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SWWDC RELEASES 2009 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Workforce partners assist thousands to access training and jobs

For the eighth straight year, the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC) and its partners have helped more than 1,000 local businesses find skilled employees, placed thousands of adult jobseekers and laid-off workers in training and family-wage jobs, and provided work readiness training and experiences to more than 1,000 low-income youth. The extraordinarily high unemployment rate has made the services of SW Washington workforce development partners a critical resource in our local community. With an influx of more than \$5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, SWWDC has been able to convene community partners to rapidly deliver workforce services to those most in need.

The Southwest Washington regional workforce partners are committed to developing a trained and productive workforce that meets current and future business needs in Southwest Washington. SWWDC's 2009 Report to the Community highlights the organization's success in accessing resources, linking workforce and economic development partners to serve the needs of jobseekers and businesses alike, and supporting at-risk youth in preparation for post-secondary success.

Highlights of the report include:

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

- SWWDC received \$2.2 million of funding through ARRA for a Summer Youth Employment Program that was administered by the SWWDC and its many partners. The program involved 126 employers that created more than 700 summer jobs for 14- to 24-year-old low-income youth with barriers to employment.
- SWWDC received \$2.7 million in ARRA funds to further aid its adult and dislocated worker populations. More than 300 new training slots were made available at local area community colleges and other training providers. Among the occupations in which participants are training are those in health care, advanced manufacturing, and green-related jobs such as weatherization specialists and limited renewable energy technicians.

Advanced Manufacturing

SWWDC partnered with Clark College, Lower Columbia College (LCC) and four Oregon community colleges to align and leverage educational and training resources across the region to better respond to manufacturers' workforce needs and to streamline the training process for workers. This project was funded through a \$90,000 Washington State Skill Panel grant and a \$5 million federal, bi-state Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative, which also brought \$126,000 in training dollars for SW Washington residents and employers.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

SWWDC and four Southwest Washington and Northern Oregon partners received one of five federal Department of Labor grants aimed at increasing the number of dislocated workers and disadvantaged youth, ages 16- 24, pursuing STEM careers. The grant brings \$2 million dollars over three years to a nine county, bi-state region. Other initiatives, such as High Tech U and "STEM for 9th graders" provided hands-on exposure to STEM careers for high school students.

The SWWDC is a non-profit organization led by a diverse board of directors from the private and public sectors that coordinates local resources to ensure employers have the skilled workers they need and that job seekers have access to the skills and information they need to secure jobs and careers that lead to self-sufficiency. Since its establishment in 2002, the SWWDC and its partners have helped thousands of youth and adult workers to connect with training opportunities and good jobs with career advancement, while connecting businesses to skilled employees through employee recruitment and retention services.

SWWDC's partners include: Arbor Education and Training, Clark College, Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum county high schools, City of Vancouver, Clark College, Columbia River Economic Development Council, Cowlitz Economic Development Council, Educational Service District 112, Employers Overload, Enterprise for Employment and Education, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Job Corps, Longview Goodwill, Lower Columbia Community Action Council, Lower Columbia College, MTC Works, nConnect NW, National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA), Northwest Service Academy, RichArt Builders, SEMI Foundation, SMEI Pacific Northwest Steering Committee, Underwriters Laboratories, USDA Coalition of Minority Employees, Vancouver Housing Authority, Wahkiakum Port #2, Washington Employment Security Department, Washington Department of Social and Health Services, Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Washington State University-Vancouver, WorkSource Cowlitz/Wahkiakum, WorkSource Vancouver, and Worksystems Inc, and hundreds of our community's employers.

For more information about the SWWDC, or to get a copy of the 2009 Report, visit www.swwdc.org or email info@swwdc.org.