

## SW Washington Workforce Development Council News

August 2008

### Internship provides teacher new ideas for the classroom



Instead of spending his summer relaxing, reading and catching

up on much needed rest, veteran teacher Jim Dawson is working 20 hours weekly as an intern with SWWDC and Mentoring Advanced Programs for Students (MAPS).

The internship is designed to help Jim, a career and technical education teacher for the Vancouver School District, expand his knowledge of workforce and employer issues through experience-based learning, while at the same time use his teaching and technical skills to complete key projects for each of the organizations.

“Teacher internships place educators in the workplace so that they can better prepare

### Senator Murray speaks with Southwest Washington students, educators and employers



*Senator Murray and students in the Youth Workforce Program's Health Care and Early Learning Career Academies*

Senator Patty Murray visited the Southwest Washington Medical Center on August 5 to meet with students, business, education and workforce development leaders to learn how to engage students in multiple career pathways. Senator Murray is considering legislation that would provide federal funds to local communities to facilitate innovative collaboration among business, education, and community partners. SWWDC coordinated the Senator's visit.

During her discussion with students in the Workforce Investment Act funded Youth Workforce Program, she heard how the program played an instrumental role in helping them to find focus for their education and careers. Diana Espinoz, 19, shared, “I graduated from high school in 2007, but didn't have any firm plans after that. This spring I joined the Youth Workforce Program, got my Certified Nursing Assistant license and plan on attending Clark College in the fall and hope to enter the Nursing Program.” She eventually hopes to be an OB/GYN physician.

### Dale Lemmons elected SWWDC's new board chair

Dale Lemmons was recently elected Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council's new board chair. He joined the 34 member advisory board about three years ago and has served on its Executive Board for the last two years.

“I have a heart to see our community grow and prosper,” he said. “This won't happen unless we have a ready and willing workforce, enabling us to attract and retain the businesses it takes to keep a community vibrant.”

Dale is owner and manager of two Kelso trucking companies, Interstate Wood Products, Inc. and Signature Transport, Inc. Interstate is dedicated to the transportation of

students to meet the practical demands of business and industry. In internships, teachers experience first-hand the skills, abilities, and knowledge that their students will need to be successful at work,” said Lisa Nisenfeld, Executive Director of SWWDC. “At the same time, we get the perspectives and experiences of a teacher who is in the trenches with today’s youth.”

As part of Jim’s professional development this summer, he’s creating a training presentation for SWWDC called Workforce 101 that will be used to provide consolidated information to employers, agencies and schools about resources to help job seekers prepare for and find a job. For MAPS he’s helping outline program changes that will be used in area high schools this coming year.

“My goal this summer was to find new ideas to use in my classrooms and school. Both projects provide an exciting opportunity for me to learn some ways to help students plan and fulfill their career dreams,” he said.

As part of the internship, Jim has also been able to attend specialized trainings and forums. Specifically, he participated in a Lean Training, sponsored by

Later, in a session with educators, business leaders, and workforce development leaders, the discussion focused on what can be done to engage students in math and science at a younger age, provide students with a broad array of real world career experiences, and ensure that all students achieve post-secondary success.

“We have created a culture where students who do not go directly to college feel like a failure,” said Bob Lewis, President of Columbia Vista, a locally-owned saw mill which provides family wage jobs and more than \$300,000 a year in education and training support for its 95 employees, many of whom completed formal education after starting a career with the company. “We need to show people that there are numerous ways to build their skills and achieve success within our communities.”

Suggestions centered on finding ways to connect businesses to parents, students, and teachers to help them understand the myriad of jobs and careers that exist in today’s workplace, ensuring teachers who teach math and science have sufficient training, reducing the “over-policed” environment in which schools operate, and creating a culture where students can find success whether they go directly to college or into the workplace.

## U.S. Rep Brian Baird visits WorkSource



U.S. Rep. Brian Baird visited WorkSource Vancouver in July to share news of the federal unemployment benefits 13-week extension signed by Congress. Joining Congressman Baird are Marty Neihuas, who recently lost his job at the Camas pulp mill due to foreign competition and is

wood products in Washington and Oregon and has 30 trucks and 55 employees. Signature Transport hauls live chickens to Foster Farms in Kelso, Washington and has 20 trucks and 30 employees. It was purchased by Dale and his wife last June.

A veteran of the school of hard knocks, Dale has a special interest in helping youth find the education and training they need to succeed.

“We are in danger of losing a generation of young adults. We need to instill in them that they have a responsibility to make something of themselves and excel at whatever vocation they have the gifts to pursue,” he said. “Then we need to open the doors to the training they need. For some it will be 2-year or 4-year college, for others vocational training and yet others, short, specific skills set training. However, all need to reach the goal of being gainfully employed and being a contributing member of society.”

Dale applauds the work of SWWDC and its partners. He

Washington Manufacturing Services, and in a roundtable discussion with Senator Patty Murray about legislation to prepare students for multiple career pathways.

## **Mentoring Advanced Programs for Students will shift focus, expand services**

Mentoring Advanced Programs for Students (MAPS) Board of Directors recently decided it will shift its focus from Advanced Placement courses in a broad range of academic subjects to those centered on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

At the same time, the organization will broaden its audience to all high school students, not just those in AP, and eventually, middle school students and teachers will be served as well. While the organization now focuses exclusively on Clark County, the board intends to expand its services throughout the region, and ultimately, the Pacific Northwest.

“Our shift in focus will continue to allow MAPS to support teachers and students through mentoring and will also allow the organization to expand its scope of

now in federally funded retraining for diesel mechanics at Clark College, and SWWDC Past Board President, Keith McPhun.

## **Shared staff bolsters economic and workforce development in Cowlitz County**



It's been eight months since Cowlitz Economic Development Council (CEDC) and SWWDC hired Merry Swanberg to facilitate workforce and economic development efforts in Cowlitz County, and since then she has done a stellar job of building relationships that benefit employers and job seekers alike.

Merry has played a key role in numerous projects, including the Cameron Family Glass project that brought 90 new jobs to the Port of Kalama in Cowlitz County. Under Merry's direction, Cameron Family Glass utilized programs at WorkSource and Lower Columbia College to successfully recruit an experienced workforce that would fit into the culture they wanted to create.

WorkSource created “Job Fit” profiles to test how well potential employees would match to the personality or culture of the company, while Lower Columbia College ensured potential employees would have the technical skills necessary for the job. Also, the College provided Job Skills Program funds to help Cameron Family Glass train their new workers. Several recently laid off workers were able to transition into Cameron Family Glass.

“My job allows me the opportunity to utilize all methods and relationships to sustain and strengthen our economy,” Merry said. “It was great to be a part of bringing WorkSource and Lower Columbia College together in the Cameron project and seeing how it all works to help support the employer. It is clear that without these programs Cameron Family Glass would not have the quality of workers they were striving for, or the funds to support their training program.”

Lisa Nisenfeld, Executive Director at the SWWDC, agreed. “Because Merry is working with employers on a daily basis, her dual role makes it

believes the organization has done a great job partnering with both businesses and community organizations to support workforce development for youth and adults.

“Our organization has done a great job integrating the total system. However, there is always much more work that needs to be done. We will continue to strive for a skilled workforce and a sustainable economy in Southwest Washington”

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## **Other News**

- Senator Patty Murray includes \$140,000 in Senate Bill for the Southwest Washington Early Learning and Teaching Career Academy to train up to 60 Southwest Washington high school-aged youth. The funds will provide hands on work experience and training related to education with the goal of encouraging more young people to pursue post-secondary education and careers in the field of early learning education and K-12 teaching.

- More than 110 SW Washington workforce specialists, counselors and educators attended the Apprenticeship 101 training sponsored by the SWWDC and Washington Department of Labor and Industries (LNI) to learn about apprenticeships. More than half chose to apply for, and received, an Apprenticeship Advocate credential from WA LNI recognizing their ability to effectively counsel students and job seekers about apprenticeship opportunities.

services in other ways,” said Natalie Pacholl, MAPS Program Manager.

In future years, MAPS hopes to extend classroom experiences for students and teachers and build on local business connections to help prepare more students to succeed in STEM coursework, and ultimately, STEM careers.

MAPS plans to place guest business speakers in classrooms, facilitate job tours and connect students to local internships. They will also seek to expand teacher renewal activities, such as summer internships, meant to connect teachers to the current business environments in which their subjects are being used.

For more information, contact [Natalie Pacholl](mailto:Natalie.Pacholl@swwdc.org) at 360-718-1603.

possible to help businesses identify workforce development issues and to facilitate solutions and connections to the workforce system,” she said.

Merry, who holds a B.A. in Public Relations from Central Washington University and who found a “home” in economic and business development in 2005 when she took a job with the Port of Kalama, sees her role and the relationship between the SWWDC and the CEDC as “very necessary and mightily effective.”

“The CEDC focuses on bringing quality manufacturing and industrial business to Cowlitz County. Since we work with existing and future employers in Cowlitz our relationships with SWWDC, WorkSource, and Lower Columbia College are essential, especially when providing a skilled workforce and with the delivery of training programs designed to meet the specific needs of businesses,” she said.

Merry hopes that through her role she’ll be able to keep moving Cowlitz County forward. “We have a lot of local expansions occurring right now (economic gardening!), and I hope to see that continue. It lets us know we have good industry here that wants to stay and that will continue to hire from our fabulously strong workforce,” she said.

## Upcoming Events

- **Governor’s 2008 Economic and Workforce Development Conference**, September 3-4, at the Lynnwood Convention Center.

For more information [click here](#).

- **SWWDC Board Meeting**, Thursday, September 11, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m., at Lower Columbia College in the Heritage Room (1600 Maple Street, Longview, WA). For more information, contact Laurie at [info@swwdc.org](mailto:info@swwdc.org).

- **Apprenticeship and Building Trades Information Panel**, Friday, October 3, at the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 290, Tualatin, Oregon. For more information, contact Bill Regan at [wregan@pattt.org](mailto:wregan@pattt.org).

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