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Summer Youth Employment Program puts 1,834 San Bernardino County youth to work this summer

Local youth gain valuable work experience, employers benefit thanks to stimulus dollars administered by Workforce Investment Board

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (October 1, 2009) – The Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County announced today that 1,834 of its young people are successfully completing the Summer Youth Employment Program.

Wages for these youth were paid for by approximately \$7 million in stimulus funding, administered by the county's Workforce Investment Board.

The program was designed to create an opportunity for young people between ages 14 and 24 to work during the summer, at a time when jobs are scarce and youth are competing with out-of-work adults for summer jobs.

Though the program was designed to only provide work experience this summer, about 200 participants are being hired on full time and part time at their work sites. These work sites consist of a variety of local public and private employers that span a wide range of industries including retail, entertainment, professional service, education, medical and child care.

Some of the employers that hired their youth workers include Patton State Hospital, Redlands Auto Repair, UPS Store, Coca-Cola, Farmer's Insurance, Boys & Girls Club, Apple Valley Animal Hospital, Little Folks Bookshoppe, American Sports University and Lee & Associates.

"Thanks to federal stimulus dollars, the Workforce Investment Board gave youth the opportunity to work during a summer with very limited job openings," said Sandy Harmsen, executive director for the Workforce Investment Board. "These youth are going back to school with foundational work skills and tools that will help carry them forward into a successful career."

In addition to providing youth with work experience, the program also allowed employers to mentor the county's young people with no out of pocket training expenses, and screen prospective candidates to become full contributing members of their staff with little risk.

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Summer Youth Employment Program

Page 2 of 2

Due to the success of the program, San Bernardino County was one of three local workforce investment areas from across the country selected to be a featured example in a “Best Practices” webinar held by the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, Division of Youth Services, which highlighted successful models and methods of transitioning American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Summer Youth Employment Program participants into year round youth and adult WIA services.

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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