

Belknap Matters

August 2010



Board of Directors

Officers

Michael Persson, Esq., Chair
Lawson & Persson, P.C.
 John Thomas, Vice Chair
Former State Representative
 Ed Engler, Secretary
Laconia Daily Sun
 Sean Sullivan, Treasurer
Denoncourt, Waldron & Sullivan, PA

Directors

Bill Beyer
Retired Bank President/CEO
 Dale Dormody
Piper Mountain Webs, LLC
 Mark Edelstein, Ph.D.
Lakes Region Community College
 Randy Eifert
Cross Insurance
 Tony Ferruolo
Hospitality Consultant
 Debbie Frawley Drake
LRL Enterprises, Inc.
 Tom Garfield
Laconia Savings Bank
 John P. Giere, Esq.
Wescott, Dyer, Fitzgerald & Nichols
 Greg Goddard
Gunstock Mountain Resort
 David Haley
Munsey & Brazil Insurance Agency
 Kimon Koulet
Lakes Region Planning Commission
 Sam Laverack
Meredith Village Savings Bank
 Henry Lipman
Councilor, City of Laconia
 Kate Miller
Representative, District 3/Meredith
 Sonya Misiaszek
Misiaszek Turpin, LLC
 Paige T. Quigley
The Wilder Company
 Jane Wood
Patrick Wood Law Office, PLLC

Staff

Jennifer Boulanger
Executive Director
 Lyn O'Callaghan
Program Coordinator

Growing Industries and Labor and Jobs! Oh, my!

In economic development circles, the key word for success is **jobs**. Are you creating jobs? Are you losing jobs? The Belknap County Economic Development Council has a history of creating and retaining quality jobs, more than 1,700 since 1992.

In Belknap County, 26 companies employ 100 or more employees, and these 26 employers account for 6,946 jobs or 22% of the county's labor force. This subset of the labor force primarily works in Gilford and Laconia (55%) and is focused in manufacturing, healthcare and education (58%). Notwithstanding these statistics, there are numerous small area employers (companies with less than 100 employees) that could otherwise evidence different conclusions.

An Industry Cluster Analysis, performed by Camoin Associates in May 2007 on behalf of the Lakes Region CEDS (www.lakesrpc.org/CEDS), provided more insight into the labor market for the Lakes Region community area¹. This report evidenced that public sector employment (Federal, state and local government) accounted for just about 17% of total workers and thus represents a significant concentration unto itself. In the private sector, the top four leading industries were Retail (20%), Manufacturing (17%), Healthcare (14%) and Accommodation and Food Service (14%). According to the New Hampshire Employment Security's Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, long-term industry projections for the Lakes Region call for 12% growth in total employment by 2016 (just six years down the road), with double-digit growth in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (31%), Healthcare (27%), Administrative and Support Services (26%), Accommodation and Food Service (18%), and Education (18%).

A trained and educated workforce is needed to support the area's existing leading industries, manufacturing and healthcare, as well as education, deemed a growing industry, and the projected leading growth industry, arts, entertainment and recreation services. Both education and arts, entertainment and recreational services are attractive to a younger workforce.

| INDUSTRY | EXISTING LR CLUSTER | GROWTH INDUSTRY | EDUCATION OF LABOR FORCE |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Arts, Entertainment and Recreation | No ** | Yes | High |
| Healthcare | Yes | Yes | High |
| Education | Yes | Yes | High |
| Accommodations and Food Service | Yes | Yes | Low/Mod |
| Manufacturing | Yes | No | High |
| Retail | Yes | No | Low/Mod |

**** Could become a cluster with the development or expansion of local cultural arts center.**

¹ For the Lakes Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the area investigated involves 30 communities: in addition to the 11 municipalities in Belknap County, the CEDS includes Alexandria, Andover, Ashland, Bridgewater, Bristol, Danbury, Effingham, Franklin, Freedom, Hebron, Hill, Holderness, Moultonborough, Northfield, Ossipee, Sandwich, Tamworth, Tuftonboro, and Wolfeboro.

Recently, local meetings focusing on employment — NH Employment Security Roundtables and Lakes Region CEDS Building Employees Committee — as well as statewide initiatives, such as NH Summit on Work and Family, State Legislative Initiatives NH Working, disclosed that the definition of a “quality job” is in flux. While compensation is always a key consideration for measuring the type of job created or retained, as long as the compensation meets the applicant’s need for a basic wage, the bonus points for attracting and keeping an engaged workforce are benefits and management attitude, otherwise termed *flexibility*.

The Council of Economic Advisers released a report in March 2010 offering a perspective on workplace flexibility and its importance to today’s worker. It noted that, since 1960, women have entered the labor force in large numbers, resulting in families where both parents work and modifying the delivery of elder care and childcare. Many workers today find flexibility key to their ability to accommodate family responsibilities.

Creating a flexible workplace can positively impact a company’s bottom line in significant ways including:

Definition of Flexibility

1. Company policy that allows telecommuting
2. Company policy that allows workers to manage their own schedules
3. Flexible leave policy (personal, vacation, sick, etc. – no difference/discrimination)
4. Ability to make personal phone calls to check on children
5. Allows workers to choose their shift
6. Workers are permitted to come in early or leave late
7. Employees may bring children to work during school closings

By: Dr. Kristin Smith, Family Demographer, and
Dr. Malcolm Smith, Professor of Family Studies (UNH)

enhancing recruitment, retention, productivity, performance, morale and commitment; decreasing turnover and absenteeism; permitting the extension of business hours; ensuring coverage during peak hours without overstaffing throughout the workday; retaining older workers’ skills and experience and offering options in lieu of layoffs. (*Approaches to Workplace Flexibility – USDOL Women’s Bureau Region 1*). NH Working, the Governor’s workforce initiative, supports flexibility in the workplace and offers several financial solutions towards averting layoffs. Competing with other businesses on the basis of wages is not the only way to go.

Generally speaking, with the exception of very small employers with fewer than ten employees, New Hampshire employers offer medical, dental, and paid time off to all full-time employees (see *2007 Benefits offered by NH Employers NHES – ELM*). Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Belknap County businesses offer medical insurance to full-time employees, and 80% pay a portion of the premium cost. Thirty percent of county businesses offer dental insurance to full-time employees, and 60% pay either all or a portion of the premiums. Seventy-eight percent of Belknap County businesses offer paid vacation time to full-time employees, and 19% to part-time employees (average period of time off is 1-2 weeks). Almost half (47%) offer paid sick leave to full-time employees, and 10% to part-time employees (average of 3-5 days). Three quarters of county businesses offer paid holiday leave to full-time employees, and 30% to part-time (average of 5-7 days).

Belknap County businesses are offering quality jobs both in terms of compensation and benefits. Flexibility could be the incentive that attracts qualified labor to the area. Employers seeking an engaged and well qualified workforce are wise to continue to offer good benefits and research ways of increasing flexibility.

Please refer to our website www.bcedc.org and review our online library of reports and newsletters for details with regard to the specific data.



Leadership Accepting Applications

Leadership Lakes Region is now accepting applications for its next class, which begins in October. Modeled after the Leadership NH Program, Leadership Lakes Region is designed to educate and inform area individuals about numerous issues at work in the Lakes Region and to foster a climate of greater volunteerism among its graduates. The program consists of seminar days covering the history/culture, health, social issues, politics, economic issues and educational opportunities in the Lakes Region and concludes with an informational day on Lake Winnepesaukee. Among its graduates in the last 12 years have been attorneys, bank presidents, municipal leaders, fire chiefs, healthcare professionals, college and secondary school teachers, realtors and small business owners.

“Leadership Lakes is a perfect educational opportunity for young professionals new to the region seeking more information as well as for those who have been here awhile but would like to learn more, and interact more, with other professionals from diverse careers” said LLR Board chair, Don Morrissey.

Anyone interested in applying or in learning more about the organization may contact Leadership Lakes Region at One Mill Plaza, Laconia, NH 03246 by calling 524-6791 or by visiting the website: www.leadershiplakesregion.org

A New Home for BCEDC

Together with its resource partners, SCORE Lakes Region and Leadership Lakes Region, the Belknap County Economic Development Council has relocated its offices to One Mill Plaza in downtown Laconia. In a joint statement, Joe Adrignola of One Mill Plaza Inc. and BCEDC Executive Director Jennifer Boulanger announced the agencies' move to shared first floor space in the historic Busiel Mill building known as One Mill Plaza.

All three organizations were previously located at 2 Airport Road, Gilford, where they had been guests of Southern New Hampshire University, occupying 2500 square feet of space on the ground level. In February 2009, the university closed its Laconia Center and, in March of this year, the building was sold.

"The BCEDC's business is helping business," said Boulanger, "Our relocation to downtown Laconia, which is the county seat and the heart of our service area, allows greater access to the council's services and staff. Additionally, it enables us and our partners to further maximize efficiencies and resources. We are greatly appreciative of the opportunity to move to first floor space at One Mill Plaza."

Although the new location provides only 1200 square feet, less than half as much space as the agencies previously occupied, tenants of One Mill Plaza enjoy the use of many shared amenities, including a large community/conference room, small meeting rooms on each floor, and an award-winning outdoor patio suitable for functions and business gatherings.

One Mill Plaza is a restored mill building that once housed manufacturers who produced textiles, Kinsman Electric Organs, and Gilbert Clocks. The Busiel Mill was restored and converted to office space in the early 1970s. The current occupants also include Martin, Lord & Osman, PA, attorneys at law; Misiaszek Turpin pllc, architects and planners; Ken Vomacka, CPA; Dr. Joseph Sack, psychiatrist; Sally Gallagher, MT; Common Ground Financial Advisors; Blackwood and Gillen, LLC, attorneys; and Market Street Settlement Services. The Busiel Mill Community Room and Gallery is located on the river level.

"We are delighted to have these new tenants in our building and downtown. For years, the BCEDC has contributed to regional job creation and is now needed more than ever. In this economic climate, they will be more visible to those who wish to avail themselves of these much needed services," Adrignola said.

Since 1992, the Economic Development Council has assisted existing Lakes Region companies and has helped to attract new firms to the area. Serving the municipalities of Alton, Barnstead, Belmont, Center Harbor, Gilford, Gilmanton, Laconia, Meredith, New Hampton, Sanbornton, and Tilton, the BCEDC is one of 10 regional development agencies providing economic development resources in the State of New Hampshire. BCEDC provides gap financing to county businesses through its Revolving Loan Fund. Free services include technical assistance, expansion/relocation assistance, workforce development, community and regional information, and business information.

The BCEDC will host a Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours event on Wednesday, October 27th, from 5 - 7 p.m. For information, please call 524-3057.



BELKNAP COUNTY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

One Mill Plaza | Laconia, NH 03246 | www.bcedc.org

Together we make a difference

SCORE The “J” Word! My, Oh My!

The most popular four-letter word these days? Jobs! From your nightly dinner table conversation to politicians on the stump, in these challenging times, jobs dominate our thinking, our fears, our focus and our hope for a better tomorrow. Some candidates offer that these are the most difficult of times; others suggest a less critical assessment. Regardless, jobs remain a key issue in the months ahead.

A recent Pew Research study indicated that one in six households (about 16%) are directly affected by the current paucity of jobs. For Belknap County, with 55,116 households, that would result in 8,818 households being directly affected, a considerable number. Those seeking employment face a monumental challenge, while the employed worry about keeping their jobs. In a volatile business climate, employers must decide whether to wait or hire. Locally, there is good news: One of the area’s larger employers has announced that it is again hiring and that its labor force is approaching pre-recession numbers.

The importance of small business in a given region is often significant. The latest data from the Small Business Administration (SBA) offers some insight as to the magnitude. Small firms represent 99.7% of all employers; they employ more than half of all private sector employees and have generated 64% of net new jobs over the past decade. In Belknap County, small companies (fewer than 100 employees) represent about 80% of all job opportunities. Maybe this is the time for you to consider starting your own business or, if already in business, maybe you need to consider how to grow and expand. If you’re considering retirement or the sale of your business, you might want to seek guidance on an exit strategy. Regardless of the current job and economic climate, opportunities exist and the talent pool is plentiful.

SCORE – Counselors to Americas Small Business has targeted 1 million newly created jobs by 2015 through its ongoing programs of Small Business Counseling and Mentoring. In the past year, SCORE Lakes Region has invested over 1200 hours of locally delivered counseling to 225 entrepreneurs, small businesses, or those seeking to start a new business in the region. SCORE Lakes Region offers free, confidential counseling and mentoring by qualified and experienced business leaders. To learn more, please contact SCORE Lakes Region in Laconia at 524-3057.

Upcoming Workshop:

**Maximum Marketing
– Minimum Dollars**

Marketing is a process that never ends! Bring your top three marketing and sales challenges to the session for insights on how to overcome or improve them.

Wednesday, September 15th
5:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Busiel Community Room
One Mill Plaza, Laconia

To register or for more details,
please contact SCORE Lakes
Region at 524-3057