



The Southwest Ohio Region
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

The latest news from
The Southwest Ohio Region
Workforce Investment Board

NEWSWIB

March 2014

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The SWORWIB now has its own [Facebook](#) page, where we will post news, pictures and interesting tidbits throughout the month. Find pictures from our Annual Meeting and SuperAwards ceremony, as well as the Atlantic Magazine conference we participated in at Siemens in February. And we also have a Twitter feed -- [@CincyWorkforce](#). So like us on Facebook and follow us on [Twitter](#) @CincyWorkforce and we'll keep you up to date throughout the month!

Employer spotlight *OJTs make difference at Richards*

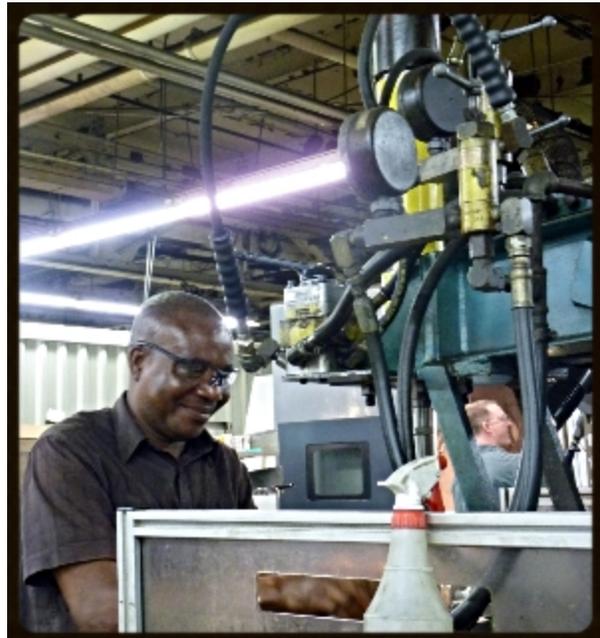
When **Cheryl Neiheisel**, Vice President of Human Resources at [Richards Industries](#), first heard about On-the-Job Training Accounts, she found it hard to believe that employers could be reimbursed from the State of Ohio for the cost of training new workers.

In November 2012, she connected with **Chuck Walters**, Employers Services manager at OhioMeansJobs Cincinnati-Hamilton County, to learn more about the funds. A year-and-a-half later, the medium-sized valve machining shop in Cincinnati has hired about 17 people using OJTs. Neiheisel has hired entry-level machinists, as well as engineering, sales and assembly workers using OJTs. For Neiheisel and Richards, it's all about using the tools available to plug the manufacturing skills gap, and help displaced workers get back into the workforce.

Along the way, Neiheisel has also forged a strong partnership with the Employer Services Team at the One Stop job center. Richards typically holds a job fair at its site a few times a year, and staffers from the One Stop attend to help determine eligibility of candidates for On-the-Job Training.

"When we look at our candidates, many of them have no experience in machining whatsoever," Neiheisel said. "The skills gap in manufacturing is huge."

Richards has used some OJT funding to put its new workers into a CNC machining class at Cincinnati State, developed with the help of



Olu Fanegan works on a hydrotest machine. Fanegan was hired in December at Richards and was eligible for an On-the-Job Training Account.

Richards' production manager. In all, it can take up to eight months to fully train a machinist, Neiheisel estimates.

For more on Richards and OJTs, click [here](#).

What is an OJT?

On-the-Job Training allows an employer to be reimbursed for some of the cost of training a new employee, if that worker was previously unemployed or falls below certain income guidelines. In Hamilton County, employers can be reimbursed up to \$5,000 for the cost of training a new worker, and that can be used for classroom training as well. For more information on OJTs, contact Chuck Walters, Employer Services Manager at OhioMeansJobs Cincinnati-Hamilton County, 513-946-7242, waltec03@jfs.hamilton-co.org.

Board member spotlight

Fifth Third's re-employment initiative pays off

About two-and-a-half years ago, in the midst of continuing foreclosures as homeowners who had lost their jobs struggled to get by, executives at [Fifth Third Bank](#) had a flash of clarity.

Why not put their efforts into helping their customers who had lost their jobs get back to work? That had the potential for a higher upside for the bank than seeing homeowners go through the devastation of foreclosure.

"If people are not working, they can't pay," said **Larry Magnesen**, Senior Vice President and Director of Corporate Communications at Fifth Third. "If our customers have a source of income, they are likely to pay you. Most people want to meet their obligations. We eventually figured out that we can reduce our losses only so much through collections; the real way is to put people back to work."



Of course, helping people find jobs is not what Fifth Third is known for. Around the time bank executives were brainstorming how to do this, the bank was approached by [NextJob](#), an Oregon-based company that specializes in "re-employment solutions." NextJob's techniques include one-on-one job coaching (via the phone), online job search training, and a weekly job club webinar. NextJob had tried to interest other banks in its approach, but Fifth Third was the first to say yes. "We thought we had everything to gain and nothing to lose to pilot this program," said Magnesen.

Thus was born a successful partnership, and Fifth Third is thrilled about the results of its Homeowner Reemployment Initiative. For the last two years, Fifth Third has sponsored homeowners who are behind in their house payments and has 50 customers in the program at any given time. In the first year, 11 out of 28 people -- 40% -- gained employment, said Magnesen. More impressively, these individuals had been out of work for an average of almost two years. These long-term unemployed face the most hurdles when it comes to getting and keeping a job, experts note.

Fifth Third also decided to license the online job seekers toolkit from NextJob, which it makes available to any customer who wants it. The [toolkit](#) is customized to the user; more than 5,000 customers have enrolled in this online program, said Magnesen.

Said **Shawn Harter**, a member of the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board and Senior Vice President of Talent Acquisition at Fifth Third: "As a banker whose primary role is to lead our recruiting efforts, it is exciting for me to see our company adopt this non-traditional approach. It's a thrill to think we can actually help put our customers back to work."

For more information on this program, contact Magnesen: larry.magnesen@53.com. For the complete story, click [here](#).

*This is one in an occasional series looking at workforce initiatives from leading companies and organizations in Greater Cincinnati, especially those represented on our board. Fifth Third board members include **Shawn Harter** and **Allen Zink**, Vice President, Senior Development Consultant.*

Youth spotlight

Meet 2 new members of our Youth Perspective Team

The Youth Perspective Team, comprised of young people who are current or former customers of our WIA youth providers, or are from similar backgrounds, has some new members this year.

On Saturday, Feb. 22, Emerging Workforce Chair **Dan Ripberger** and SWORWIB Youth Specialist **Kathleen Williams** met with **Adrian Farmer**, currently enrolled in [Job Corps](#), and **Kevin Beck**, 21, a former customer of [Literacy Center West](#), a program of [Santa Maria Services](#). Kevin dropped out of high school due to a recurring illness, gastroparesis, which surgery has helped. In February 2012, he walked into Literacy Center West determined to get his GED. A little more than a month later, he had passed the exam.



Adrian Farmer, left, of Job Corps; Dan Ripberger, Chair, EWDC, and Kevin Beck, formerly in Literacy Center West.

"These guys from Day One were pretty much my friends," Kevin said. "I am quiet. Every time I came in I had a conversation with them. They got me out of my shell. That changed me." Kevin now works at Amazon, where he has gotten both a raise and promotion, and he hopes to take advantage of the company's tuition reimbursement program to attend college.

Adrian, a dropout from Mt. Healthy High School, said he had no discipline in high school. He worked in retail for while. "I made the same kind of mistakes and found myself getting fired," he says. About a year ago, he said, while working at Chipotle, "A lightbulb went off. I knew I needed an education to begin getting the things I wanted out of life." He enrolled in Job Corps, and has since received his high school diploma. And he loves both the discipline of Job Corps, and its work-based learning. He is currently studying office administration.

We'll be introducing other members of the Youth Perspective Team throughout the year. A big thank you to Adrian and Kevin!

Keep 'em coming!



How do you spell determination? N-C-R-C! Here we have a wall full of National Career Readiness Certificates at the Platform to Employment Center at OMJ Cincinnati-Hamilton County. That represents a lot of commitment and dedication! Kudos to all those job seekers who have taken the assessments to earn this certificate.

Spotlight on the WIB



From left: Aeria Crowder, staffer, Council Member Young's office; Holly Hankinson, Council Member Simpson's office; Courtney Houser, Council Member Smitherman's office, Annie Wilkerson, Rep. Brad Wentstrup's office, and President Marshall.

Marshall meets with elected officials, staff

Sherry Kelley Marshall, President/CEO, held two briefings this month with elected officials. On March 12 she met with City Council Member **P.G. Sittenfeld** as well as staff members from **Council Members Simpson, Smitherman, and Young's** offices and **Rep. Brad Wenstrup's** office, who then had a tour of OhioMeansJobs Cincinnati-Hamilton County. On March 17, she met with Hamilton County Commissioners **Chris Monzel, Greg Hartmann** and **Todd Portune**. She described the challenges and opportunities the public workforce system is facing in Cincinnati and Hamilton County, as well as our "Transformation Agenda." Read about that agenda [here](#).

MSSC's June Annual Conference shaping up

Leo Reddy, Chairman and CEO of the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council, and **President Marshall** are putting the finishing touches on the agenda for the MSSC's Annual Conference, which will be held in Cincinnati June 17-18. Most of the activity will take place June 18, with a full array of panels comprised of industry, education and workforce leaders. Among the companies represented will be General Electric, Cummins and Wagstaff. The presidents of Ivy Tech, Gateway, and Cincinnati State community colleges will be leading a panel. The day at GE will conclude with a tour. Later that afternoon, **Brig. Gen. John E. O'Neil IV**, Commandant, U.S. Army Quartermaster School, will lead a discussion at the 21C Museum Hotel about a military credentialing program for logistics industries. On June 19, a Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair will be held at Sharonville Convention Center. More information will be coming out in the NewsWIB, but for now, [save the date!](#)

In the news

Several TV stations covered the name change for the city-county One Stop job center. Formerly known as the SuperJobs Center, the One Stop is now called OhioMeansJobs Cincinnati-Hamilton County. If you missed the excitement, here is our [press release](#). Other mentions: [Enquirer](#); [Moira Weir's blog](#) at Hamilton County Job and Family Services.

Greater Cincinnati's Economic Development entity has changed names and structure. Formerly known as the Cincinnati USA Partnership for Economic Development, an arm of the Chamber, it is now called **Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI)** and will be overseen by an independent board of business executives. Read more [here](#).

Find Atlantic's Build the Future video conference [here](#).

Contact: **Kathleen Williams, Youth/Public Information Specialist**
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