

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES



News from the Oakland Private Industry Council

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Welcome to the news at Oakland PIC

With this first issue, PIC is inaugurating a new newsletter highlighting some of our activities, the City's Workforce Investment Board and the employment and training issues that impact people in our community. We will focus on successes, challenges, developing trends and the daily heroes and heroines who work on the front lines of workforce development.

Oakland WIB and PIC host state WIB Roundtable

Creating job opportunities for people coming out of prison must become a top priority for policy makers, according to leaders of public and non-profit agencies who met recently to seek solutions to challenges facing job seekers in Oakland and the region.

"An important part of our work is to reintegrate people who are coming back into the community after being incarcerated," said Gay Plair Cobb, Chief Executive Officer of PIC and a member of the State Workforce Investment Board.

Carol Jones, District Director for Assemblymember Sandre Swanson, said, "Rather than pay \$43,000 a year to incarcerate individuals, it would be better to spend the money for workforce development."

"The vocational training arm inside prisons should be providing real skills," said Barbara Halsey, Executive Director of the state WIB.

The meeting of the Transformation Roundtable, held March 28 at the East Bay Community Foundation, was convened by the California Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and hosted locally by PIC and the Oakland WIB.



Job seekers find work at Oakland career fair

Twenty-two people found jobs at a March 12 Career Fair hosted by PIC and the Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA) at the SSA Career Center, 2200 San Pablo Ave. Nearly 350 job seekers attended the fair, meeting with representatives of 34 employers and service providers.

Among companies attending were: **Kaiser Permanente, FedEx, UPS, Alameda County Medical Center, Trader Joe's, Renoir Staffing, Manpower, Brinks, Securitas, Oakland Police Department, Five Star Housekeeping, Union Bank of California and the U.S. Navy.**

Former PIC Client Now Flying High



Charles Teferi, who recently was hired as a commercial pilot, came to PIC a few weeks ago to thank us for helping him realize his lifelong dream.

It began 10 years ago when Mr. Teferi lost his job as a computer technician, which meant that he was going to have to drop out of the private pilot training program he was attending.

“I was referred to PIC, and I met Charles Turner,” who was then an employment counselor, Mr. Teferi said. “Charles worked with me for eight months to get my school on the approved list, so I could continue in the program,” he said.

“(Charles) didn’t have to do that, but he did.”

After a year of classes, he finished his commercial certificate. He then went to work on his flight instructor certification in order to build up the hours of experience required to get into the airlines.

Finally, eight months ago, he was hired as a pilot at Continental Airlines.

It took 10 years, but Mr. Teferi landed the job of his dreams. “Along the way,” he added proudly, “I also earned my bachelor’s degree in aeronautical science.”

Rapid response to employee layoffs

The downturn in the economy has meant that PIC’s Rapid Response Team has been very busy with employers that are closing down and laying off workers.

Metro Furniture, a division of Steelcase, is laying off 320 workers and closing its branch in Oakland. The company, which manufactures high-end office furniture, has been in Oakland for nearly 100 years.

The primary languages spoken by Metro’s workforce are Spanish, Chinese and English, and the response team provided services in all three languages.

“We provide people from different backgrounds with information they need in their own languages,” said Anne Chan, Rapid Response Team Coordinator.

The team presented information on important resources: the One Stop Career Center, unemployment

insurance, COBRA, pension benefits and financial planning

The Rapid Response Team is also involved with other local businesses that are closing. ATA Airlines at the Oakland Airport eliminated 60 local employees, and Broadway Ford laid off 40 people.

PIC welcomes back staff member Rommel Silva

PIC welcomes back Business Services Representative Rommel Silva, who returned to his job a few months ago after moving to Los Angeles in 2006.



Rommel, who is now in his fifth year at PIC, works with businesses to find highly qualified employees, as well as tax incentives and labor market information.

“It definitely feels good to be back in the Bay Area, in Oakland and at PIC,” he said. “This is my second family. I work with great folks here, and it’s important work that requires commitment, dedication and a sense of service to the clientele.”

Employers On-Site Recruiting at One Stop Career Center

Safeway’s recent on-site recruitment was one of the largest such events ever held at the downtown One Stop Career Center. When nearly 100 job seekers arrived, recruiters generously conducted three separate presentations in order to accommodate everyone.

Safeway is seeking employees for its store in Oakland’s Fruitvale District, which is currently being

remodeled. Safeway has plans to return to the Career Center to recruit sales staff.

During the week of April 21, **Macy’s** and **Washington Mutual** also held on-site recruitment. In addition, there was a Brown Bag lunchtime workshop on green business jobs and training opportunities. Panelists included representatives of **PG&E**, **Sun Light and Power** and **Grid Alternatives**.

On May 14, PIC and Alameda County Social Services Agency are hosting a Career Fair at the SSA Center, 2000 San Pablo Ave., in Oakland.