TEDC 2018 WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

The 2018 TEDC Workforce Excellence Awards will be presented at the TEDC's 2018 Mid-Year Conference in Galveston, Texas, on June 14, 2018. Awards in each of the five categories will be presented to the community or region that has demonstrated the most significant contribution to workforce development in their community/region and in the State of Texas.

Applicant
Name of Community or Region/Workforce Board: Corsicana Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas office

Contact Name: Cindy White Title: Account Manager
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Telephone: 903.874.8276 Email Address: cwhite@dfwjobs.com
Community Population: 24,040 (as of most recent census or as officially marketed)

Summary Review
Please attach a brief description of the workforce development initiative. Within this description, address the awards criteria of innovativeness, transferability, community commitment, measured objectives and secondary benefits. Please provide the start date of the project and completion date, if applicable. Provide measurable results from the project in the past 12 months. The workforce development initiative can be a long-term project, but must show measurable results in the award year. The nomination can be no longer than five conventionally formatted 8.5" x 11" pages.

Nomination Submitted by:

Member Name: Scott Jones (individual, not organization)
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Please return nomination forms and supporting documents by Tuesday, May 1, 2018 to Amy Swank, amy@texasedc.org, or by fax to 512-472-7907.
Corsicana Workforce Development Committee (CorsicanaWORKS)
Workforce Development Programs 2017-2018

Workforce development in times of low unemployment is especially important and requires thinking outside the box. A strategic partnership was formed in Corsicana in 2017 for the purpose of collecting and disseminating employment data from local businesses, and then developing effective programs to handle these firms’ issues to successful resolution. The Corsicana Workforce Development Commission partnership, also known as CorsicanaWORKS, is comprised of the Economic Development Department of the City of Corsicana and Navarro County, the Navarro Small Business Development Center, the Corsicana/Navarro County Chamber of Commerce, the Corsicana Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas workforce development board office of the Texas Workforce Commission (WFS), and workforce training educators from Navarro College and Corsicana ISD. The partnership and local employers cooperate to ensure growth in Navarro County and its county seat, Corsicana.

Over the past 12 months, as employment needs information is accumulated by the Economic Development Department from major employers, through regular Business Retention & Expansion visits, pairing resources becomes important to industry, educators, non-profits and government, alike. Asking a standardized set of questions, The Economic Development staff becomes informed about workforce trends, including recruiting efforts and expenses, skills development training needs, anticipated workforce expansion/contraction, and other shifts in workforce requirements. By doing so, Economic Development can get a good idea of what issues are facing major employers and act as liaison with educators and the Texas Workforce Commission to further investigate employer issues and facilitate a plan to assist them. Low unemployment numbers mean developing new ideas for workforce attraction, or business attraction slows due to the lack of availability.

Economic Development has paired employers seeking workforce training grant funding with WFS and Navarro College career development educators, via Texas Workforce Commission programs, and with WFS to develop/attend job fairs, develop employment pre-screening criteria, post jobs and for other programs available. It has also recommended Corsicana High School’s technical training program advisors meet with employers to custom tailor programs to meet their needs, therefore ensuring smooth workforce transition upon graduation for many current students not planning to attend college. By training high school and college resident students in the skills needed by local businesses, the flight of young graduates from the small city they’re familiar with to the big city adventure can be somewhat mitigated, since the reason many leave their comfortable environs is the perceived increase in opportunity for employment outside the world they know.

Many will choose to stay, rather than leave, when given a viable and prosperous career path option through such programs. Retaining the existing potential young workforce is preferable to recruiting new employees, as these young residents are already familiar with and entrenched in Corsicana and Navarro County, with established social groups. It’s much less expensive and much more effective to use what local human resources you already have, rather than spending to recruit from outside. A guaranteed job in a student’s hometown is often enough to satisfy the feeling of restlessness. And word-of-mouth from locally established new hires through social contacts and media can be very good advertising to fill other positions available in local industry.

Additionally, the City of Corsicana/Navarro County Economic Development Department partners with WFS to attract new business to the county. By accessing Workforce Solutions’ website, (www.dfwjobs.com) site selectors and other users directed there can access valuable, current data including an economic overview for the North Central Texas area, historic and projected trends, as well as population, industry, business and workforce characteristics.
Another CorsicanaWORKS partner, the Navarro Small Business Development Center (SBDC), a field center of the North Texas SBDC Network and an accredited member of the America’s SBDC nationwide network, also acts as a facilitator to determine how to best assist local businesses. It works closely with WFS, the Corsicana/Navarro County Chamber of Commerce, Navarro College and CISD to identify businesses that need assistance locating employees. Its mission is to help existing businesses grow and remain competitive in the complex marketplace of an ever-changing global economy, and to guide new entrepreneurs in realizing the dream of business ownership. SBDC provides no-cost business consultation and low-cost training, and spearheads efforts for businesses to locate all of the necessary training, grants and/or other funding sources necessary to survive and expand. WFS’ Corsicana facility provides SBDC with labor market information as needed, defining and informing employers SBDC regularly meets with of current labor market trends. This relationship and these partnerships have been instrumental in the success of numerous businesses in the community.

Navarro County was impacted by the loss of several hundred jobs back in 2012. But recent new projects and expansions in the past 12 months have brought new vitality to the county’s economy. The relocation of Polyguard, the employee-owned manufacturer of impermeable barriers, to Corsicana brought the addition of 125 jobs, a majority of which pay higher than median county wage. Embroidery product and sports uniform manufacturer R.J. Leibe Company relocated to Corsicana from St. Louis, where it was in business since 1923, and added 80 new positions. Dart Container, a global leader in the production of single-use food service products, purchased a 1.5M square foot facility and will open its southwest distribution operations there, adding 50 jobs. The expansion of Pactiv LLC, another international container包 packaging manufacturer, and its Corsicana plant creates 224 new jobs. The average weighted salary of their first 75 new hires is projected to be above median county wage.

One example of CorsicanaWORKS’ success is with this expansion. Through the encouragement of the City of Corsicana/Navarro County Economic Development Department, Pactiv partnered with Navarro College and WFS and was awarded a $48,469 Skills Development Grant which trained 224 New Employees. Customized training for the following targeted occupations was provided by Navarro College at the employer’s location:

- 51-4021 Extruding and Drawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic
- 51-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
- 51-9111 Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders
- 53-7051 Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators
- 49-9041 Industrial Machine Mechanics
- 49-2094 Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment
- 51-4031 Cutting, Punching, and Press machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic
- 17-2112 Industrial Engineers
- 51-8021 Stationary Engineers and Boiler Operators

Another example of CorsicanaWORKS’ recent success is in working with Navarro Regional Hospital (NRH) in Corsicana, one of the county’s largest employers. Navarro Regional partners with WFS because of the excellent programs and services offered. For example, the On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program offers a win-win partnership for both the hospital and participants. The hospital’s current OJT-qualified hire has the opportunity to earn as they learn, while NRH benefits from a 50% wage reimbursement for up to 6-months during the initial employment timeframe.
NRH has been impressed with the quality candidates provided from their team of specialized recruiters to help match skill sets and positions. The employer need only be willing to train the person they choose to hire for a permanent, full-time position. Advantages to finding the “right fit” includes not only contribution to the bottom line by saving time and money, but the fact that when employees recognize management is supportive of their growth and enrichment, the employees are generally more engaged and productive. This engagement and productivity leads to increased retention rates and reduced turnover year-over-year. The human resources department at NRH has been particularly grateful that the OJT program allows local talent to be considered for hire as a priority, rather than constantly sourcing talent outside of the community. Another benefit is that WFS basically provides all the administrative support for the program. This turn-key approach allows the business’ human resources department to pursue other responsibilities.

Within the past twelve months, Corsicana WFS has completed 17 successful OJT contracts, which resulted in employers obtaining 17 new employees trained to meet their unique criteria and industry standards. Navarro Regional Hospital and Medical Surgical Compare have both been strong advocates of and participants in this program, due to the overall positive impact.

Another program WFS offers in Navarro County and promoted by CWDC/CorsicanaWORKS is “Subsidized Work Experience” (SWE). SWE is a planned, structured, learning opportunity that takes place in the workplace for a limited period of time, whose purpose is to provide the participant with opportunities for career exploration and skill development. SWE has worked in the private, for-profit sector, the non-profit sector and the public sector. It is particularly helpful for participants that have specific barriers such as limited work history, who did not complete High School or obtain a GED, with the lack of license or certifications, insufficient transportat on, and/or background issues. In the past twelve months, Corsicana WFS has completed 57 SWE’s in many different industries and for varied occupations. The plan is extremely flexible for the employer.

One benefactor of CorsicanaWORKS and this particular WFS program is one of its CWDC/CorsicanaWORKS partners! The Corsicana/Navarro County Chamber of Commerce has always worked closely with WFS to provide training to office support candidates. Due to limited resources as a nonprofit, the Chamber is not in a position to permanently staff all positions necessary to run smoothly and efficiently. Through WFS, the Chamber has now made an SWE position available, which teaches many of the office skills necessary for today’s fast-paced environment. The Chamber position also imparts skills required to become a great employee, from day one. Many of today’s candidates are not familiar with customer service concepts, telephone etiquette, professional behavior and dress, marketing, attendance requirements, and other areas covered in their Chamber SWE training. Further, as a Chamber of Commerce, they train these job candidates to look at every member as a potential future employer. They have helped several candidates move on to more beneficial positions after their skills development training at the Chamber, and hope to help many more in the future. Their referrals are a key component of this partnership with WFS and CorsicanaWORKS. With budget constraints as they are, they would be unable to accomplish a large portion of what they do without Workforce Solutions of North Central Texas.

The other free program heavily utilized by employers in Navarro County and touted by CorsicanaWORKS is Workforce Solutions’ “Job Postings” program. Employers can use www.workintexas.com to post openings or WFS staff will post the jobs. WFS also offers job fairs/hiring events, interview rooms and customized testing for our employers. Currently, the Corsicana WFS has 155 active job postings listed for Navarro County employers.
Finally, communication of goals planned and results achieved is the key to providing essential feedback in Economic Development/Workforce Development circles. The City of Corsicana, Navarro County and CorsicanaWORKS partnership members conduct monthly Economic Development Meetings to provide information regarding the economic activity and workforce status of the city and county to its members and to the public. These regular meetings are live-streamed on the first Tuesday of every month, and are well attended by 30 or more stakeholders, concerned citizens and media, alike. CorsicanaWORKS members meet with the Corsicana/Navarro County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee monthly, as well. The impact and value added by CorsicanaWORKS and WFS is truly felt throughout the community.

I. INNOVATIVENESS:

The goal of the CDWC/CorsicanaWORKS partnership is to find innovative ways for our county and city to self-sustain employment, which directly benefit our community and local businesses. By developing these strategic goals, by educating all partners in the resources available to local businesses, and by communicating those resources through the marketing arms of partner organizations who regularly confer with local business management, an effective tool is created to boost these sustainable employment efforts and assure businesses of a homegrown workforce, critical to their continued health and growth.

II. TRANSFERABILITY:

The ideas and methods of CDWC/CorsicanaWORKS are fully transferrable. Similar programs can be utilized in most other Texas counties and/or municipalities, as the players and roles are similar. The programs available to them through WFS and TWC are the identical. Collaboration and communication are key, and similar regular meetings are required to stay informed. Cross-training on available workforce development programs is another necessity: your WFS Board office must spend the time to educate partners regarding programs and resources available. And the WFS programs available within the state are absolutely transferrable: they only need to be communicated to businesses by an educated partner when a need is discovered.

III. COMMUNITY COMMITMENT AND LEVERAGE:

CDWC/CorsicanaWORKS is an investment in the community by its dedicated partners. All are working to improve the local labor market and economy, and all have a vested interest in its growth and prosperity. By educating the partners in the available resources, the business development and marketing staff interacting with local businesses regularly have a chance to inquire and define workforce issues, then suggest potential programs or pair members of the organization with the best solutions for businesses. This creates leverage far beyond the resources of the individual organizations themselves. The overall goal is to develop and promote workforce resources and create self-sustaining employment opportunities, and as you can see from the above examples, it is working in Corsicana and Navarro County.

IV. MEASURED OBJECTIVES:

CDWC/CorsicanaWORKS’ objectives reached on goals achieved are not difficult to measure. Pactiv’s expansion created $30M in capital investment, in machinery and equipment, to the tax rolls of Navarro County. The city, county, college district and state will all benefit, in many multiples of the actual cash investment. Their first 75 new jobs paying over median county wage means those employees have disposable income to circulate through the local economy. Some will buy homes and pay property taxes. Many will purchase big ticket items locally: automobiles, boats, etc. and pay sales tax thereon. All will spend substantially on local taxable goods, which generate income for the taxing authorities, who, in turn, provide services for those new residents.

Those 17 OJT employees placed through WFS’ program in the past 12 months have added resources to the local workforce and helped local businesses remain profitable. Those 57 SWE’$ have placed a large number of
job-seekers that otherwise might have had a very hard time finding work, creating benefits for both employees and the employers participating. Those 155 active job postings save employers time and money, helping the bottom line and easing the hiring process. They are more productive and revenues increase accordingly, and when the positions posted are filled, the result is of even greater benefit.

V. SECONDARY BENEFITS:

The effects of unemployment on society are astounding. Unemployment affects not just the person himself but also his/her family, and, in the long run, the society where he/she lives. Unemployment brings with it despair, unhappiness and anguish. It forces people to live their lives in a way they do not wish. Life expectancy is negatively affected. Here are the primary negative aspects:

1. **Mental health**: Mental health problems like low self-confidence, depression and hopelessness. With the lost income and the frustration involved, the recently unemployed may develop negative attitudes toward common things in life and may feel that all sense of purpose is lost.

2. **Health diseases**: Overall tension can increase general health issues dramatically.

3. **Tension at home**: Quarrels and arguments at home may lead to tension and increases in divorce, etc.

4. **Political issues**: Loss of trust in administration and the government may lead to political instability.

5. **Tension over taxes rise**: Unemployment also brings up discontent and frustration amongst the tax paying citizens. In order to meet the demands of the unemployment fund, the government may have to increase taxes in times of high unemployment, thus inciting restlessness amongst the tax paying citizens.

6. **Insecurity amongst employees**: Prevailing unemployment and the plight of the unemployed people and their families may create fear and insecurity even in the currently employed people.

7. **Crime and violence**: Increase in the rate of crime.

8. **Suicide cases**: Increase in the rate of suicide attempts and actual suicides.

9. **Social withdrawal**: Unemployment may bring a decrease in social outings and interactions with other people, including friends.

10. **Stigma**: Unemployment brings more than just ‘no work’. It also brings with it disgrace that the person has to bear. Nobody likes to be called unemployed.

11. **Standard of living**: In times of unemployment, the competition for jobs and the negotiation power of the individual decreases and, thus, the living standard of people with income is often reduced.

12. **Employment gaps**: To further complicate the situation, the longer the individual is out of job the more difficult it becomes to find one. Employers find employment gaps a negative aspect. No one wants to hire a person who has been out of work for some time, even when it’s no specific fault of the individual.

13. **Loss of skills**: The unemployed are not able to put skills to use and may lose some of them.