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CONTACT:

Sandy Harmsen, 909.387.9862

Jessica McLeish, 951.805.1236

Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County allocates \$3.2 million in stimulus dollars to train county residents

Approximately 2,000 training opportunities in the county's top industry sectors are under negotiation

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif., (August 5, 2009) - The Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County on Monday night approved the use of \$3.2 million in stimulus dollars in the county. These funds will be used to pay for skills training for about 2,000 qualified county residents.

Applicants who qualify will be trained at no cost to them, due to funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act distributed by the Workforce Investment Board.

Training proposals were selected based on how closely they were tied to job openings in the region, and whether they trained residents for skills that would be in demand in the county's leading industries once the economy shifted into a growth mode.

The Workforce Investment Board is negotiating contracts with colleges, hospitals and other employers to provide training for a variety of employment opportunities, including nursing, auto repair, welding, waste water management and solar panel installation.

The Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County, a public-private board charged with directing funding to develop a trained and skilled workforce in the county, is administering \$8 million in stimulus funding for adult and dislocated worker services.

“As soon as we were aware of the stimulus dollars, we held a series of meetings with cities, economic developers, economists, businesses, and representatives from the education and training industries to identify areas of need and the best ways to utilize this funding,” said Sandy Harmsen, executive director of the Workforce Investment Board. “We identified the industry sectors that have the most demand for a skilled workforce and the skills that transfer across multiple industries, and asked for training proposals in those areas.”

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“Our goal is to put the entire \$8 million into direct training for county residents, and we are well on our way,” said Harmsen.

This training will be focused in the county’s largest employment sectors. These sectors include health care, aviation, transportation and logistics, manufacturing and green industries. The Workforce Investment Board is also developing a matrix of the top skills that translate across multiple industry sectors needed by county employers that have an aging workforce, so that residents will have a better chance of getting a job regardless of which industry rebounds first.

Training contracts are being negotiated currently and some are subject to Board of Supervisor’s approval. Individuals interested in more information should contact the Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County at 800.451.JOBS. The Workforce Investment Board will utilize the stimulus dollars within the next 14 months.

About the Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County

The Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County is comprised of private business representatives and public partners appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. It strives to create a strong, vibrant economy by developing the county’s workforce through partnerships with business, education and community-based organizations.

The Workforce Investment Board, through the county’s Economic Development Agency and Workforce Development Department, operates the county’s Employment Resource Centers and Business Resource Centers. The Employment Resource Centers provide individuals with job training, placement and the tools to strengthen their skills to achieve a higher quality of life, and the Business Resource Centers support and provide services to the county’s businesses including employee recruitment.

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