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**Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County announces
the results of stimulus funding in local economy**

*Federal government dollars make an impact and
prepare adults and teens for in-demand jobs*

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (October 12, 2009)—The Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County announced today that of the \$15.8 million in stimulus funding allocated by the federal government in February 2009, approximately \$11.7 million has been spent on local programs for workforce training, business retention and youth work experience, and \$4.1 million is contracted to be spent on additional training programs during the next year.

The federal government required that all money be allocated by June 2010 and spent by June 2011. Workforce investment areas were tasked with administering the stimulus funds to residents quickly in order to provide relief to struggling economies.

Before receiving the stimulus funding, the Workforce Investment Board met with local city governments, economic development leaders and educational institutions to identify the needs of the local economy to ensure funding would be utilized to its best potential. To date, the Workforce Investment Board has accomplished this by assigning funds quickly to support workforce skills training in the county's five demand sectors and areas which were most valuable to enduring the current economic situation.

“As a board, we understood that research, assessment and planning was crucial to implementing successful programs quickly and effectively,” said Sandy Harmsen, executive director of the board. “We invested substantial energy into building programs tailored to the needs of our community. This strategic use of stimulus dollars created local jobs and a more qualified workforce, benefitting both residents and local businesses of San Bernardino County.”

Approximately \$7.1 million in stimulus funding was assigned to the Summer Youth Employment Program, which placed 1,834 youth, ages 14 to 24, in jobs this summer. The program provided work experience and job skills that many youth would be unable to secure independently due to the number of adults competing for the same entry-level positions. The Workforce Investment Board spend \$6.8 million of the funds this summer, of which \$5.2 million was used to pay the wages and provide support services to the program's participants.

Through the program, the Workforce Investment Board consulted local economists to place older youth in jobs in the county's five demand industries including aviation, health care, advanced manufacturing, transportation and green technologies. This approach prepared older youth to work in fields most likely to gain momentum and provide employment as the economy recovers. In addition, approximately 200 youth participants have gained permanent employment through their summer employers, although the program was created solely for the purpose of providing summer work experience.

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The overall success of the Workforce Investment Board in implementing the Summer Youth Employment Program was recently highlighted by the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, Division of Youth Services, in a national best practices webinar.

To support adults and the business community, approximately \$8.7 million of the stimulus funds were appointed toward training and resources for laid-off adult workers and local businesses. So far, \$4.9 million has been spent and \$3.8 million is contracted for services and programs that are in progress.

This funding has covered the cost to train 1,876 adults enrolled in training programs. Each training program is linked to an industry with a demand for employees such as health care, customer service, childcare, bookkeeping, water management, welding, logistics and management.

The Workforce Investment Board also partnered with local businesses to help train 332 employees, assisting with the cost of incumbent worker training and paying for some employee wages for the first three months of work. This offset training costs for businesses and helped increase the chance of permanent employment and promotion for workers in the program.

Many of these training courses are facilitated by the Workforce Investment Board's local Employment Resource Centers located in Rancho Cucamonga, San Bernardino and Hesperia. Since January 2009, these Employment Resource Centers have served 94,188 residents with free reference materials, career videos, job postings, Internet service and access to the Workforce Investment System, which currently has a listing of 655 available positions. During this same time period, 12,770 residents have used free resources such as career counseling, employment mentors, skills assessment, training programs, job placement and supportive services, which include gas cards, bus passes and tools.

In addition to employment resources for adults, the Workforce Investment Board also focused on business retention. Reaching out to 720 local businesses, the board was able to connect with and provide assistance to 83 employers that took advantage of their free services. Services provided to the businesses include business survival workshops, seminars on incentive programs, and identifying cost reductions, marketing, loans and financing.

“The goals achieved by the Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County embody the intention of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act,” said Supervisor Gary Ovitt. “The financial resources were managed with care and efficiency, producing programs that yielded measurable results and moved our community in a positive direction.”

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.

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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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