



National Forum: State Energy Workforce Consortiums



**Hosted by Georgia Power, Georgia Power Headquarters, Atlanta, GA
August 6, 2009**

❖ **Mickey Brown, Executive Vice President Customer Service Organization, Georgia Power**

Mickey welcomed participants and then gave his perspective on the importance of workforce development. He stated that workforce development is a very important endeavor at Georgia Power. Having significant partnerships with educational institutions and workforce investment boards makes addressing the challenges easier. The economic recession provides companies with an opportunity to develop stronger partnerships and identify the programs that will be needed for the future. While recruitment and hiring efforts have slowed down, once the economy turns around retirements will occur and the timeframe will be cramped. So now is the time to identify your future requirements and develop partnerships to determine training requirements for new employees.

Mickey said that Georgia Power's executive team is on board with the criticality of workforce development and they are proud to be part of the team and their partnerships.

❖ **Ann Randazzo, Executive Director, CEWD**

Ann Randazzo asked the group what was the mix in the group in terms of consortium maturity. The state consortia that started in the 2006-2007 timeframe are Georgia, Florida, North Carolina/South Carolina, Indiana, Minnesota, Tennessee and Alabama. Those that started in the 2008-2009 period are Ohio, California, Connecticut, Maryland and Missouri. The Pennsylvania consortium has just started. There are currently 21 state energy workforce consortia with Iowa and Nebraska getting ready to start. Each consortium is structured differently –some are loose affiliations of partners and others have established a formal 501c6 organization. However, regardless of the structure, each consortium can learn from the others on how to grow.

❖ **Paul Bowers, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer – Southern Company**

The importance of workforce development is critical in the role that the energy industry plays in the country's economic development. He opened by congratulating the group – 21 states have state-wide energy consortia – look how far we've come.

When he was in generation, around 2003, too many potential candidates did not have the basic skills or education needed for the business' skilled craft positions nor were they able to pass the pre-employment tests. They found that there were about 100,000 people available to work in the energy industry but the need was between 125,000 and 140,000. Even back then we didn't have the pipeline that was needed. The industry needs to get out into the communities to let young people know about all of the jobs in the industry – engineering, accounting, skilled craft positions. Need to match the skills needed with the people that are available.

Not having a capable workforce costs a company – you will pay more for capital needed for new construction and maintenance of existing equipment – because of the amount of rework that is required.

While the buzz word is “green”, we need people with skills to work in the basic fundamental jobs in the energy industry. Young people need to be re-educated in the basics so companies do not have to spend time and money with remedial training. New skills will be needed for the new electric network – for renewable however the skills are basically the same. For design, development and implementation of a Smart Grid we will need people skilled in electronics and communications. The biggest challenge with the Smart Grid will be the customer interface – we will need people to think about explaining usage patterns, understand pricing and how to communicate that so the customers understand and can make informed decisions. What skills will be needed to maintain the batteries in electric vehicles and to hook up the distributed generation that will start to be implemented? The industry will need people to think about all of the pieces and put them together. This will take a collaborative effort at the national, state and local levels along with a strong educational network.

Keynote speaker Q & A's

Q – How do we maintain (or create) momentum during the recession what jobs are not there to the same degree? How do we maintain the relationships with our partners?

A – We now have the opportunity to look longer term and time to plan. The current workforce is delaying their retirement and in the Southeast we are seeing growth in demand requiring new construction. Now is the time to clearly identify the skills that will be required in the future and work with your partners in your states to determine the best way to educate young people about energy careers, determine the supply of potential candidates and identify existing programs that can be used to train potential candidates.

Q – How do we change the mindset of the managers at the job site level that we need to build the new workforce, not buy it?

A – Southern Co. has made a commitment to bring in the most qualified personnel for its positions. The company leadership has made it known to both Southern Co. field personnel as well as its contractors that there are certain expectations regarding the quality of the personnel on the jobs. We need to encourage a quality of life balance with the pay of the jobs. Had a 35% turnover in welders at one plant – found out that while they would leave for an extra dollar in pay, the quality of life part of the job was becoming just as important. Need to let the field managers and contractors know that we can't afford to re-work.

Q – The green jobs definition in the Energy Act is very narrowly defined. Is there anything that can be done to broaden it?

A – No – we will have to work within the current definition. Need to define the skills required for green jobs. Not a lot of workers needed on site at a wind farm – install the turbines and then watch them turn; not many new skills needed there. With the downturn in new housing starts, Georgia Pacific and other companies that supply lumber have an excess of commodity. Can they turn the wood into wood pellets which can be burned at a power plant as a bio-fuel? Need to think creatively on how we incorporate clean coal, nuclear and other forms of generation into this definition.

Q – Has Southern Co.'s approach to talent management changed and are you confident you will be ready in 5 years with a qualified workforce to replace the existing one?

A – We are going back into the high schools and technical schools to work with the teachers to get students prepared to pass our pre-employment tests. We are getting more aggressive in our recruitment efforts so individuals know about our company and the careers that are available. We have built partnerships and relationships that will get us ready. We have invested heavily in understanding the dynamics of our workforce demand vs. the available supply. We are using a workforce technology tool that will help us with the transition and transformation of the workforce. We are now applying a scientific approach to workforce rebuilding like we do in other areas of the company.

Q – Are your contractors having the same issues with finding qualified candidates?

A – Yes they are. Many of the contractors have to do remedial skill building before the workers can do the job. Companies need to set expectations of the required skill sets and maintain a quality control approach to the contractors.

The industry needs to influence education at the state level to increase the importance of STEM education to support engineering and the skilled craft positions. Need to ensure that they understand the importance of aligning career and technical opportunities with current course material. In Florida, career and technical courses are required of all students.

Can also influence at the university level – need construction engineering degrees for individuals responsible for project management for the new construction that will be required.

The industry must have an enthusiasm for qualified talent – how do we qualify them, where will we get them. The energy infrastructure is critical to the country. You need to work within your states to make sure they understand that.

We are making a difference and we need to continue these good efforts.

Working Break Out Session – Consortium Strategy and Activities

- **Career Awareness (Facilitated by Carol Golden)**
 - Need to start with branding then focus on the marketing
 - Utilize Skills USA (Local, statewide, national levels)
 - Motivates students to succeed
 - Reach out to guidance counselors at local schools
 - Many schools have conferences that will allow industry to speak at
 - Education Forums w/ local schools/Technical Colleges and Universities
 - How do we identify the right audience of students
 - Reaching out to parents
 - Energy Industry has great careers that pay well and do not require a college education
- **Education (Facilitated by Marion Kellogg)**
 - A lot of work needs to be done around normal economic issues (Green, Growing, Graying –aging workforce), but the fact that there is open dialogue about this is good/healthy.
 - Enrollments are “up” in some sectors.
 - State Govt. (Indiana, as example) is very supportive of programs for Indiana consortium. Same holds true for Florida, Georgia and Connecticut. This support comes from strong awareness by inviting a broad spectrum of people into the knowledge circle of what is going on.

- A lot of work needs to be done around normal economic issues (Green, Growing, Graying –aging workforce), but the fact that there is open dialogue about this is good/healthy.
- Awareness of training needs by colleges. (Energy a “Career of choice”). Collaboration is growing. Funding, National Policy, etc. are all coming together at the same time, creating a “perfect storm.”
- There is a keen awareness of leveraging resources.
- We are drastically increasing our ability to tweak information = Have critical information at our finger-tips. (CEWD)
- Willingness (Energy Co.’s) to share data/information is “very beneficial” to all.
- Current administration is pushing “green” but is broadly defined
 - Can’t go “all the way with Green”, because there are many non-Green considerations still at play. We have to keep a keen focus on all initiatives.
 - Understand that “Green” is about efficiency. Change the perception of “Green.” It is so much more than is frequently marketed. We have to get our heads around this and educate each other and where possible the community at large (when the opportunity presents itself).
 - Need to target Vo-Tech kids. There is surprising talent in this population and we need to change perceptions in some cases and effectively use this talent in new ways.
 - Technical schools. = Make sure you visit specific programs. Companies must understand the importance of knowing educators on a personal level. You can’t expect quick curriculum changes or a sudden influx of targeted talent to your organization if you have not kept in touch with schools in a meaningful way.
 - Future focus is keen around programs and creating industry partners.
- Branding - “Get into Energy Careers”
 - “Get into Energy” vs. “Green” or “not Green.” It is broad! Don’t get too granular in your outlook. We must have a unified Energy concept.
 - National Information campaign that describes “Energy” world. Something from CEWD on a yearly basis, similar to “National Lights Out” program.
 - Billboard Ad = Hard hat with a large label on each side that says “We have one for YOU.”
 - What is our brand? Decide on this first, in order to deliver consistency in telling your story.
 - Work with a marketing firm.
- Do you have layered messages, or one message? Example might be, do you market an individual consortium under the CEWD’s message, or do you market only the interest of one state’s consortium’s message, without the presence of a larger/more national message?
- Create a new member packet, clearly illustrating the consortium message.
- Invest in rights to your own .com and .org licenses, so no one can confuse your brand/marketing message.
- Create a logo.
 - Decide on whether to market the product of the consortium vs. the consortium’s name.
- Individual customized branding of CEWD materials.
 - Create a website with CEWD Hosting Service = Aligned branding (example, “ASTD”).
- CEWD getting involved with Facebook, or other sites that can market/spread the message needed.

- Making “Energy” sexy. Let kids, for example, talk about their impressions of the energy field and their desire to enter some aspect of that universe. Video and website opportunities are virtually endless.
 - We (Education) must get a “Common language.” This will help build a powerful communication tool for all. The next CEWD gathering should make this a priority discussion that lasts several hours, to get the ball rolling. This is critical to our growth and continuing success.
 - Creation of supply/demand map
 - What programs already exist/gaps
 - We need to get “specific” training built and implemented, meaning customized for specific industries. This requires collaboration with all industries and the Education community.
 - Haven’t used Govt. data to the fullest extent. (Data not always accurate). Consortia need to be taught how to use and pull the data. Educators must be involved around this process.
 - The State level needs to be more politically active. More is needed around Math, Science, and Engineering. Legislatures need to be very involved.
 - Build “Asset Maps.” – Key/core Energy curriculum. More “Career Mapping” is needed. Get educators to know what things link together.
 - - What entities - manufacturing, contractors, suppliers...
 - Continuing education and development. What are the needs (job skills) = Get a dialogue that’s not segmented.
- **Untapped Labor (Facilitated by Sloane Evans/Jesse Owens)**
 - TANF – Disadvantaged/Unskilled workers
 - Military & Military Spouses (TAP Offices)
 - Partnership and Branding
 - Women in non traditional roles
 - Partnership w/ organizations
 - SWE
 - Women in Construction
 - MAGIC Camps
 - Displaced workers
 - Partnering w/ organizations to funnel workers to areas with existing needs
 - Utilizing regional WIB’s to assist in matching industry & workers
 - Training programs should be expanded
 - Youth (unpaid internships)
 - “Power-Up” – 6 week energy focused camp in Florida
 - Apprenticeship programs – pipeline for future vacancies
 - Ex-Offenders
 - NCRR Curriculum
 - Liaison to appropriate contractors (Construction)
 - Drop Outs (High School/College)
 - Minorities
 - Work based learning programs
 - Alternative & Technical training schools
 - Year around classes
 - Religious Organizations
 - Partnering WIB to engage on behalf of consortium

- Research opportunities/identify grants to assist
 - How do we engage /identify partners?
 - Plan and align priorities
 - Have a work plan
 - Who is a partner?
 - Engage
 - What's in it for them?
 - Continually improve and stay connected
 - What are the priority issues/actions your committee addressed?
 - Work readiness
 - pre-employment testing (Remediation of skill gaps)
 - NCRR training & LEAD AP Certification
 - Identifying Un-tapped labor sources
 - What are your committees' long term plans?
 - Establish pre apprenticeship programs
 - What challenges does your committee face?
 - Alignment
 - Partnerships (Gov't & Industry)
 - Lack of skills
 - Records (poor employment & criminal)
 - Education System (k-12)
 - Planning for post-recession (building the architecture)
 - Re-tooling
 - Re-training
- Funding and Grants (Facilitated by Andrew Bouldin)
 - Must have a good foundation before you submit a grant proposal
 - Strategic Plan, Key Mission, Actions, Sustainability
 - Grant Writers – Hire an independent writer
 - Grants are available through the Federal DOL, DOE, NSF as well as State WIB's and independent foundations like "Gates" and "FORD FUND"
 - Grand administrator key to managing grant funds once awarded

• **Peter Fleming, Regional Office DOL Education & Training Administration (ETA)**

Peter Fleming – Regional office DOL Education & Training Administration (ETA) – picture the workforce system as the “cart” and the energy industry as the “horse” – how do we get them together?

College isn't the only answer for young people – need to get the message out to parents, educators and students about the high paying careers in this industry. Need to let the students know that they can be successful, prosperous, happy and productive working in the energy field.

So, how do we hook up the horse to the cart?

- Know who your state and local WIB members are and get yourself on those boards; 51% of the board must come from business
- Anticipate jobs that are coming up (long term look) and be sure that the cohort of unemployed have the skills to fill those jobs – leverage the workforce investment system to help train for those new skills
- Funding – WIBs have influence over the formula grants and how that money should be spent

CEWD will provide support if you are applying for a grant. CEWD will prepare letters of commitment – but not for development of new curriculum. Look to increase the support systems needed for career awareness, certification programs to allow people to bring their skills to different employers and provide fundamental training to increase the proficiency in basic skills.

Break-out & Brainstorm on “Green”

- Impact of Green
 - Quantify Green jobs
 - Keep definition broad and flexible
 - 24/7 virtual job
 - skill sets (onet, DOL)
 - Change the work
 - Current skill sets
 - Energy Efficiency
 - Retooling
 - Ensure training is up to speed
 - Career Fairs
 - Educate and build awareness (example: Nuclear)
 - Career Academies
 - Career Pathways to include “green”
- Structure and Organization
 - Pipeline – Develop Communication – Sharing ideas among members
 - Union representation
 - Minnesota struggled with union Representation
 - Alabama said that union representation was good through the Construction Roundtable
 - Florida stated that state and local union reps don’t communicate well
 - Carolinas’ the Utilities Coordinate Leadership
 - No subcommittees
 - Emerging Technologies – Education and Awareness
 - Industry – Tie to manufacturing in energy
- **Andra Cornelius, Vice President, Business & Workforce Development Opportunities, Workforce Florida, Inc.**

I am honored to have this opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of Workforce Florida. We are very proud of the accomplishments of Florida’s public workforce system. The system was restructured in 2000 to create Workforce Florida which is a nonprofit, public-private partnership.

You likely remember the four uninvited visitors to our state in 2004 and 2005. In the wake of destruction of each of the storms, our utilities were essential in the rapid recovery of our businesses and citizenry. Line technicians were literally our heroes. They restored our power enabling us to get our businesses and our lives back in order. Prior to these storms, the energy industry was never one of Florida’s economic development targets – in other words, it was not an industry we actively recruited, expanded or retained. However, after the series of storm, we realized just how vital this industry is to our state’s economic stability.

By 2010, Florida is on target to become the third most populated state behind California and Texas. Demand will continue to grow. Almost everyone uses power or needs it, so demand will come to soar and so will the need for additional infrastructure to generate, transmit and distribute power.

We knew we needed to begin our outreach by hearing from our industry partners, so we asked colleagues at Gulf Power and Progress Energy to help us get started to ensure we had all of the major players at the table if we were to understand how critical issues affect the workforce in power operations and energy delivery now and in the future, the consortium

I can not emphasize how important and how critical the partnerships among industry, education, economic development and workforce are in creating and sustaining a pipeline for skilled energy workers. A challenge for the industry in building awareness is changing their public image from one of being static to one being more dynamic, offering challenging careers in an exciting industry. In order for us to do this we need to remember the three P's: Partnership, pipeline and policy.

- **Alan Martin, CEWD Board of Directors**

Our issues are unique to our industry – With the Boomers ready to retire that our industry is like a “Pig in the Python” they are on their way out and are coming to the end of their careers. Even though many are postponing their plans for retirement right now, they will retire.

6 out of 10 students do not want to go to college. They want to come out of High School making the most money they can. They are not looking at our industry because they don't know we have things they might be interested in. If they knew the average line worker with overtime made around \$70-90K then they might start looking at us. We need to do a better job at building awareness and with skill gaps.

We are responsible getting the word out. Accepting how critical the needs are for our industry. Then we need to communicate to schools, teachers, and parents on what careers are available.

Collectively we need to have more meetings like this one where we can discuss and learn in order to come up with actions and results.