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Workforce Development Council Holds Quarterly Meeting

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation’s (DLR) Workforce Development Council held its quarterly meeting in Pierre yesterday. Discussion topics included various efforts to strengthen the workforce.

“The Department has many exciting projects involving communities across the state,” said State Labor and Regulation Secretary Pam Roberts. “Workforce development remains a top priority.”

State Labor and Regulation Deputy Secretary Marcia Hultman provided updates on the progress of the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). Over 1,000 participants have tested for the NCRC with results significantly higher than the nation.

“We have always taken pride in knowing South Dakota has a quality workforce and work ethic,” said Deputy Secretary Hultman. “The NCRC shows quantitatively this is true. This data will be an incredible tool for economic development efforts.”

DLR staff are using the NCRC to certify the first work-ready community in South Dakota. Watertown is a pilot site to test three percent of its workforce, approximately 370 workers, for work readiness skills to showcase its talents to businesses interested in relocating or expanding to the area.

The Council approved 72 positions to receive a total of \$156,000 in Dakota Seeds funding to assist with the wages of employees. Dakota Seeds is designed to create internships and assistantships in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

“The interest from businesses in the Dakota Seeds program is outstanding,” said Secretary Roberts. “All of these internships are exactly the types of jobs we will need in the future.”

Amy Jacobson, Deputy Director of the South Dakota Area Health Education Center (AHEC), also spoke about its organization’s future plans to service all of South Dakota. AHEC’s goals are to build the future healthcare workforce by providing opportunities to students to connect with professionals and communities.

“Many opportunities exist to partner and collaborate with AHEC,” said Secretary Roberts. “Healthcare remains our number one growing industry in the state, and we are working to provide a pipeline of workers, especially in rural areas.”

The Council was formed in 1994 to plan and evaluate job training and education programs in South Dakota and to advise the governor on workforce issues. Members represent various business, labor and education interests. A majority of its members are from the private sector. Council membership also includes representatives of the state departments of Labor and Regulation, Education, Human Services, Governor’s Office of Economic Development, and the Board of Regents. For more information, visit www.sdjobs.org