

# VIRGINIA



# WORKFORCE CONNECTION

Virginia Workforce Council Winter 2013

## From the Chairman's Perspective

By Huey J. Battle  
Chairman, Virginia Workforce Council

### March Madness

It is no secret that I am an avid basketball enthusiast. Whether I am watching my daughter play on her college team or I am refereeing a local



high school game, I am passionate about the sport. One might say that each of us is in the midst of our own version of "March Madness" right now. In the arena of workforce development, the Final Four competing themes that have my interest are: sustainability, sector strategies, collaboration and reform.

### Sustainability

Our national economy is in a very precarious position. Sequestration is upon us with \$85 billion in budget cuts to be played out over the next 7 months. This will impact our WIA funds for example, with an estimated 5-8% reduction. Unemployment insurance amounts will be lowered, federal employees will be furloughed. The 113th Congress is considering proposed legislation to reauthorize 27 different programs in workforce and education, including WIA and Perkins. The percentage of WIA statewide funds awarded to states hangs in the balance with competing proposals in the Skills Act (H. R. 803), H. R. 798 and pending Senate proposals. The debt ceiling limit is looming in May, and a continuing resolution will expire on the federal budget later this month. The clock

(See CHAIRMAN on page 3)

## VWC Launches New Online WIA Scorecard

The scorecard was developed in partnership with the Virginia Workforce Council in an effort to help shed light on how locally operated programs are performing.

The federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) includes funding for three program areas: Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth. The Scorecard displays the performance across the State on each of these programs and allows users to select a specific region to focus on.

The tool will be used to provide easy to access data on the performance of WIA programs as well as to help decision makers identify areas of improvement for the system, either through training or public policy.

Each of the programs' performance is tracked in the areas set by both the US Department of Labor (USDOL) and those set by Virginia legislators. These measures include such things as the rate at which customers have entered employment, employment retention, as well as

average earnings. Youth programs are focused on literacy and numeracy gains, attainment of credentials which lead to employment as well as job placements.

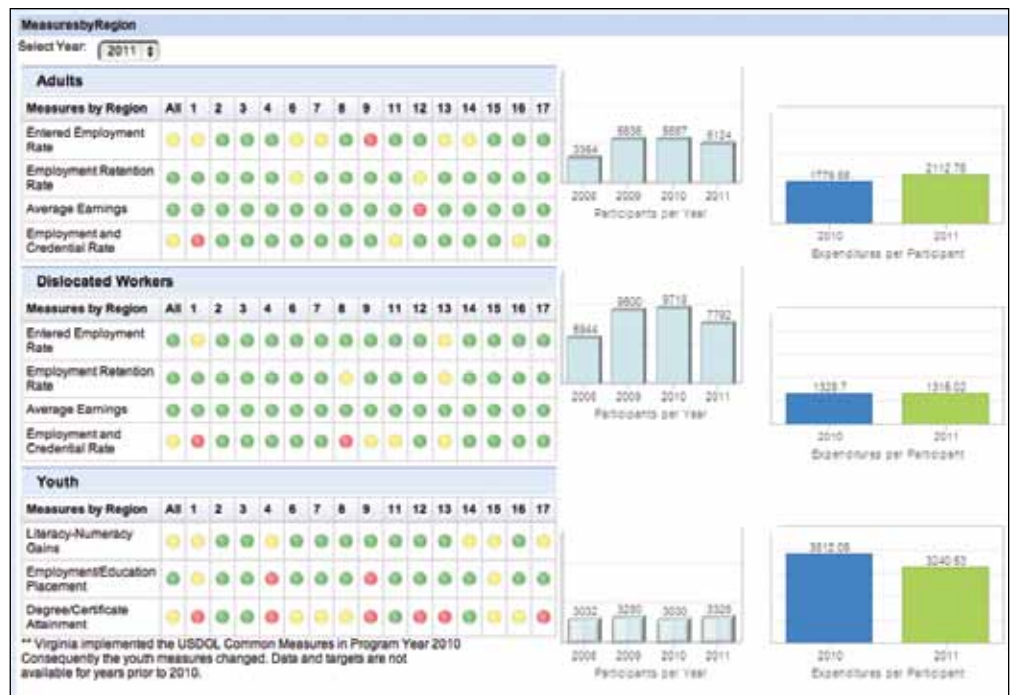
Some additional measures have been added through the input of the Virginia Workforce Council and are also displayed in the Scorecard. These include Career Readiness Certificate attainment, employment and credential attainment, employment related training and costs per participant.

You can find the scorecard on the [Virginia Workforce Network Website](#) under the Virginia Workforce Council tab (scroll down to Resources/WIA Federal & State Program Performance Measures).

A redesigned version 2.0 is slated for release in spring 2013. Future measures are in development and include:

1. Return on investment,
2. Employer and customer satisfaction and
3. Employer penetration. These are expected to be available in fall 2013.

The VWC's new WIA scorecard is a tool that will be used to provide easy to access data on the performance of WIA programs as well as to help decision makers identify areas of improvement for the system, either through training or public policy.



## A Special Report from Elizabeth Creamer, Director of Education and Workforce Development, Office of the Secretary of Education

The Governor's Workforce Agenda for the 2013 General Assembly session was designed to move forward three primary goals:

1. Increase the number of education and workforce credentials attained by Virginians;
2. Increase the number of Virginians trained and prepared for technician level jobs in key industry sectors;
3. Increase collaboration and resource sharing between federal and state funded career and technical education and workforce programs in Virginia to improve performance and cost efficiencies.

Correlating the Governor's goals and the Virginia Workforce Council's interest in program alignment, each of the policy and budget initiatives focuses on collaboration and leveraging of resources between community colleges and WIBs, other higher education partners, economic development entities and business and industry.

Successful budget proposals, approved by the General Assembly, include \$3.7 million to support expansion of the Precision Machining Center at Danville Community College. The expansion will double training capacity of the college's precision machining program which has a job placement rate of close to 95% and a current wait list of 40 applicants. Significant regional industry support has been generated for the project by the community college, and the request for state funds was matched by \$1.5 million in local contributions and another \$1 million commitment from the college. In addition, the center will offer a 33 college credit hour certificate in advanced manufacturing to high school students.

A second budget item targeting advanced



Elizabeth Creamer

manufacturing was approved by the GA with a \$125,000 planning grant for an Advanced Integrated Manufacturing Center at Thomas Nelson Community College. Funds will support the community college in leading planning with business and industry, economic development, and the region's WIB for an advanced manufacturing center in integrated digital processes, from design and rapid prototyping to additive manufacturing, to meet projected workforce needs of 200 small and 14 major companies employing multi-skilled technicians.

After an incredibly robust education and information campaign by its leadership team and key agency heads, \$280,295 was approved by the GA to support the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS), a multi-agency initiative anchored by VDOE, SCHEV, VCCS, VEC and VITA that provides the technology and inter-agency agreements to allow for informed policy making and program design based on collection and reporting of data on lifelong learning and employment from early childhood and K-12 through higher education and the workforce.

The Governor's agenda also included successful legislation, carried by VWC members Delegate Kathy Bryon and Senator Ruff, which expands the VWC's scope to broadly address the entire spectrum of career and technical education and workforce development programs in the Commonwealth. The new legislation directs the VWC to advise the Governor on policies relevant to increasing alignment and resource sharing between education and workforce programs for the purpose of creating and supporting cross-agency and cross-program sector strategies and career pathways that expand and improve the workforce pipeline in targeted industry sectors.

Creating High School to Work Partnerships is legislation that requires the Board of Education to develop guidelines for high school student apprenticeships, internships, and job shadowing programs. This legislation will help local businesses address current and impending skills shortages of trades and technician workers in high technology industry clusters such as advanced manufacturing.

It was an honor for me to work throughout my first legislative season with the other members of the Governor's Workforce Team: Secretary of Education Laura Fornash and Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Trade Carrie Roth, who led team efforts to move forward the Governor's Agenda. I am deeply appreciative of their instruction throughout the process and their teaching through example as well as of the efforts and strengths of the legislators and VWC members who carried, informed, or promoted the Governor's Workforce Agenda.

## Work Readiness Curriculum is Preparing Workforce

At the heart of every successful business or organization is a highly skilled workforce consisting of employees who have perfected work readiness skills such as initiative, planning and organizing, and working effectively with others. However, developing a workforce that can meet the needs of a company and contribute to its success and bottom line presents a challenge for workforce development professionals, especially among workforce professionals serving the youth population. Poor work ethics and soft skills in young adults are among the top of the list of concerns facing today's employer as these challenges often result in low productivity and high turnover rates.

People Incorporated of Virginia, Workforce Development Division, is committed to the high standards necessary to build tomorrow's workforce one person at a time. By engaging and preparing individuals for the careers of the 21st century, People Incorporated is fulfilling its mission to meet the needs of local employers. Through the use of an effective yet practical work readiness curriculum, youth are equipped with the employability skills needed to enter and compete in the 21st century competitive labor market.

During his tenure as a WIA youth client, Alexander Keene completed occupational skills training, leadership development, work readiness training, and an Internship, which lead him to full time employment as a Welder earning \$13.34 per hour for local employer Steel Fab.

According to Keene, "The services and activities provided by People Incorporated, which included the work readiness program, guided me into my future."

One key component of the work readiness curriculum is the design, which meets the needs of both the employer and young adults. The modules consist of a combination of PowerPoint presentations, guest speakers, workbook and hands-on activities (including mock interviews and personality and learning styles assessments), and icebreakers.

Finally, the youth are given the opportunity to network with local employers which has resulted in many youth obtaining part-time employment that assists them in funding their living expenses while enrolled in education or training (several youth have received job offers from employers during the workshops).

With a Placement in Employment/Education rate of 86%, and an increasing number of employers characterizing WIA Youth as "Having a Good Work Ethic" and "Eager to Learn," People Incorporated attributes much of its success to the solid work readiness curriculum (and teaching styles of the staff) used to empower youth with the employability skills needed for success.



Alexander Keene

## CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE *(Continued from page 1)*

is running out and we are all sitting on the edge of our seats waiting for someone to step up to sink a 3 pointer to win this game. We do see signs, however, that the economic recovery is continuing. Wall Street is experiencing all-time highs and the February jobs report provided encouraging news of job growth and lower unemployment. Now is the time to really push the accelerator and look to take advantage of these more positive trends.

### Collaborate

The recipe for success on any winning team is to collaborate. From the Latin word: collaboratus: "to labor together", Webster defines collaboration as "to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor." The role of the Virginia Workforce Council has been to encourage and participate in the efforts at a state, regional or local level where collaboration reaps success. Some examples of this include:

1. The production of the [Career Pathways Video](#), a collaboration among 8 different state agencies,
2. The development of the [Workforce System Report Card and WIA Scorecard](#), as well as
3. The legislative and executive reforms that

will redefine the work of the Council and improve the quality of service to challenged populations including persons with disabilities and our returning veterans.

### Sector Strategies

As Chair of the Council, I view myself as a coach in some ways, helping to facilitate a talented bench of partners who are collaborating on winning strategies of advice to offer the Governor. One such strategy is a further enhancement of our career pathways model to expand sector strategies. More than half the nation's states are exploring these partnerships of employers within one industry that bring together government, education, training, economic development, labor and community organizations to identify and solve the workforce needs of that industry within a regional labor market. According to the NGA, the National Skills Coalition and the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, sector strategies are the most consistently adopted approach to meeting businesses' need for skilled workers and workers'



### Reform

As of this newsletter issue, the General Assembly has passed legislation to reform the work of the Council (see HB 2154 and SB 1177 sponsored by Council members Delegate Kathy Byron and Senator Frank Ruff). I am excited about this expanded game plan and look forward to its approval by the Governor this Spring.

On a final note, I have taken my game on the road and have been inspired by the service provided on the ground by our local workforce network partners. I attended the LWIB meeting in Region 2000 in February and have plans to be in LWIA 14 later in March, and LWIA 2 and 8 in April. I look forward to seeing you in your region or perhaps at the full Council meeting on March 14.

I leave you with one thought. In order for our team, which is the workforce system, to be successful, we must live by this injunction...Be responsible for your assignment, but also be accountable for the mission. Do this and we will all be cutting down the nets in the end. 🏀

## Deputy Secretary of Commerce Visits WCC Workforce

Virginia's Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Trade for Rural Economic Development, Mary Rae Carter, visited Wytheville Community College on January 28, 2013 and met with Vice President of Workforce Development and Occupational & Technical Programs, Angela Y. Lawson, and Director of Workforce Development, Joseph R. Bybee.



Mary Rae Carter

Carter also toured the Amcor and Gatorade facilities in Wythe County and met with the leadership of Amcor, Gatorade, and Pepsi.

"My recent visit to Wytheville, WCC, Amcor, and Gatorade was a truly rewarding experience to see the positive results of the partnership between Wytheville Community College and these esteemed industries," said Carter. "It was wonderful to witness first-hand the advanced manufacturing skills of the workforce being utilized at Gatorade and Amcor. This is an excellent example for employers to look to our community colleges to bring a skilled and productive workforce to their companies."

Governor Bob McDonnell appointed Carter Virginia's first Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Trade for Rural Economic Development in March of 2010. Carter is based in Franklin County and spends significant time traveling in rural Virginia. The Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Trade for Rural Economic Development serves as the Secretary of Commerce and Trade's senior liaison to rural parts of the Commonwealth, focusing on the strategic vision for rural economic development. 🏀

## MAKE IT WORK 2012 Hire Education Conference

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# WIA Success Stories Aboard

## Job Search Success

**E**dna "Fay" Hawkins worked as a project manager for a construction company for two years when she received her layoff notice in February 2010. As the economic outlook continued to decline, Fay grew increasingly discouraged when her job search efforts yielded no results.

"The construction industry was just slow at that time, but being laid-off really hurt my spirits," said Fay. When her unemployment benefits were exhausted, Fay sought the assistance of the WIA Adult Program operated by People Incorporated of Virginia.


Through a series of interviews and assessments, WIA Adult staff quickly discovered that Fay had much to contribute to an employer, including a strong work history as well as Associate Degrees in Administrative Support Technologies, Business Management, and

Accounting. Fay and the WIA senior workforce development specialist began to formulate a plan which would include intensive staff-assisted job search. It was through this job search that WIA staff identified a

local employer, Jeff Johnson's Chevrolet, who needed a receptionist with excellent communication skills and clerical abilities.

Fay received an interview for the position, and the employer was impressed with Fay's experience, skills, and performance during the interview. However, the employer was hesitant to extend an offer of employment as many of her skills would need to be upgraded due to the length of time Fay had been unemployed.

In order to serve both the needs of the job seeker and business, People Incorporated set up an internship that would allow the employer to train Fay and ensure that her skills were still current. Fay exceeded the employer's expectations, and was soon promoted to Office Manager of the new RV Center. Her job duties were expanded, and the position came with a higher wage rate as well.

Fay successfully completed the internship and is now employed full time as an office manager for Jeff Johnson's RV Center. She is scheduled to receive an additional merit based pay increase and fringe benefits at the completion of her 90 day introductory period. Fay said, "I am thankful for the WIA program, and honestly believe that without the assistance, I would not have been given this opportunity for employment." 

**Edna "Fay" Hawkins found success through perseverance and WIA assistance.**

## I'm Gonna Do This For Me!

**F**or the past three years, that has been the mantra for Kaniesha Bass of Mecklenburg County. She is currently a senior at Bluestone High School and plans to let nothing stand in her way.

Kaniesha came into the WIA Youth Program as a shy young lady, who had actually considered quitting school because she felt she should find a job to help out with things at home. Fortunately, case manager Kathy Johnson saw the potential in Kaniesha and through persistent attention and guidance brought Kaniesha out of her shell.

Her first summer work experience through the Southside Virginia Community College was spent at Bluestone working with the janitorial department, but she quickly proved herself during the next two summers at the Estes Center, occupying a position in

the computer lab.

Within this environment Kaniesha's case manager saw her mature as she was exposed to new experiences and challenges. Her self-esteem has improved


**Kaniesha Bass' self-esteem has improved along with her leadership skills.**

along with her leadership skills to the point that Kaniesha will be a Youth Ambassador for the 10th annual Youth Summit in March. No stranger to the Youth Summit, Kaniesha attended the 8th and 9th meetings and has won third place in the talent contest.

Kaniesha was named senior of the month in September 2012 at her high school and received a \$500 scholarship. Having worked hard to keep her grades up, she was accepted at both VCU and Mary Baldwin. She chose to attend Mary Baldwin where she applied and was accepted into the Virginia Women's Institute of Learning ROTC, and was awarded another scholarship.

Kaniesha is planning to major in forensic science at Mary Baldwin. This coming summer she will be attending the Navy Reserve boot camp, being the recipient of a Navy ROTC scholarship. After graduating from Mary Baldwin, she will enter active duty as an officer and work in the law enforcement division.

Kaniesha stated that without the WIA Youth Program and the Southside Virginia Community College, she would not have been able to have the experiences she has had or been able to have the money to prepare for school without it being a hardship on her family.

Once lacking self-confidence, Kaniesha now stands up for herself and says, "I'm gonna do this for me!" 

## The Road to Employment

**H**ow does a student with aspirations to become a corrections officer end up as a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA)? And, is this his final career destination?

According to his mother, all William Holmes ever wanted to be was a corrections officer. When he was accepted into the WIA In-School Youth program, case manager Andrea Word encouraged him to make his goals known to everyone at his high school.

Holmes graduated from high school May 20, 2011 and went straight to his first work experience at Hope Community Services in Farmville as a maintenance helper. He attended classroom training on interviewing skills, resume writing, job search skills and dressing for success - all part of the Youth program. His case manager provided him with a

**William Holmes takes a detour, but it's a detour in the right direction as he works his way to his career goal.**


copy of "The 6 Most Important Decisions You'll Ever Make" by Sean Covey and set a deadline for completion. He participated in the Reality Store exercise, exposing him to

budget principles and practices.

One important consideration for Holmes is the fact that he has a son who is now 15 months old. Throughout the summer, Holmes helped to take care of his child, completed his Summer Work Experience, and looked for full time work.

To bring his story up to date, William completed the CNA course at Southside Virginia Community College in August of 2012 and got a full time job at The Laurels at Willow Creek in Midlothian, Va. He can now take his state board exam to become certified in this profession.

Not one to sit around and wait for success to come to him, William recently interviewed with Piedmont Jail for a corrections officer position, with good results. In spite of having been assessed at one time as needing help with career goals and work readiness, determined case management combined with effective youth programs have kept this young man on the right path.

The position as a CNA is not a detour for William but a step in the right direction as he works his way to his career goal. Armed with work skills learned in the WIA Youth program, his natural people skills, and determination, William will soon be in the corrections officer's job to which he has always aspired. 

## Peninsula Council and Hospitality Industry Partners Put Customer Service First



Dexter Godfrey captivates the audience with customer service tips at the Hampton Roads Convention Center.

On October 30, 2012, the Hospitality Industry Cluster of the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development and its partners - Hampton Convention and Visitor Bureau, Newport News Tourism Development Office and Newport News Hospitality Association - hosted their annual fall customer service training seminar. Over 200 hospitality industry professionals attended this event held at the Hampton Roads Convention Center.

The participants represented various facilities that serve the public such as hotels, tourist attractions, public service agencies, city government agencies, churches, and colleges. There were over 25 different properties and agencies from the Peninsula and the Southside.

The main presenter was Dexter Godfrey, owner of Leadership & Sales Academy. As a successful business man, he has served as the keynote speaker at all levels, teaching and training business executives and corporate leaders the value of influencing others through leadership and customer service. Mr. Godfrey delivered the message titled, "Customer Service is more than communicating...It's connecting!" He addressed such topics as connecting is all about the customer, how connecting is more skill than talent and how to identify if your customer service is headed in the right direction. The presentation was well received by those in attendance, with many of the participants voicing accolades as they were leaving.

The next customer service training seminar will be held in the spring of 2013. For more information on any of the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development Industry Clusters or other hosted training activities, such as the Disney Institute, please call (757) 826-3327 or visit [www.pctfwd.org](http://www.pctfwd.org).

## Region 2000 Workforce Investment Board Ramps Up Business Services

As an early step to implementing its recently adopted Strategic Plan, the Region 2000 WIB is establishing an "Existing Worker Training Program". This program will assist employers who may have a need to make training-related investments in their existing workers to remain competitive, enhance productivity or support the introduction of a new product line.

The need for such a program was underscored by results from online employer surveys and roundtable discussions throughout the region indicating a need for training incentives and a preference for using on-the-job training to update worker skills.

Through a grant application process, approved projects can be reimbursed for training related costs, such as instructor/trainer fees, tuition costs, textbooks/manuals, expandable materials and supplies, and computer software. Employers are required to provide a 50% match on the award amount.



Farm Fresh President Gaelo La Fuente shares his inspirational story with students.

## Farm Fresh Supermarkets Partner With Workforce Readiness Program

The students participating in the Workforce Readiness Program (WRP) are considered non-traditional students. They are often expected to fill roles at home such as baby sitting, preparing meals and tutoring younger siblings.

Based on the need to empower students, a partnership was established with Farm Fresh. President, Gaelo La Fuente, celebrated the partnership by hosting a Farm Fresh Mentors Day recently at the Virginia Beach Higher Education Center (VBHEC). He gave an inspirational speech discussing his background and the obstacles he had to overcome to obtain an education. He discussed Farm Fresh Supermarkets and how he rose through the ranks to become President of the company. The students were thrilled that he took the time to speak to them and that Farm Fresh has agreed to hire a number of youth participating in the NSU -VBHEC Workforce Program. He developed and implemented a plan with the Human Resource manager to target WRP youth applying for employment.

He and the administrative staff of Farm Fresh shared with the students their respective roles and career opportunities within the company. A Farm Fresh supermarkets tour was conducted. Student's job-shadowed different career opportunities at Farm Fresh Supermarkets during the holiday.

This partnership has enabled 14 WRP students to work at Farm Fresh stores in their communities. This is remarkable because public transportation is expensive and many families do not have personal vehicles and cannot afford to purchase bus passes to and from work. Employment has aided students in the ability to meet additional financial obligations and prevent negative behaviors and outcomes.

Over the year the partnership has grown, more students have obtained employment in addition to a scholarship for college.

# The SkillSource Group, Inc. Releases its 2012 Annual Report

The SkillSource Group, Inc. (the non-profit arm of the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board; Area #11) has released its [2012 Annual Report](#). This report highlights the expansion of SkillSource's services through new grant awards and programs, as well as other innovative methods of enhancing training and employment services for Northern Virginia's job seekers.

If you would like to be on the SkillSource distribution list for future press releases and Annual Report distribution, please send an email to [deb.stopak@myskillsource.org](mailto:deb.stopak@myskillsource.org).

## Training Futures and Ticket to Work Participant Retools for Career Change

Kevin came to the SkillSource Group, Inc. in November 2010 seeking assistance returning to the workforce. He had worked in the remodeling industry, when a medical condition necessitated two major neck surgeries. After a month in rehabilitation, he returned home uncertain about his future. The physical demands of Kevin's remodeling job prevented him from returning.

In March 2009, Kevin applied for and was granted Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits and was encouraged to pursue the Ticket to Work (TTW) program. He contacted SkillSource and met with the TTW Project Director. She introduced Kevin to both free employment services and workshops at the SkillSource Centers, and a program called Training Futures, which

provides candidates clerical training and job placement support while earning college credits.

Operated by Northern Virginia Family Service, in partnership with Northern Virginia Community College, Training Futures placed Kevin as a Surgery Billing intern at Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center in Woodbridge. After completing his internship, Sentara offered him a full-time position with benefits.

Kevin has been employed at Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center for ten months and has regained his confidence and looks forward to a promising new career.

## NOVAGATE Cultivates Entrepreneurial Reality

Gary worked 12 years at USA TODAY as Director of Circulation Marketing, responsible for subscription sales, marketing and customer service. When his position was eliminated in a corporate consolidation, Gary knew exactly what he wanted to do - turn his work experience into a business. He enrolled in the Northern Virginia Growing America Through Entrepreneurship (NOVAGATE) program and created International Media Consulting (IMC),



which specializes in assisting associations, news media and organizations to build their audience and membership.

"I knew I would have to do a lot of things myself that I used to have staff to do. It was overwhelming at times with all of the details that go into starting, selling and managing a business. [The] NOVAGATE program provided moral support as well as practical support with website design and marketing collateral for my business."

As a new entrepreneur, Gary had concerns about having enough customers, however, his business took off almost immediately and he is now working with several firms, including SiriusXM Radio. Gary has added support staff on a contract basis and looks forward to building his business.

For additional SkillSource news, check out their [press room](#).

## Peninsula opens third Youth Career Café at the Hampton Teen Center

The Peninsula Council for Workforce Development opened a new Youth Career Café (YCC) in Hampton, Virginia to give area young people the opportunity to explore careers and the world of business. This location, along with the Cafes at Patrick Henry Mall and on the campus of Thomas Nelson Community College in the Historic Triangle, brings the number of YCCs to three locations along I-64 on the Peninsula.

Like the other YCC locations, the Hampton café grew out of an ongoing effort between the Council and local businesses, government and school officials to better prepare young people for the workplace. The new café will serve the Hampton City School division.

"The new location provides a connection between what the students are learning in school and what the business community needs in the emerging workforce," says Matthew James, PCFWD president and CEO.

In addition, a virtual Youth Career Café was launched in the fall. Located at [www.youthcareercafe.com](http://www.youthcareercafe.com), the site provides many of the services that a participant can find at a physical Cafe. This gives youth the opportunity of accessing services at any location, such as libraries, community centers or their home.

For more information on any of the cafés, call (757) 826-3327

or visit [www.youthcareercafe.com](http://www.youthcareercafe.com).



## Dr. Najmah Thomas Receives Prestigious Living Legacy Award

It is with great pleasure that VCCS Workforce Development shares news that Dr. Najmah Thomas, Workforce Investment Act Programs Administrator for Virginia's Community Colleges, was selected by the



Dr. Najmah Thomas

Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) and Farmers Insurance as a recipient of the national Living Legacy Award.

This prestigious award is bestowed upon local, state, national, and international African American women who work to improve their communities, institutions, organizations and family life. Biographies of the elite 2013 Living Legacy Awardees [may be viewed here](#). You can tell by the prestigious list of recipients that Dr. Thomas is in good company and deservedly so.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Thomas on this national award.