



GOVERNOR BEEBE EXPANDS ARKANSAS WORKS INITIATIVE TO OFFER JOB TRAINING, CAREER EDUCATION

Governor Mike Beebe today announced a major expansion of Arkansas Works, the governor's strategic initiative to coordinate education, training and economic development in Arkansas communities. The expansion focuses on providing unemployed and underemployed Arkansans with career training and educational opportunities.

"As communities work hard to attract new business, the State will help ensure that a qualified workforce stands ready to fill those jobs," Beebe said. "The world is quickly changing, and Arkansas must accelerate its pace to create careers for our citizens. This effort has something to help every Arkansan, whether you need a job, want to find a better job or want to shift to a new career."

Beebe helped unveil the College and Career Planning System, an online information resource that will help Arkansans locate jobs that fit their interests and help businesses find qualified candidates to meet their workforce needs. Every Workforce Development Center in Arkansas has personnel prepared to assess job seekers and help them connect with jobs and industries that lead to satisfying careers.

In January, 43 career coaches will be placed in high schools to offer enhanced career guidance to students who want to build careers in Arkansas. The career coaches will be employed by the two-year colleges located in the communities these coaches are placed.

In addition, up to \$8,000 in financial aid may be available, based on the needs of each

individual, to help pay for career training and education.

The Governor's Workforce Cabinet will lead the public-private partnership. The Cabinet includes the Arkansas Department of Career Education, Arkansas Department of Career Services, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas Economic Development Commission as well as private partners such as the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges and the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce.

Beebe began the Arkansas Works Initiative in October, 2008, with The Governor's Summit on Education and Economic Development, the first such summit in the State's history. At that time, Beebe brought together more than 1,500 education, economic development, community and business leaders from every county.

The College and Career Planning System will build a database that Arkansas's businesses can use to locate an available and interested workforce. Businesses also will be able to use the Arkansas Works website to showcase themselves and the career opportunities they offer.

The System can be accessed at www.arworks.arkansas.gov or by calling 1-866-ARWORKS (1-866-279-9677). Participants must visit a Workforce Development Center first to start the process and to get log-in information.





IS THERE A CAREER CHANGE IN YOUR FUTURE?

Has the thought of changing to a new, more rewarding career been gnawing at you lately? Or has a recent job loss pushed you into thinking that this would be a good time to change career paths

mid-stream? Well here is some advice from the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics on how to go about it wisely.

First, assess your progress in your current career, what has gone well and what hasn't. Identify your key accomplishments and what parts you've not enjoyed. This will give you insight into what type of work you'd like to pursue.

Carefully consider the motives behind your desire to change careers. Is it the people you work with, the daily commute, or something else that might merely indicate a need to switch jobs rather than career paths? Weigh what you like about your job against what you dislike to get a clearer picture of what you're lacking.

Next, take a look at your finances to determine whether it's possible to change careers at this time. Changing careers may require you to pay for some additional education and training. And, will the new career you'd like to pursue finance your current lifestyle? Also, if you've recently been laid off, will going back to school to pursue a different career path affect your eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits? Check with your state unemployment insurance office to make sure!

Conducting a thorough self-assessment is critical to your success when changing careers. Assessing your values, skills and interests is key to which path you will want to pursue.

What aspects of a job are meaningful and rewarding to you? Is it independence, creativity, wages, job stability, moral fulfillment? While no job will meet all of your values, comparing what is

important to you with what is available may help you narrow your search for a new career.

Assess what skills you bring to the job and which skills you're lacking and will need to improve. And don't think of just past jobs or school, but consider hobbies and volunteer work as well.

Next, look to where your interests lie. Studies have found that people who are satisfied with their occupation share many interests with others in the same career who are equally satisfied. Tests known as interest inventories are available to help you narrow occupations based on these shared interests. And then you can begin to network with others.

The next place you need to go for help in determining your new career path is the local library or the Internet. First check www.servicelocator.org or call toll free 1-877-872-5627 to locate a Career Center near you. My search found one in Little Rock, North Little Rock, and Benton in Central Arkansas. The Web site has links to career exploration tools and other job-related resources.

Career changers can find information on hundreds of occupations in the BLS's *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. Along with details about the nature of the work, the *Handbook* provides training requirements, job outlook, working conditions, earnings, and employment. It is available in libraries, career centers, and online at www.bls.gov/ooh (U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics). Also on the BLS website is the *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* newsletter, which features many articles that are relevant to career changers.

Also check out:

- ◆ The U.S. Department of Labor's CareerOneStop (www.careeronestop.org).
- ◆ The Occupational Information Network, or O*NET, database, online at www.online.onetcenter.org.
- ◆ A joint effort of the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education at www.opportunity.gov.
- ◆ The National Career Development Association at www.ncda.org.



Working Together

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics:

◆ Men aged 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 had the highest median weekly earnings, \$944 and \$979, respectively. Woman age 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 had the highest weekly earnings at \$720 and \$727, respectively

◆ In August 2009, the largest over-the-year percentage increases in employment were reported in Sandusky, Ohio (+2.7 percent); Hot Springs, Arkansas (+2.6 percent); Kennewick-Pasco-Richland, Washington (+2.5 percent); Jonesboro, Arkansas (+1.9 percent); and McAllen-Edinburg-Million, Texas (+1.5 percent.)

◆ In May 2008, the IRS started mailing Economic Stimulus Payments (also called tax rebates) to income tax filers. Nearly half (49 percent) of recipients used the money mostly to pay off debt. Thirty percent reported mostly spending the rebate, and 18 percent reported saving the rebate money. Sixty-five percent of single parents, however, reported using the money mostly to pay off debt. They were also less likely to save the money than families with a wife and husband.

JOB SEEKERS BEWARE

With unemployment at record highs and an unstable economy, many Arkansans are looking for work or attempting to supplement their income. Thus, when these job seekers read ads in the newspaper or on the Internet about jobs that will only require a couple hours of work per week and put a few hundred dollars in their bank accounts, they are understandably tempted to respond to the offer. Unfortunately, some of these new employees soon find out that instead of making money, they lose it to a scam artist. Attorney General Dustin McDaniel issued this consumer alert to help Arkansans identify and avoid job scams.

One type of bogus job offer requires the "employee" to deposit checks, money orders, or accept wired funds into his or her personal bank account then keep a commission and wire the balance somewhere else, often to places outside of the United States. What the "employee" is really being asked to do is launder funds obtained fraudulently. Legal problems, potentially including criminal charges, could follow.

Another bogus offer asks potential employees to process packages or perform certain tasks, such as medical billing or envelope stuffing. The problem is that all of these offers come with the requirement of an up-front payment by the consumer in order to participate in the work-at-home opportunity. Invariably, the promised profits can never be realized and the consumer loses the up-front fee.

"Whether the task is stuffing envelopes or forwarding checks, the net result is the same for the consumer, who almost always ends up losing a lot of money and getting a lot of trouble for their effort," said McDaniel.

Here are some tips to remember to avoid falling for a job scam:

- Don't do business with any entity you do not know or trust. If you are unsure about a company, check its credentials by contacting the Better Business Bureau, www.bbb.org, and the Attorney General's Office, www.ArkansasAG.gov.

(contd. on next page -- see Job Seekers)

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JOB

SEEKERS *(continued from page 3)*

- Don't take a job that requires a payment up-front for a paycheck later. If you send the company money, you are unlikely to get any of it back.
- Never give your personal information, like your bank account number, in response to an unsolicited job offer.
- Never accept money from an unknown source.

- Always remember the old adage, "If something sounds too good to be true, then it probably is."

If you receive or see a bogus job solicitation, you can forward it to the Public Protection Department of the Arkansas Attorney General's Office via email, oag@ArkansasAG.gov or via fax, (501) 682-8118.

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