event that has positively impacted their program. The monthly provider reports will be sent to the council a week before the meeting date to ensure sufficient time for review.

The members discussed the content of the economic stimulus package that may result in extra youth dollars which could be available within 90 days after approval. This funding may allow for a stand-alone summer youth program similar to those administered under the JTPA Act. The age range stipulated is 14-24 with fewer performance measures regulating the program. More details will be provided as they become available and after staff receives guidelines and training relative to the funding. Other discussions included the potential for training sessions that could be utilized by all providers such as Food Safety Sanitation or OSHA-10 hour safety courses. This will continue to be a topic for discussion at the next Youth Council meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, 2009, beginning at 4:00 p.m. ■

One-Stop Committee Meeting Notes

The One-Stop Committee met on February 3, 2009, at the Marion Man-Tra-Con office. Cindy Webb discussed the increase in traffic to the Marion site, explaining that it was a direct result of upcoming layoffs and the free tax preparation services provided by the Center for Economic Progress. Victor Harris reported the Mt. Vernon One-Stop has also experienced an increase in customer volume during the last month. *Illinois workNet* workshops continue to be offered at the Marion and DuQuoin offices, and Cindy Webb is available to provide training and offer assistance to the partner agencies. Michelle Cerutti informed the committee about recent dislocated worker workshops held at Circuit City to accommodate their 185 employees. Other businesses impacted by dislocation events in the region include 34 employees from Anheuser Busch in Mt. Vernon and 230 from Spartan Light Metals. The determination has been made that Joy Technologies will now fall under the Trade Adjustment Act guidelines.

Alan Summers asked the committee for ideas on how to best share information pertaining to the new economic stimulus legislation's impact on Workforce Investment Area 25. The group felt the One-Stop Committee meetings would be the best venue for disseminating information. This topic will be revisited next month. Cary Minnis offered information on the industry clusters and on the upcoming energy meeting and transportation, distribution, and logistics (TDL) meeting to be held the second week in February. Phil Minnis and Bob Mees reported on the progress of the National Electronics Warranty (N.E.W.) training classes held at John A. Logan College; two computer labs have been dedicated to N.E.W.'s training program. All members are hopeful the company's projections of potentially filling 500-700 positions in this region will come to fruition. Debra Jackanicz announced funds are still available for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The next One-Stop Committee meeting is slated for Tuesday, March 3, 2009, beginning at 8:00 a.m. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Cancellations and meeting relocations can be viewed at www.siwb.org. Many of the meetings are also available via teleconference—numbers and passwords are sent out with the meeting agendas.

MARCH 11, 2009

Youth Council

4:00 p.m. at the
One-Stop Business
& Employment Center in
Marion, Illinois

MARCH 11, 2009

Executive Committee

5:00 p.m. at the
Family Opportunity Center in
Du Quoin, Illinois

MARCH 17, 2009

One-Stop Committee

8:00 a.m. at the
One-Stop Business
& Employment Center in
Marion, Illinois

MARCH 17, 2009

WIA and Policy Planning Committee

4:30 p.m. at the
One-Stop Business
& Employment Center in
Marion, Illinois

MARCH 19, 2009

SIWIB

5:30 p.m. at the
Family Opportunity Center in
Du Quoin, Illinois

APRIL 15, 2009

Chief Local Elected Officials

11:30 a.m. at the
One-Stop Business
& Employment Center in
Marion, Illinois