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Progress is ...

Progress Council's fall quarterly meeting features presentation on national work readiness model // Progress Council secretary Bill Worthington appointed MVPC president // PA Turnpike Commission work continues on Expressway project // MVCEC plans for December building inspection class and courses for spring term.

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Progress Council's fall quarterly meeting features a presentation on national work readiness model –Marla Ryan and Diane Sproull of the Westmoreland/Fayette Private Industry Council reviewed a national model program called Work Certified that addresses entry-level job skill requirements. Business input, including input from a number of local firms, was used to develop the national and local work readiness program.

Progress Council secretary Bill Worthington appointed MVPC president – Progress Council secretary and local businessman Bill Worthington has accepted an appointment as president of the Mon Valley Progress Council. Former president Joe Vesely resigned due to business commitments in Florida.

PA Turnpike Commission work continues on Expressway project - On August 22, the PA Turnpike Commission's CEO Joe Brimmeier announced a commitment to complete the Brownsville to Uniontown section. Engineering work continues on the PA Route 51 to I-376 Expressway. And the Progress Council-led Expressway Partnership Initiative is planning a meeting with Southwestern PA legislators to discuss additional funding for the PA Route 51 to I-376 Expressway project.

MVCEC plans for December building inspection class and courses for spring term – California University Southpointe will be offering the highly successful building inspector series of courses through the Mon Valley Community Education Council (MVCEC). The courses, which begin on December 3, will include classes at the Southpointe campus and distance learning through the MVCEC's access site at Mon Valley Career and Technology Center in Speers.

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Progress Council's fall quarterly meeting features national work readiness model

Marla Ryan and Diane Sproull of the Westmoreland/Fayette Private Industry Council (PIC) reviewed a national job readiness model at the October 12 fall quarterly meeting held at Monongahela Valley Hospital Education Center. The "Work Certified" program addresses a widely recognized gap in entry-level job skill requirements including basic math, technical reading and other job readiness skills. Business input, including input from a number of local firms, was used to develop the national and local work readiness program. The Westmoreland/Fayette PIC is implementing the program through CareerLink offices. The Mon Valley Community Education Council is also considering the program.

The Work Certified program is more of a "business-training" program with certification only given to participants who have demonstrated that they are truly ready to be responsible productive employees. To become Work Certified graduates, students must attend a 90-hour course, pass all 50-core competencies and pass a certification exam with a score of 80% or better. Graduates receive a card that can be presented at job interviews. Employers in states with the program are increasingly relying on the Work Certified certificate cards in hiring.

Key results of the Work Certified program:

- 92% of the graduates find employment within 30 days after graduation
- Students must master 50 competencies in a 90-hour program then complete an examination with a passing grade of at least 80% correct in order to become certified.
- 86% are still employed six months later
- Employers hiring Work Certified individuals will retain those workers and avoid the high cost of turnover. The jobseekers that are work ready have good work ethics, motivation and initiative!
- 30% of the program graduates have received promotions. Work Certified employees have greater potential to climb the corporate ladder.
- Over 50 businesses have endorsed our program and that number is growing.

Please call the Progress Council if you would like to learn more about this exciting program. You can also visit www.workcertified.org

Progress Council secretary Bill Worthington appointed MVPC president

Progress Council secretary and local businessman Bill Worthington has accepted an appointment as president of the Mon Valley Progress Council. Former president Joe Vesely resigned due to business commitments in Florida. Bill comes to the position of president with a broad and successful career as prosecutor, an attorney in private practice, and a real estate owner and manager.

In a number of speaking engagements, Bill has spoken of his appreciation of the Mid Mon Valley's potential. "We have a great area with a wonderful history, and we can make it better with everyone's help." Bill sees great potential in our location and affordability with the Expressway project. "The Expressway project will continue to spawn new interest in living and working in the Mid Mon Valley. Now we can offer a combination of great access and affordable housing."

Bill recognizes that completion of the Mon Valley/Fayette Expressway is the key to our future, but he is concerned that drug issues in the Valley are also an economic development issue. Bill also worked on drug enforcement issues as a district attorney in Buffalo N.Y. "We want to make sure that we are doing everything possible to address the drug issue in our region. The efforts of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) made clear that community involvement could address a major issue." Please feel free to call the Progress Council office at 412-997-9305 if you would like to work with Bill on these efforts.

PA Turnpike Commission work continues on Expressway project

On August 22, the PA Turnpike Commission's CEO Joe Brimmeier announced a commitment to complete the Brownsville to Uniontown section. Engineering work continues on the PA Route 51 to I-376 Expressway. And the Progress Council-led Expressway Partnership Initiative is planning a meeting with Southwestern PA legislators to discuss additional funding for the PA Route 51 to I-376 Expressway project.

"The Expressway project enjoys broad support from area legislators. We look forward to the meeting with area legislators as an opportunity to discuss financing strategies to keep the Expressway project on track," said Progress Council president Bill Worthington.

Potential funding strategies for the Expressway project include:

- **P3 legislation** - Passage of public/private partnership (P3) legislation that would include the PA Route 51 to I-376 Expressway project P3 demonstration project
- **The 2% solution** - Passage of state legislation to target 2% of funds to be raised through Act 44 to advance the Expressway. Act 44 was the recently passed state legislation to fund highways and transit through a combination of tolling of I-80 and increasing toll on the Pennsylvania Turnpike
- **Federal funding** - Develop a unified effort of areas state legislators to press for inclusion of funding in the federal transportation reauthorization due in fall 2009.

MVCEC plans for December building inspection class and courses for spring term

California University Southpointe will be offering the highly successful building inspector series of courses through the Mon Valley Community Education Council (MVCEC). The courses, which begin on December 3, will include classes at the Southpointe campus and distance learning through the MVCEC's access site at Mon Valley Career and Technology Center in Speers. Penn State is offering a series of academic courses and is planning to offer certificate programs in areas business and real estate. The Westmoreland County Community College's spring term courses through the MVCEC are under development.

MVCEC courses currently scheduled for late 2007 and early 2008

California University's Building Inspector course

- Residential Inspection series 12/03/2007 to 01/24/2008
- Commercial Inspection Series 02/05/2008 to 03/19/2008

Penn State (spring 2008 – 01/14/2008 to 05/02/2008)

- Crime Scene Investigation
- Adolescent Development
- Psychology
- Effective
- Introduction to Engineering Design

The MVCEC's board chairman Armand Ferrara is looking forward to progress in the upcoming terms. "We need to work harder to reach out to prospective students and demonstrate that our education partners are committed to providing quality education at our MVCTC Speers site. Please check the MVCEC website www.mvceec.org for course updates."