

Minutes for Southeast (SEVA) Rapid Response Forecasting Team Meeting/Summit

Monday, June 25, 2012, @11am-1:30pm
Facilitator: Curtis D. Wray, Southeast Virginia Rapid Response Program Coordinator

Thank you all for attending this event and displaying a willingness to participate, to provide input, work together, and to discuss group issues and dilemmas. With each session, we as a Team, continue to make positive progress and incremental improvement. The following partners were in attendance for the Rapid Response Forecasting Team Meeting/ Summit:

Opportunity, Inc.

1. Nancy Stephens
2. Jackie Rondeau

Peninsula Work Link

3. Lisa Zahralldin
4. Angela Harris
5. Lisa Taylor

Virginia Employment Commission

6. Barbara Langley, Hampton
7. Kay Hogan, Hampton
8. Keeley Humphrey, Hampton
9. Barry McElroy, Portsmouth
10. Amy Hibbard, Business and Economic Resource Area 13
11. Hosey Burgess, Norfolk
12. Janelle Martin, Business and Economic Resource Area 14 & 16

Economic Development

13. Von Gilbreath, Chesapeake
14. Dan Girouard, Hampton
15. Meisha Holmes, Norfolk
16. Karla Siedschlag, Suffolk and the JFCOM Transition Center

Virginia Community College System

17. Felecia McClenny

Rappahannock Community College

18. Rusty Bragg

Paul D. Camp

19. Randy Betz

Tidewater Community College

20. Tuneika Wynn

Thomas Nelson Community College

21. Sunita Hines
22. Tony Farley

Reliance Staffing

23. Lynn Connors

Department of Labor

24. Rick Brooks

ECPI College of Technology

25. Renee Turner

Small Business Development Center

26. Debra Hamilton-Farley

Narrative:

The meeting started with providing the group on the most current updates and events in the southeast region. The following were discussed:

1. **New Service Locations**-As of July 1, SEVARAPIDRESPONSE's service areas will include Caroline, Fredericksburg, all of King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford Counties. A completed map of the new sites will be provided via separate correspondence.
2. **Update on Remark 5 Survey**-During the last Virginia's Community Colleges monitoring visit in January 2012, members of the monitoring team indicated a need to change the employee Workforce Development Needs Assessment Survey to make it less lengthy, easier to read, and more user-friendly. Institutional Research and Effectiveness at Thomas Nelson Community College, granted a license for use of the Remark 5 application software program for data compilation for the Rapid Response needs survey questionnaire. The survey has been streamlined with a second look (scrubbed), removing irrelevancies, redundancies, and excessive narrative questions. Input was solicited from Forecasting Team members in attendance on the streamlining process.

Sunita Hines and Terry Allen of Institutional Research and Effectiveness and David Morales of Information and Technology have been instrumental in providing expertise and insight in the revision of the needs assessment survey and provided additional training to Tammy Williams, Rapid Response Program Support Specialist. The new survey will be used after July 1, with an expected 10 business day turnaround back to partners for review, per Virginia's Community Colleges MOU.

3. **Weekly Reports**-As of July 1, weekly reports will no longer be required to be turned in to Virginia's Community Colleges System (VCCS) Office.
4. **Quarterly Reports**-Quarterly Reports are still due; and, per the MOU, are to be disseminated to all viable partners, when submitted up the chain.
5. **Outreach**-At the beginning of 2012, there were approximately 277, 076 employers in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As part of an aggressive, proactive outreach plan, effective July 1,

SEVARAPIDRESPONSE will begin identifying all employers within local areas 13, 14, and 16. The plan is to make contact with the employers at the frontend before any layoff occurs to inform them of Rapid Response services and about a team of service delivery partnerships that can be provided when needed. SEVARAPIDRESPONSE has created brochures and postcards and additional outreach material that will be given out to employers in the service areas. A copy of the brochures was included in packets given to each member of the Forecasting Team.

Members of the Virginia Employment Commission Tax Representatives, Veteran Services, Workforce Services Representatives, and Business and Economic Resources Representatives (those who routinely visit employers) and members of the One Stop Business Services Team were asked to participate in the distribution of resource material during their employer visits. Knowledge of SEVARAPIDRESPONSE services benefits the One Stops and the VECs at the backend, during the layoff aversion and dislocation phases (what is in it for me?...reciprocity for effort). More knowledge and education equals less or diminished customer lines in the office for the VEC and increased volume for the One Stops in aversion and dislocation phases.

6. **WARN Act Notices**-The Worker Adjustment Retraining and Notification (WARN) Act log virtual site has been revised and now falls under the maintenance auspices of the VCCS. Also available is a WARN subscription to all members of the Virginia Workforce Network. It was recommended in the discussion that Forecasting Team members sign up for the subscription. It is very important for members of the Forecasting Team to stay abreast of the information provided on the VCCS WARN log, because the media pays attention too and scrutinizes company layoffs and closures via the WARN log. The WARN log is a virtual way of staying apprised and informed with the most up-to-date transition information.
7. **One Source Employer Database**-VCCS has purchased licensing for access to *One Source* employer database systems. *One Source* will be available to Rapid Response Coordinators in each of Virginia's four regions; and, it is currently available in the southeast region. Information in the employer database will include data such as business closures, changes in administrative staff, bankruptcies, layoff notices, and relocations. *One Source* is an invaluable tool in proactive Rapid Response and outreach, in that; it can be used to keep an accurate track of current employers in the southeast region...local areas 13, 14, and 16. See the attached for more information on *One Source* systems.
8. **WIA Conference**-Felecia McClenny, state Rapid Response Program Manager, VCCS, indicated that plans were in the making for a Rapid Response/WIA Conference, possibly in October 2012, in either Virginia Beach or Roanoke sites. Plans have not been finalized. A representative from *One Source* is expected to be one of the guest speakers at this event.

9. Active Employer Review

- a. **The Cape Henry Inn**- A Rapid Response Manager's Meeting was conducted on June 13. The Employee Briefing was scheduled for June 27. Eighteen core workers and fifteen to twenty temporary workers are being impacted. The terminal closure date is September 30.
- b. **The Daily Press**-A Rapid Response Manager's Meeting was conducted on June 4. Employee Briefings were scheduled for June 26 and 28. Eighty workers are being impacted. The layoff is phased July 18 through August 2.
- c. **QVC**-No WARN submitted because impacted workers are part time. The layoff is protracted, making it ideal for Layoff Aversion efforts. The company expects to downsize 602 employees. Rapid Response Manager's Meeting conducted April 16. Rapid Response Employee Briefings conducted May 8, 9, and 10, with One Stop, VEC, Economic Development, The Social Security Administration, and The United Way. 263 part time temporary employees were laid off June 4; 230 part time and 109 full time layoffs dates are yet to be determined. OppInc One Stop conducted workshops.
- d. **Hostess Brand**-Conditional WARN submitted based on the notification of non-receipt of funding to continue operations. Regional affected employee impacts would be Newport News-16; Hampton-3; Warsaw-5; and, Chesapeake-29. As of June 19, there are no plans to conduct a lay off.

10. REVIEW OF TERMINOLOGY

a. **Proactive Rapid Response**

A separate phase from reactive Rapid Response that aligns with early warning, is optimal for Layoff Aversion, diminishes knowledge deficits, and supports national Department of Labor trends/mandates.

b. **Forecasting Teams**

Build multiple partnerships with the business community, unions, local, and state agencies, and is an integral part of the information network and early warning system.

c. **Why Forecasting Teams?**

To predict layoffs before they happen and develop a process to avert or lessen the number of employees affected by downsizing and company closures.

d. Layoff Aversion Defined

A worker's job is saved with an existing employer that is at risk of downsizing or closing; or, a worker at risk of dislocation to a different job with the same or a new job with a different employer and experiences no or a minimal spell of unemployment.

The group discussed the contradiction "*minimal spell of unemployment:*" What is wrong with the current definition of layoff aversion in an *aversion phase* concept? There is no distinction between aversion and dislocation phases. You cannot have a minimum spell of unemployment in the aversion phase, because aversion means to avoid the layoff and not become unemployed. Further, minimum spell is not defined. What does it mean? It could mean two weeks, four weeks, or eight weeks in some cases or whatever it is expressly interpreted to be. This does not clarify, but adds to more confusion.

11. REVIEW OF REASONS AND BENEFITS OF LAYOFF AVERSION (LOA)

a. LOA Benefits Employers

- Retrained reliable worker
- Reduced cost of severance packages
- Reduced cost in filling job vacancies
- Reduced cost of retraining
- Increase in employee morale
- Reduction in unemployment tax rates

b. LOA Benefits To Employees

- Contributes to national economic engine
- Personal financial stability
- Prevents devastation from loss of income
- Reduced rolls of unemployment
- Morale enhancer-benefiting and contributing member in workforce

c. LOA Benefits To Taxpayers

- Saves outlays from U/I trust fund
- Less disruptive to community services
- No loss of property taxes/foreclosures
- Maintenance of community wellness
- Maintenance of regional economic vitality

12. REVIEWED LAYOFF AVERSION COMMITMENTS

- The One Stops shall:

- The VEC shall:
- The Community Colleges shall:
- The Staffing Agencies shall:
- The Economic Development Directorates shall:

The Rapid Response Coordinator had a member from each of the agencies above roll call and read out loud what each had committed too in Layoff Aversion tactics and strategies at the last Forecasting Team Meeting on February 7 (see Forecasting Team Meeting Minutes). All conceded that not much proactive Layoff Aversion had been conducted within a Team concept and the opportunity existed with Pitney Bowes and QVC, Chesapeake. In both these layoffs, optimal Layoff Aversion criteria existed: (1) early warning, (2) a protracted layoff of two months or more, and (3) a willingness to work together. What is missing? Basically the team reverted back to reactive Rapid Response, which focus is in the dislocation phase. Partners did not proceed with a proactive mindset and agenda. More is required to make this occur.

- 13. BUSINESS SERVICES TEAM**-At the **tactical level**, (those who actually have resources and personnel and will be doing the Layoff Aversion work...the VEC, Economic Development Directorates, and One Stops) the Rapid Response Coordinator brought up discussion about implementing a Business Services Team (BST) or a Business Resources Team that would work together to come up with strategies when situations are conducive for the Layoff Aversion Phase. The BST concept came from attending a Business Engagement Meeting, facilitated by Mary Ann Lawrence, of The Center for Workforce Learning, Department of Labor, and sponsored by VCCS on May 31.

Per Mary Lawrence, “*the Business Services Team would be co-chaired by Wagner-Peyser/WIA and roles and responsibilities would be defined.*” The goal of the team would be to maximize hires/reemployment in the Layoff Aversion phase and report these hires in the aversion phase to the Rapid Response Coordinator. They, the BST, should decide who should be part of this team. One Stops reported that this team already quasi-existed in local areas 14 and 16. The goal then, was to expound upon what was there or already in place to make it viable and supportable for Layoff Aversion.

There was some confusion and discussion about whether Rapid Response should be a member of the BST. The Rapid Response Coordinator in nature, in character, and by default is a member of the BST at the operational level and not the tactical level. Coordinators inform the BST of an event that meets the criteria for optimum success in Layoff Aversion. At the tactical level, the VEC, Economic Development, and One Stop Directors bring the process to fruition by reaching Layoff Aversion goals and expectations, because again, they have the resources and personnel to accomplish the task. It is a win-win concept; and, all would benefit for being functional and viable members of the BST.

- 14. LAYOFF AVERSION GROUP DISCUSSION**-The Forecasting Team was separated into three different groups and their goal was to come up with mock strategies or processes for working together as a Business Service Team and to develop how they would proceed in conducting Layoff Aversion. The goal was to get them to talk and understand the value that each brought to the table as feeder input. In all three groups, it became abundantly clear, that all required some type of structure or system in place to make the Layoff Aversion process work.

15. **NEXT MEETING**-Scheduled for September 17, 2012. We will further develop the BST at tactical and operational levels. There will be more group discussions. A line diagram will be proposed on how it should look. The group was given a homework assignment to read... a Layoff Aversion Concept paper by Curtis Wray...entitled *Layoff Aversion: Get Your Mind Right (Successful Partnerships Support a Demonstrative Need for a Layoff Aversion Phase and System)* to spur active thinking, creativity, innovation, and to broaden the reach on intellectual dialogue on Layoff Aversion. See SEVARAPIDRESPONSE.org and click news; then click commentary. If all Forecasting Team members understand where we are trying to go...it makes the road much easier to travel and to get there.