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Chairman Ovitt and Workforce Investment Board announce launch of San Bernardino Business Network

Human resource consulting available to county's businesses free of charge

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif., (January 19, 2010)—Chairman and Fourth District Supervisor Gary Ovitt and the Workforce Investment Board announced today that the Board of Supervisors has approved \$70,000 in funding for a San Bernardino Business Network in partnership with the California Employers Association. The program will include a countywide human resource hotline and a series of employer workshops free of charge.

The hotline will provide San Bernardino County's 60,000 businesses with unlimited access to human resource consultants to answer questions and provide advice during business hours until the end of 2011. It will be dedicated to answering employment and labor law questions, and help businesses solve employee-related issues in the areas of compliance, recruitment, retention, safety, training and organizational development. California Employers Association's human resource experts can also help with the day-to-day challenges of managing employee attendance and discipline while also providing a wide range of human resource materials from simple forms to sample employee handbooks at a nominal cost. The hotline is now available Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and can be reached at 800-399-5331.

"Many of our businesses are operating on tight budgets and cannot afford to employ a dedicated human resource expert," said Chairman Ovitt. "Through this service we can further support businesses that employ our county's workforce and help preserve jobs, which is our top priority right now."

In addition to the hotline, the county will host 15 employer workshops during the next two years that will focus on managing reduced hours and layoffs as well as remaining in compliance with labor laws. The workshops will be held at the county's three Employment Resource Centers and will be announced as they are scheduled.

"The Board of Supervisors and Workforce Investment Board are working together to initiate programs that create a climate where local businesses can thrive," San Bernardino County Second District Supervisor Paul Biane said. "By providing business owners with human resource assistance, we can free up their time and allow them to focus on what they do best – run their businesses."

These services are normally offered through a membership with California Employers Association at a cost of several hundred dollars per business. Through the Network, the Workforce Investment Board has made these services available to all county businesses during 2010 and 2011.

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The network is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The estimated value of the contract is more than \$90 million in services during the two-year period the program will operate.

“This is just one more way the Workforce Investment Board is administering federal stimulus dollars to help connect county businesses with resources that will help them continue to employ our residents,” said Sandy Harmsen, executive director of the Workforce Investment Board. “The network is a true investment in the future of our business community and we encourage all business owners to take advantage of it.”

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. The Business Resource Centers support and provide services to county businesses including employee recruitment. The centers are located in Rancho Cucamonga, San Bernardino and Hesperia.

About the California Employers Association

California Employers Association helps member companies maximize the performance of their employees and organization through talent, tools and training. It is a not-for-profit employers association that serves more than 8,000 employers throughout California. California Employers Association’s human resource professionals provide expertise in the areas of compliance, recruitment, retention, surveys, safety and training and organizational development. For more information please visit www.employers.org.

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