

December 2007

**Save these Dates****Appalachian Regional Commission Conference  
Renewal Energy & Energy Efficient Technologies**

January 23 - 25, 2008 -- Rome, Georgia  
Go to [www.CVRDC.org/ARCC](http://www.CVRDC.org/ARCC) to register. Call  
706.295.6485 for more information.

**4th Annual Southeastern WorkKeys Conference**

January 23 - 25, 2008, Chattanooga, Tennessee  
Chattanooga Marriott at the Convention Center Hotel  
[www.ce.unf.edu](http://www.ce.unf.edu), 904.620.4200.

**National Conference on Renewable Energy and  
Energy Efficiency Workforce Education**

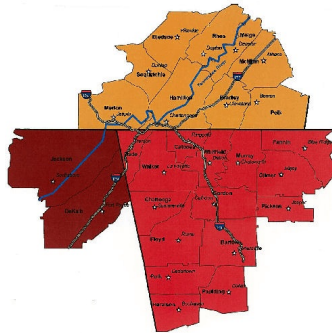
March 17 - 20, 2008, Hudson Valley Community  
College, Albany, New York  
[jane@irecusa.org](mailto:jane@irecusa.org) or 781.461.8167.

**America's Small Business Summit**

U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
April 16 - 18, 2008, Washington, D.C.  
For more information or to register, visit  
[www.uschambersummit.com/sb/summit/default](http://www.uschambersummit.com/sb/summit/default)

**Energy Focus Group**

October 11, 2007, the Tri-State Alliance hosted a focus group study at the TVA Complex in Chattanooga. Energy industry leaders from throughout the Tri-State region were invited to meet to provide advice and input on how their current and future workforce needs could be met with the assistance of the Alliance. Key findings from the study follow:



Beth Jones, Executive Director, Southeast Tennessee Development District, addresses the focus group.

The impending retirement of thousands of Baby Boomers will create a severe shortage of skilled workers within the next decade. The impact will include the exit of experienced workers who will be replaced by entry level workers. Knowledge management will become a key priority as companies strive to maintain safety standards while training workers.

While there may be a sufficient supply of job applicants in the local workforce, the workers and applicants often do not have the skill levels required by today's energy industry. Many participants noted that, as a general rule, only 1/3 of applicants can pass pre-employment tests. Industry jobs are increasingly more technical, and the demands of technology are growing exponentially. Without good foundation skills in math and reading, workers will not be able to function in the workplace.



Happy Holidays

On a positive note, the participants believe that the region has the right training and educational resources in place. However, the industry link between the K-12 system is weak. Youth, at an early age, should be informed about the wide-variety of careers available to them in industry and other well-paying technical employment.

**Alabama in Program to Boost Industry Image**

The Construction Users Roundtable, a Kentucky-based industry group, has picked Alabama to participate in a pilot program to boost the image of the construction industry.

The plan will create a **Construction Workforce Development Center** in Alabama. The goal is to start the center by mid-2008.

The program will launch a campaign to recruit individuals for the construction industry by marketing the industry as a great career opportunity and promote training programs to ensure recruiting dollars are wisely spent. Dan Masters of Associated Builders & Contractors said the proposal could be a big boost to Alabama construction firms who have had to rely heavily on immigrant workers due to a shortage of young people entering the construction field.

In addition to the construction project, Northeast Alabama will be working with the National Association of Manufacturers to promote the excellent career opportunities available in the manufacturing field. For information above the manufacturing project, contact Dr. Mike Kenamer at Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC), 256.638.4418.



Dr. Mike Kenamer, Director of Workforce Development, NACC.

## Tri-State Regional Workforce Alliance Web Site

The Alliance now has a web site available to members and the public that provides information about its purpose and regional activities. The web site is located at [www.tristateworkforce.org](http://www.tristateworkforce.org). Please contact Nancy Griggs at [griggsn@nacc.edu](mailto:griggsn@nacc.edu) with your comments and suggestions.

### IRS News



The IRS has announced that the **2008 standard mileage rate** has been increased from \$.485 to \$.505 cents per mile. The rate can be used to reimburse employees for business use of their car, and the reimbursement can be deducted as a business expense.

e-News for Small Businesses is a free **electronic mail service** designed to provide tax information for small business owners and self-employed individuals. It is distributed every other Wednesday. To sign up, visit <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/content/0,,id=154826,00.html>.

### Driver Safety Program

The **Driver Safety Program** is offered nationwide by AARP to individuals aged 50 and over. Successfully completing the program continues to offer an average 10% annual discount on comprehensive and collision segments of automobile insurance premiums each year for three years. For some, the percentage may be even higher depending on one's personal driving history with an insurer. To find out more about the program and its availability in your area, visit [www.aarp.org/families/driver\\_safety/](http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/). In addition to classroom instruction, the program is available on-line.

Under Georgia Law, the Driver Safety Program is available to anyone **aged 25 and older**. To learn if similar programs are available in your state, contact your local coordinator.

### E-Informer

The U.S. Department of Labor includes an Advisory for the **Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN)**. WARN is a law that, in certain circumstances, requires employers to provide advance notification of layoffs and plant closings in order to provide workers with sufficient time to seek other employment or retraining opportunities. The Advisory is available on the Internet at [www.dol.gov/elaws/warn.htm](http://www.dol.gov/elaws/warn.htm).

The U.S. Department of Labor has released a new interactive web tool to serve as a resource for employers in complying with federal employee benefit laws. The

elaws ERISA Fiduciary Advisor, available at [www.dol.gov/elaws/ERISAFiduciary.htm](http://www.dol.gov/elaws/ERISAFiduciary.htm), is designed to help employers and others who provide services to private sector retirement plans understand their responsibilities.

### Kimberly Chose a Career, Not Just a Job



Kimberly is on her way up!

When Kimberly Patterson from Flintstone, Georgia, was laid off from the job where she had worked for more than a decade, she knew that in the future she wanted a career and not just a job. She found her opportunity at the Southeast Lineman Training Center in Trenton, Georgia, where she will soon graduate from the program.

David Powell, Director, and Kimberly's instructors at the center report that she is an excellent student who has many opportunities open to her. Kimberly has already had several companies approach her with offers of employment. She noted how great it is to have employers coming to her with offers instead of having to go out asking them for a job.

Kimberly said that it did get a bit lonely at times being the only woman in class; however, all the guys were great and it was like having dozens of brothers to encourage and support her. She also noted that employment as a line worker is a great career opportunity for men or women, and she hopes this article will encourage more women to consider it as career.



Kimberly Patterson - ready to start her career as a line worker.

The Southeast Linemen Training Center is approved as a Workforce Investment Act Training Provider in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and certain districts in North Carolina. For more information, contact David Powell at 706.657.3792 or visit [www.lineworker.com](http://www.lineworker.com).

The Business Informer is a publication of the Tri-State Regional Workforce Alliance. For more information about the Alliance contact Gwen Dellinger, Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Director, Coosa Valley Regional Development Center, 706.295.6485; Mike Kennemer, Director Workforce Development, Northeast Alabama Community College 256.228.6001, or Wanza Lee, Director Workforce Development, Southeast Tennessee Development District, 423.266.5781. Suggestions or articles to contribute - contact Karen Howell, 706.277.7466 or [Vandy88@aol.com](mailto:Vandy88@aol.com). An Equal Opportunity Program. Auxiliary aids and services available upon request. Published by Coosa Valley RDC, Rome, GA.