



MEDIA BRIEFING
April 4, 2007

ANNUAL WORKFORCE CLUSTER JOB PROJECTIONS SURVEY

Results are in for January 2007 – January 2009. They are up significantly from 2006 – 2008 survey as follows:

Item	07-09 results	06-08 results	Difference
New positions	1,057	395	+662
Replacement positions	1,394	988	+406
Total positions	2,451	1,383	+1,068
Types of Bs			
Mfg/Log	24	21	+3
Tech/Service	7	4	+3
Health	11	7	+4
Total respondents	41	32	+9
Total positions identified	130	102	+28

This year, we also asked respondents to be more specific about skill requirements. Key findings included the following:

- 57 of the 139 or 44% of the jobs require a BS or greater degree**
- 26 of the 130 or 20% of the jobs require at least an AS degree**
- 64% require college degree**
- 47 of the 130 or 36% of the jobs require at least high school diploma/GED**
- 0 jobs were available without at least a high school education**

GROSS RECEIPTS TAX PROPOSAL OPPOSITION

Historically, Vermilion Advantage has never taken official positions regarding legislation, but rather has chosen to be a vehicle for “information only” to our members. However, the proposal for the Gross Receipts Tax, that would be the “Largest Tax Increase in State History,” has prompted both our Board of Directors and our Business and Industry Leadership Forum to take official written action in opposition.

“In 26 years, when we have been in the final running for a project, we have only lost once to another Illinois community. Otherwise, we have lost to another state which, in most instances, has been Indiana. We cannot afford one more reason to be eliminated from consideration for new investment and job creation,” said Haugen.

“On a daily basis, our businesses face escalating costs in utilities, supplies, employee wages and benefits, regulatory demands, while at the same time their customers, including the average consumer, is demanding more for less. The line between profit and loss is getting thinner and thinner. If a business cannot be profitable in one location, we’ve seen all too many times what the result of that is. Vermilion

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Advantage exists to do whatever we can to make our existing businesses successful while working to increase the employment and investment base. When we are successful, so is the state. No one is disputing the importance of a quality education system and a quality health-care system. The problems within both did not occur overnight, and they are not going to be fixed with one magic bullet. According to the Tax Foundation's January 31, 2007 position on Gross Receipts Tax, "*There is no sensible case for gross receipts taxation. The old turnover taxes—typically adopted as desperation measures in fiscal crisis—were replaced with taxes that created fewer economic problems. They do not belong in any program on tax reform.*" www.taxfoundation.org/news/show/2180.html

ELECTRIC RATE ALTERNATIVES

At our "Member informational meetings" held on March 29, we had 56 businesses attend and have had many more that were not available on the 29th express an interest. This will be an ongoing process. APPI will be looking at all interested parties individually first to see what can be done for each business. Aggregation will be looked at in the future when or if we determine that might be the only alternative for cost savings for certain types of businesses

One of the most important components of our partnership with APPI is the on-going education they can provide our member business on deregulation in general. An informed business can make more prudent decisions.

We have set up two different call-in conference calls for members or prospective members that have not yet been able to plug in on this process. Those calls will be at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 11 and 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 12. Businesses who are interested can call us for a reservation to participate in either of those calls.

NEW SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Three new scholarship programs will greet area high school counselors next week when they return from Spring break. In addition to the Manufacturing/Logistics Cluster's "Engineers for Tomorrow" program, our Health Care Cluster is now also offering scholarship opportunities for students seeking education and future careers in Physical Therapy and Pharmacy. Jointly, all three clusters (health, manufacturing/ logistics and technology/service) are also offering a new scholarship for students seeking education and future careers in Accounting and Computer Network Engineering. Key characteristics of all the scholarships are as follows:

1. Give priority to students planning to or currently attending DACC.
2. Pay \$800 towards DACC annual tuition or 1/3 of cost, whichever is less.
3. Pay one-half annual tuition at four-year Illinois university, or \$5,000 whichever is less.
4. Guarantee paid internships during all summer breaks.
5. Provide paid internships during holiday breaks as available.
6. Provide guaranteed, minimum two-year job in that career field among participating area employers.
7. For the "Engineering" scholarship, students attending Bradley University for their junior and senior years and getting 1/3 assistance from the School through the "Engineers for Tomorrow" program will have receive 1/3 tuition assistance from the Manufacturing/Logistics Cluster.

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