

The Business Informer



Tri-State Regional Workforce Alliance Business Newsletter

October, 2010

www.tristateworkforce.com

Mark
your
calendar

- ✓ Youth Council Meeting – 12 Noon, November 10, 2010, Calhoun Convention Center, Calhoun, GA
- ✓ WIB Meeting – 12 Noon, November 17, 2010, Calhoun Convention Center, Calhoun, GA
- ✓ Tri-State Meeting – 11:30 AM, December 2, 2010, Chattanooga, TN (location TBD)

Health Reform Tax Credit Calculator for Small Businesses[®]

The 50-State Health Reform Calculator for Small Businesses[®], a free online tool, offers for-profit and non-profit small businesses the ability to estimate eligibility for tax credits through health reform. In addition to the interactive calculator, the Affordable Care Act package for employers includes a policy brief with highlighted provisions that affect employer decision-making. Both can be accessed at <http://aysps.gsu.edu> (scroll to bottom of page for calculator).

If small employers (fewer than 25 FTEs) offer coverage and the employer has a generally low wage workforce (average annual wages less than \$50,000), the employer may be eligible for temporary subsidies to offset some of the costs of offering plans. Firms eligible for such subsidies can claim them through their tax returns starting in 2010. The calculator takes into account many of the factors that will determine if, and how much of a credit the business could receive, but necessarily makes some assumptions. Employers who feel they may be eligible for the tax credit are urged to consult with their tax advisors to determine the actual amount. **Note:** Java Version 6 is required to see and use the calculator. Download it for free at <http://java.com>.

New Bill Brings Much Needed Aid to Small Businesses

The Small Business Jobs and Credit Act of 2010 will create a \$30 billion fund to help community banks with less than \$10 billion in assets make loans to small companies. The legislation also gives companies some \$12 billion in tax breaks to write off new equipment purchases and, for the self-employed, to write off health-care expenses. It also extends a waiver that allows entrepreneurs to avoid Small Business Administration loan fees.

Jim MacPhee, Chairman of Independent Community Bankers of America, notes that “community banks will be able to build on the new government funding with their own money, increasing the amounts available to small companies and giving entrepreneurs more options for

credit. The money that banks can receive through this legislation could be leveraged to provide as much as \$300 billion of new credit to small businesses.”

As the economy improves and business picks up, small companies that have managed to survive will need capital to make improvements after years of holding costs down. Find out more details about the *Small Business Jobs and Credit Act* at govtrack.us/congress. To learn more about how to access loans, visit the *Independent Community Bankers of America* at icba.org, which lists community banks across the country.

How to Do Business with Volkswagen

“*Building Automotive Partnerships*” was the topic of a summit in Dalton hosted by the Dalton-Whitfield Joint Economic Development Authority, where more than 100 businesses from the southeast were told by Senior Consultant for RMG Consult GmbH Andreas Geiger, that suppliers will be expected to locate within thirty miles of the plant for transportation and quality reasons and contracts for openings are expected to start within a year or so. Geiger also stressed the importance of quality, the ability to serve global VW operations, and patience with the supplier selection process, advising suppliers not to be discouraged if they were not included in the initial round of supplier selection.

Becoming a VW Partner

To become an authorized user of VW’s Group Business Platform, a multi-stage registration process is required. As a user, you will have access to activated applications and information services. The registration process, which includes 6 steps, requires the business’ DUNS number and can be accessed at <https://sso.volkswagen.de/ssr/faces/selfRegistration/start.xhtml?language=en>.

The tools to initiate successful supplier relationships, such as online catalogs, online inquiries and forms, online negotiation and capacity management information are found at <https://VWGroupSupply.com>. With VW Group’s B2B supplier platform, administrative tasks are stream-lined, planning details can be determined accurately, and opportunities for collaboration can be clearly understood and communicated.

Important COBRA Notice from DOL

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration has updated the dedicated COBRA Web page to add a fact sheet to provide tips for individuals whose 15 month COBRA premium subsidy ends before their regular COBRA coverage ends, in order to help them maintain health coverage. In particular, it is important that individuals understand that they will need to make the full COBRA premium payment in order to maintain their COBRA coverage after the subsidy ends. The fact sheet also notes some other coverage options to consider. The fact sheet is available at:

<http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/newsroom/fsExpiringSubsidy.html>. If you have further questions, contact EBSA toll free at 1-866-444-3272.

EBSA also has a dedicated Web site that explains the COBRA premium reduction subsidy (www.dol.gov/ebsa/cobra.html). To receive automatic e-mailed updates from EBSA about any new information on the COBRA premium reduction subsidy, enter your e-mail address at: https://govdelivery.com/service/subscribe.html?code=USDOL_231.

SAVE THE DATES

EDA/ETA Southeast Regional Workforce and Economic Development Conference

October 24-26, Lowes Atlanta Hotel

Beyond the Storms – Achieving Competitiveness in a Changing World

Subject matter experts and policy makers will focus on best practices and contemporary thinking on building competitive and resilient regional economies that are based on innovation, diversification and entrepreneurship, with high-level content benefitting public and private sector leaders from local governments and in workforce, economic development and strategic planning. For additional information contact H. Philip Paradise, Jr., EDA Regional Director, at 404-730-3019 or register online at <http://sedc.affiniscape.com/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=78>

Appalachian Regional Commission Conference

Appalachia's Educational Assets: Investing in a Skilled Future

October 25–27 - Forum Civic Center, Rome, GA

Learn how your community can leverage its assets to help build and sustain stronger local economies. Topics include retooling the workforce, expanding instructional capacity through technology, building a healthy and educated workforce, and supporting entrepreneurial training. For information and to register, contact ARC at conferences@arc.gov or 202.884.7700.

HealthCare.gov and CuidadoDeSalud.gov

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has unveiled HealthCare.gov, a website where consumers can compare insurance plans specific to their life situation and local community, and its partner site,

CuidadoDeSalud.gov for Spanish-speakers seeking information about the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and other health resources. Both sites offer an insurance finder (*Explore Sus Opciones de Cobertura*), explanations of the *Affordable Care Act in step-by-step detail* (*Comprender la Nueva Ley*) and offer information for families with children (*familias con niños*), senior citizens (*adultos mayores*), people with disabilities (*personas con incapacidad*) and others. In October, CuidadoDeSalud.gov will include price estimates for health insurance plans.

Georgia Launches Work Ready Connect New Online Employment Marketplace for Georgia Work Ready People and Employers

Governor Sonny Perdue announced the launch of Georgia's new online employment marketplace, Work Ready Connect. The website, workreadyconnect.org, brings together Work Ready Certified people and employers to ensure the right person is placed in the right job to drive success. "Georgia Work Ready has transformed our state's workforce and made our people our number one competitive advantage," said Governor Perdue.

Work Ready Connect is free to individuals holding Work Ready Certificates and companies that either prefer or require certificates as part of their hiring process. It is being launched in a partnership between the Governor's Office of Workforce Development and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce. The site helps job seekers use their certificate to find the best job for their talents. They can build a personalized employment profile, see recommended job opportunities, search for open positions and communicate with Georgia employers actively seeking candidates.

Companies can use Work Ready Connect to find job candidates with verified skills. Employers can create company profiles, post open jobs and invite qualified, Work Ready Certified candidates to interview for their jobs. To date, more than 150,000 Georgians have earned Work Ready Certificates and more than 540 companies are listed on the Georgia Work Ready website as preferring or requiring the certificate as part of their hiring process.



The Business Informer is a publication of the Tri-State Regional Workforce Alliance. For more information about the Alliance contact Gwen Dellinger, Workforce Development Director, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, 706.295.6485; Mike Kennamer, Director Workforce Development, Northeast Alabama Community College 256.228.6001, or Phyllis Casavant, Deputy Director, Southeast Tennessee Development District, 423.424.4251

Send information or contributed content to:
new@nwgrc.org

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