



PACIFIC MOUNTAIN ALLIANCE FOR INNOVATION

THAT'S NEWS | December 2008

Director Out and About

It's getting ugly out there and I don't mean the weather! Our nation's economic situation is enough to make you shudder and while the state of Washington is faring better than most, our region is having a very hard time. Some say we may see double-digit unemployment rates before this is over. Pacific Mountain's WIRED strategy was developed before things got this bad, but the fundamentals of the program are right:

- ⇒ work on becoming a region so you will collectively have more to offer both employers and job seekers;
- ⇒ focus on select industries and let them tell us what is needed;
- ⇒ don't leave anyone behind, not because it's ethically right, but because we cannot afford to waste any of our talent; and
- ⇒ focus on the next generation and the entrepreneurs. If we equip young people and the innovators of the region with the skills and avenues to success we will find the solutions we seek.

But those fundamentals should not overlook an essential ingredient to our success in this region--HOPE. We overlook HOPE because

it is hard to measure and because it seems trite. But when you've seen it, you understand its power to drive change. I regularly witness WIRED activities that confirm we are on the right track, but more importantly, I also see HOPE. Last week for instance, I saw HOPE on the faces of the 22 graduates from the Computerized Manufacturing course. And the week before Amanda spoke of HOPE when she described what work she will do after completing her combined high school and Associates Degree and why the robotics class was meaningful to her path. STARangers, a newly formed entrepreneur's group is working on a website to share their ideas, capabilities, and HOPE for a sustainable tomorrow. I see organized labor reaching into our high schools to let students know the HOPE for a good paying job could come in the choice to join an apprenticeship. This all gives me HOPE that we will find our way out of even the biggest mess.

WIRED is there prompting, encouraging and training the HOPEFUL. If we do it right, when this grant concludes the story of HOPE in the Pacific Mountain Region will mean more jobs, more opportunity and greater prosperity.

Cheryl

Learning Green

How do you affect the thinking of an entire region? How can you promote a commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability that ensures the economic viability of the region? One way is to put the people involved in the work, those concerned with the issue and wanting to make a difference, into a network. Get them talking, thinking and planning together. This is the notion driving a "green" entrepreneur and innovation network. Provide these entrepreneurs and innovation change agents the information they need and the thinking and capabilities of a region will begin to change.

Change will also come by engaging students who understand the importance of "green". Since they don't always see how that translates into a useable skill set and a future career, sparking a student's interest in environmental and science career fields may take linking them with mentors, faculty, and professionals who can help them think about the opportunities in a sustainably conscious career. It may mean creating experiences that tap their creativity and desire to make a difference.



WIRED is working to develop the networks that will promote change and partnering with organizations like the Pacific Education Institute to foster a renewed interest in environmental and basic science education for students. For information concerning all these efforts, contact Claude Dotson, Innovation & Entrepreneurship Panel Coordinator (360) 482-1757, cdotson@pacificmountainworksource.org

CONTACT US

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Math + Competency = JOBS

NO one needs to tell us how important math is. We see it in our everyday lives and most recently our public school system declared students must take even more math courses to graduate. Colleges are expecting greater math backgrounds and are testing to make sure students have math competency. Apprenticeship and workplace opportunities increasingly are demanding greater on-the-job math expertise.

But for many, math is frustrating, difficult and often stands between the students and their goals. This roadblock is evident when looking at the WASL math scores, which have declined over the past three years in a majority of our schools. This leads to unprepared youth entering our higher education system and the workforce.

In one of the most exciting projects WIRED has undertaken, we hope to aid in efforts to promote better math understanding. In partnership with Educational Services District #113 and Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, an integrated career and technical math curriculum is under development. The new curriculum

offers another way to gain math understanding. . . students may choose to substitute the new career and technical education (CTE) math courses for currently required Algebra I and Geometry and Algebra II. Teachers will receive additional tools to promote “hands-on” math learning. Research indicates the positive results of this type of learning integration. These courses enable students interested in career and technical courses to remain focused on their career tracks, learning math that has applicability to their chosen fields.



The Pacific Mountain Region’s teachers and employers will be the first to pilot the new program in 2009. The goal is that this curriculum becomes Best Practice and is soon available to schools across the State. This is an unprecedented opportunity for business and labor to take a proactive approach to helping local schools prepare the future workforce. Questions? Contact Joni Olson 360-570-4242 or jaolson@pacificmountainworksource.org

“Hands-On” the Skilled Trades

Career fairs are taking a different shape in Washington State. Rows of tables with recruiters and job seekers quietly trying to entice each other just doesn’t describe the very popular apprenticeship career fairs being held around the region. These fairs are all about “hands-on”.

When we say “hands-on” learning, we are very literal....a 17-year old with her "hands-on" a 100 foot all terrain crane lifting 500 pounds of concrete while another female student puts her "hands-on" concrete cinder blocks and builds her first wall. There are "hands-on" metal studs, telephone poles, shut off valves, scaffolding, air ducts, compactors, bull dozers and much, much more. These are not the career fairs of old, but exciting, fast paced events where students participate in an active and engaging process of learning and doing.



Spokane, Snohomish and Island Counties, Enumclaw and Puyallup have all been host sites for recent large events where apprenticeship programs, local employers and upwards of 1000 to 1500 students have put their *hands-on* real equipment, talked with skilled professionals and learned first hand how they might enjoy one of these exciting, well-paid careers.

On May 1st, WIRED will host a career fair at the Pacific Mountain Regional Training Center in the Satsop Development Park in Elma. Students will be able to “Try a Trade In Green Technology”, putting their *hands-on* one of the opportunities of the future. This fair focuses upon the skills and knowledge necessary for careers in the building and construction trades of the ‘Green Economy’. This is the economy where our future jobs and solutions will be found. For more information contact Matt Gordon (360) 482-1754 or mgordon@wslc.org



UPCOMING EVENTS

Construction Skills
Competition

February 19, 2009

At Satsop Development Park



Career Fair
May 1st, 2009

Try-a-Trade at Satsop
Development Park

Contact Matt Gordon for info:
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