



Media Advisory

Businesses and DC Legislators Invest to Develop Workforce Skills

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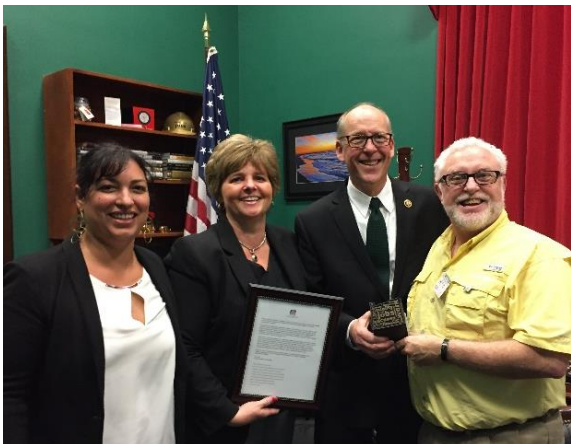
- ▶ **Local business leaders work with legislators to create new investments and systems alignment for workforce development**
- ▶ **Workforce investments seen as key to building the region's economy**

Washington DC

Southern Oregon business leaders, along with colleagues from the rest of Oregon, met with federal legislators on March 15th to coordinate strategies and investments in workforce development. Representative Greg Walden, Senator Ron Wyden and Senator Jeff Merkley, Representative Peter DeFazio and Oregon's other federal legislators were also presented Workforce Champion Awards by the Oregon Workforce Partnership¹, honoring their support for new federal legislation that passed in July 2014.

"The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act² creates a new framework for business-led partnerships at the regional level" said Jessica Gomez, CEO of Rogue Microdevices and Chair of the Rogue Workforce Partnership³. "We're excited and really appreciate what our legislators accomplished with their colleagues in Congress to support our regional efforts."

The WIOA legislation was one of the few pieces of legislation passed in recent years with bipartisan, bicameral support. Its focus is to improve America's Workforce Development



Representative Greg Walden receiving the Workforce Champion Award from: (l to r) Jessica Gomez, Rogue Valley Microdevices, Nikki Jones, Express Employment Professionals, and Chip Massie, Klamath Falls Chamber of Commerce

System, and to build the skills and talents of our region's workforce, so local businesses and career-seekers can succeed in the modern global economy.

Efforts have now been launched to create a more seamless and effective workforce system, with aligned career training pathways between K-12 education, higher education, workforce organizations and business/industry. The new federal legislation mandates and supports these changes, and local business leaders like Ms. Gomez are spearheading and guiding this systems alignment work.

Jessica Gomez | Founder & CEO
Rogue Valley Microdevices -RWP Chair

Gregg Edwards | Chief People Officer
ASANTE Health Systems- RWP Vice-Chair

Peter Angstadt | President
Rogue Community College

Scott Beveridge | Superintendent
Southern Oregon Education Service District

Wes Brain | Labor Representative
Retired SEIU

Chris Cahill | Technical Director
Hunter Communications

Adam Cuppy | Co-founder & COO
Coding Zeal

Mike Donnelly | Materials Manager
Carestream, Inc.

Jon Flegel | Assistant Business Manager
IBEW 659

Ron Fox | Executive Director
Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc.

John Higgins | Superintendent
Grants Pass School District #7

Fred Holloway | Principal
Holloway Human Resources

Nikki Jones | Owner
Express Employment Professionals

Pete Karpa | District Manager
Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Brent Kell | Executive Director
Valley Immediate Care

Norm Kester | CEO
Quantum Innovations

Scott Koch | Vice President Territory Manager
Umpqua Bank

Tolga Latif | President & CEO
Linx Technologies

Doug Mares | District Manager
Oregon Department of Human Services

Tamara Nordin | Vice President, Human Resources
Pacific Retirement Services

Barbara Perkins | Vice President, Human Resources & Risk Management – *Lithia Motors*

Roy Saigo | President
Southern Oregon University

Teresa Sayre | Superintendent
Phoenix/Talent School District

Chad Scott | Director Human Resources
Fire Mountain Gems & Beads

Brian Shumate | Superintendent
Medford School District

Sherri Stratton | Senior Manager
Oregon Employment Department

John Underwood | Human Resources Manager
Timber Products

"We want to help business succeed and create jobs," said Ms. Gomez," and in order to do that, employers need skilled and motivated workers." By working together, partners are helping career-seekers learn how to get the skills they need, and position themselves to get good jobs with career pathways that can lead to greater success. Local Workforce



Senator Ron Wyden receives Workforce Champion Award from leaders of the Oregon Workforce Partnership

Boards are focused especially on high-demand "middle-skills" jobs⁴ - those that require education beyond high school but not a four-year degree, and which make up the largest part of the labor market. "We want businesses to succeed, career-seekers to succeed, and everyone to prosper," said Gomez.



Senator Jeff Merkley meets with Oregon Workforce Partnership leaders

"There are amazing Sector Strategies partnerships underway in our region with leaders from industry, education, workforce and economic development," according to Jim Fong, Executive Director of the Rogue Workforce Partnership. "Advanced Manufacturing, Information Technology / E-Commerce, and Healthcare as our three top industry sectors because they all have high-demand, high-wage career pathways and they fuel our region's economic vitality. Linking the business demand for skilled workers in these fields with the aligned career training pathways is our top priority."

This Workforce Champion Award was designed and manufactured in Oregon, where innovative 21st century skills were used to craft this award. Cannonball Media, a company based on Bend that specializes in high-quality 3D motion graphics, designed the award using stereo lithography 3-dimensional modeling. Jeld Wen, one of the world's leading manufacturers of reliable windows and doors, converted the 3D model to a solid form, then utilized a 3D printer they designed to print the award. It's made from bronze/brass powder and polylactic acid. The key messages embodied in this award: design skills matter, creativity matters, manufacturing and technology skills matter, organizing and project management skills matter and Investment in Workforce Development Matters!



Representative Peter DeFazio receives award from Oregon Workforce Partnership leaders

¹ <http://www.oregonwpartnership.org/>

² <http://www.help.senate.gov/ranking/newsroom/press/praise-for-bipartisan-bicameral-bill-to-improve-americas-workforce-development-system>

³ <http://rogueworkforce.org/>

⁴ <http://www.hbs.edu/competitiveness/research/Pages/middle-skills.aspx> & <http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/state-policy/fact-sheets>