

SIWDB ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 1, 2024 – NOVEMBER 30, 2025

**Workforce
Development
in Action!**



**Southern Illinois
Workforce Development
BOARD**

One Region Workforce Strong



The American Job Center and partner agencies serve businesses and residents of Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Perry and Williamson Counties. The partner system supports the economic health of Southern Illinois by providing services designed to build a quality workforce. The need to provide a quality workforce for local employers drives our collective work.

With guidance from our Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO) and the Southern Illinois Workforce Development Board (SIWDB), the partners work to improve workforce preparation and quality of life for all the customers we serve. Enclosed please find the facts and figures surrounding collaborative work in serving our local workforce area and Southern Illinois.

WIOA Title 1B: Adult, DW & Youth Services

Man-Tra-Con is proud to be a partner of the **American Job Center** for **LWIA 25**, serving the communities of Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Perry, and Williamson Counties. The following report shows Title 1B Service and Performance reports for December 1, 2024, through November 30, 2025.



Employer Services

The Employer Services team offers recruitment services including: individual meetings with employers; participation in group employer gatherings; and hiring events. The team, in collaboration with AJC partners, provides up-to-date labor market statistics and other helpful demographic data to assist in the recruitment and retention of Southern Illinois employers. Coordinating employer workshops and retention visits in connection with local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development partners are important elements of the business service team in LWIA 25.

ECONOMIC IMPACT — Total Amount Spent on Employers and Customers

Adult	\$953,380.49
Dislocated Worker.....	\$444,937.99
Youth.....	\$726,458.00
Special Grants	\$677,030.78
Employer Services.....	\$202,754.31
TOTAL	\$3,004,561.57

WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (WEP) CONTRACTS SIGNED WITH 35 EMPLOYERS

- A Gift of Love
- Allied Automotive
- Barber Shop
- Branch Cafe & Market
- Carbondale United
- City of Carbondale
- Crucial
- D&D Electric
- Dayempur Farm
- Enhanced Aero, LLC
- Extreme Exigency
- Franklin County Senior Services
- Good English
- Greg Weeks Inc
- Interior Design by Lisa
- Intertape Polymer Group
- Jackson County Housing Authority
- Jefferson County Development Corp
- Longbranch Cafe
- Marion Ministerial Alliance
- Miller Contracting Serv LLC
- New Kahala
- Oasis Outdoors
- Oasis Powersports
- Odyssey Railcar
- OneStop
- Rafi's Custom Remodeling
- Schaeffer Manufacturing
- SI Prime Cleaning
- Smith-Hafeli
- Take Action Today
- The Lighthouse Shelter
- Thirteen RF
- Town Square Market
- Village of Colp

WIOA Title 1B: Adult, DW & Youth Services

Man-Tra-Con Employer & Customer Services Impact



DEMOGRAPHICS: ADULT

Total Registered	169
Male	43%
Female	57%
Felony.....	20%
Misdemeanor	19%
Food Stamp Recipient	85%
Determined Low Income.....	99%
Veteran.....	3%
Disability	3.0%
Received Training Services	52%
Race	
White	65%
Black	27%
Hispanic.....	6%
Preferred not to answer.....	2%

DEMOGRAPHICS: DISLOCATED WORKER

Total Registered	82
Male	57%
Female	43%
Felony.....	9%
Misdemeanor	11%
Food Stamp Recipient	48%
Determined Low Income.....	48%
Veteran.....	0%
Disability	4%
Received Training Services	43%
Race	
White	83%
Black	17%
Hispanic.....	0%
Preferred not to answer.....	0%

DEMOGRAPHICS: YOUTH

Total Registered	185
Male	52%
Female	48%
Age 14-18.....	46%
Age 18-21.....	34%
Age 22+	20%
Food Stamp Recipient	53%
Determined Low Income.....	58%
Veteran.....	0%
Disability	15%
Received Training Services	69%
Race	
White	68%
Black	25%
Hispanic.....	4%
Preferred not to answer.....	3%

Youth Success: Logan Ridings

Youth Program Lead JoDene Kern reports on her customer. “Logan began receiving Man-Tra-Con services in February 2025. He had been enrolled in the Cooperative Career & Technical Education (CCTE) program at Marion High School. The CCTE program, which allows a senior student to attend school for a half-day and be employed for a half-day, referred Logan to Man-Tra-Con for job search assistance,” JoDene explains.

“Logan was interested in a career in customer service. Logan’s only work experience at the time had been a part-time job as a bus boy. Without any customer service work experience or a high school diploma, Logan had several barriers to overcome before he could reach his career goal,” JoDene adds.

“Logan’s plan was to work in an office setting to gain customer service experience for his resume. He enrolled in our Work Experience Program (WEP) and began working as a Resource Room Assistant at the American Job Center in Marion while attending high school. Logan excelled in his role at the American Job Center, gaining strong customer service skills and effectively assisting visitors. He received the highest rating he could receive on his first review for WEP,” Jo Dene reports.

“Logan did such a great job as a Resource Room Assistant that when a Follow-up Specialist position opened up at Man-Tra-Con, he applied and was hired. After his graduation in May 2025, Logan was hired on full-time at Man-Tra-Con, where he is currently working as a Follow-up Specialist, contacting former customers to see how they are doing and if they need additional assistance. In addition, Logan travels to Man-Tra-Con’s auxiliary offices to assist customers as needed,” JoDene adds.

“Man-Tra-Con Corporation has greatly impacted my career’s trajectory. They have opened my eyes to the public service field and the immense support we bring to the community on a daily basis. It is massive honor to be a part of this remarkable organization,” Logan says. ■



Adult Success: Traci Smith

Statewide IWP Individual Achievement Award Winner!

Adult/DW Lead Nikki Lanham reports on her customer.

“Traci Smith’s journey through the WIOA program is a powerful story of resilience, determination, and transformation. Traci had been out of the workforce since 2012, and decided to pursue a career in nursing. Traci had several challenges to overcome when she visited Man-Tra-Con for WIOA training assistance. At 38, she was a married mother of five who had been homeschooling her children. Traci’s family had only one vehicle and her husband worked full-time at Aisin. Despite the challenges, Traci remained focused on her goal—to become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and eventually earn her license as a Registered Nurse (RN),” Nikki explains.

“With WIOA funded support that included case management, occupational and skills training, transportation assistance, books, and exam fees, Traci overcame every obstacle on her path. She excelled academically, earned straight A’s and became a role model for her class. Always punctual and eager to help, Traci tutored her classmates and inspired those around her with her dedication and kindness. She graduated from the LPN program at John A. Logan College (JALC), and then continued on to pass the RN program in May 2025,” Nikki adds.

“In March 2025, while completing her RN program, Traci began working full-time as a circulating nurse in the operating room at Herrin Hospital, earning \$31.25 per hour. Her new career has brought financial stability to her family. As a result, Traci and her husband have been able to purchase a new car and provide their children with everything they need for school. Traci’s success has not only transformed her own life but has also lifted a significant financial burden from her family. Her story is a shining example of how opportunity, support, and determination can change lives,” Nikki says.

Reflecting on her experience, Traci shared, *“Man-Tra-Con helped me so much when I was in nursing school. They really helped take off the financial strain of nursing school.”* ■



Traci Smith, her husband and their five children get together for a holiday photo.

LOCAL WORKS:

Connecting Young Adults with Employers

Through supplemental grant funding from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Man-Tra-Con Corporation developed the “Local Works” program which sponsored tours for high school students located within LWIA 25 (Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Perry, and Williamson Counties). The Local Works program was designed to connect young adults with local employers in the area and raise awareness about potential job and/or apprenticeship opportunities available to them after graduation.

Students received Local Works t-shirts, drawstring bags and other items before beginning the tours. Man-Tra-Con also purchased regulation “steel-toed” boots for the students to wear during the plant tours and keep after the tours ended. The tours began at 9:00 a.m. and ended with breakfast presentations where students learned about potential career or training opportunities.

West Frankfort High School students toured the **Walgreens Distribution** plant in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, in February 2025. For nearly 125 years, Walgreens has been a cornerstone in local communities, helping people live healthier lives through personal care, trusted advice and accessible services.

Walgreens Distribution Center employees are responsible for handling, sorting, and shipping products to Walgreens stores. Positions may

include warehouse workers, forklift operators, and inventory specialists.

In February 2025, **Marion High School** students toured the **Aisin** plant in Marion, Illinois. Founded in 1965, Aisin supplies engine, drivetrain, body and chassis, aftermarket, and other automotive parts for the Toyota Motor Corporation, plus OEM parts for other companies such as Subaru, General Motors, and Mercedes.

Du Quoin High School students toured the **Prysmian** plant in December 2024, and **Pinckneyville High School** students toured the plant in March 2025. The Prysmian plant, (formerly General Cable) is a division of Prysmian — a world leader in the energy and telecom cable industry.

Prysmian manufactures thousands of miles of cables and systems for power transmission and distribution, as well as cables in micro-grids, energy storage, renewable energy and EVs and EV charging stations. Prysmian is currently developing a \$63.8 million expansion project at its Du Quoin, Illinois plant to increase cable manufacturing for the renewable energy and electric vehicle sectors.

With continued DCEO supplemental grant funding, a new round of Local Works tours are currently in the works for December 2025 and into 2026. ■



West Frankfort High School students tour Walgreens Distribution Center in Mt. Vernon.



Pinckneyville High School students tour the Prysmian plant in Du Quoin.

ROE #21 & ROE #30 Career Fair for High School Students

Man-Tra-Con Corporation collaborated with Regional Office of Education #21 and Regional Office of Education #30 to organize a Career Fair at the Pavilion in Marion. The career fair was held on October 29th at the Pavilion in Marion.

Twenty-five high schools from ROE 21 and ROE 30 participated in the event. Over 600 high school students had an opportunity to speak with about 80 local employers including representatives from healthcare, education, and manufacturing industries. Students were excited to meet with employers, learn about career opportunities, and try out various simulation displays present at the event. ■



Students spin the wheel for prizes at the Regional Office of Education (ROE) #21 table.



Students explore simulation equipment at the Southern FS table.



Jackson County Ambulance Services explains CPR training equipment to students.



Logan Ridings explains Man-Tra-Con services to students at the ROE Career Fair.



Man-Tra-Con staff greet students at the ROE Career Fair. Left to right: Emily Perks, Logan Ridings, Darien Daniels, and Abby Russell.

Workforce Summit: Employer-Driven Solutions

Man-Tra-Con Corporation, led by Employer Services Director Emily Perks, collaborated with SIWDB Economic Development Committee members and local employers to host our fourth annual Workforce Summit: Employer-Driven Solutions.

The all-day summit was held at John A. Logan College in Carterville, Illinois, on Wednesday, October 1, 2025. The workforce summit featured national speakers, local employer panel discussions, plus representatives from education, healthcare, employment law, and manufacturing. Over 120 people attended the event. Photos illustrate highlights from the event.

The summit opened with introductions by Master of Ceremonies Dr. Steve O'Keefe, Vice President of Marketing, John A. Logan College; and a **Welcome Address** from Dr. Kirk Overstreet, President, John A. Logan College. Presentation topics included: **Team-work and Leadership** by Keynote Speaker Kerry Martin, Teacher & Former Head Football Coach; a Panel Discussion: *NO TURNING BACK: AI's Role in Business Survival*, with Moderator Erin Kopec, Vice President of Sales & Marketing, HireLevel and Panel Members Cohen Barnes, President & CEO, Sundog; Tom Harness, SIU COBA Marketing Instructor, Owner

of Harness Digital Marketing; Dr. Mark Korte, Ambulatory Informatics Officer, Southern Illinois Healthcare.

Breakout Session 1, **Apprenticeship Program Successes** was presented by Emily Perks, Employer Services Director, Man-Tra-Con; Abby Russell, Employer Services Coordinator, Man-Tra-Con; Amy Murphy, Technical Specialist, IMEC; Scott Wernsman, MBA, Dean of Career & Technical Education and Workforce Training, John A. Logan College; Maggie Ervin, Director of Workforce Development, Rend Lake College; and Brody Wilson, Coordinator of Industry and Apprenticeship, Rend Lake College.

Breakout Session 2, **Prison Re-entry and Work Release Programs** was led by Moderator Freddie Buckingham, Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES); with Panel Members Josh Doerner, Project Coordinator, Marron Institute of Urban Management, New York University; Kim Larson, CEO, Illinois Correctional Industries; Greg Runyan, Assistant CEO, Illinois Correctional Industries; Jessica Mayhew, LCSW, CRADC, Southern Region Reentry Manager, Illinois Department of Corrections; and Ronda Pryor, Special Population Coordinator, Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES).

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Keynote Speaker Coach Kerry Martin talks about leadership, best practices, and how to build a winning team.



Dr. Steve O'Keefe introduces Moderator Erin Kopec and the panel for "NO TURNING BACK: AI's Role in Business Survival."

Workforce Summit: Employer-Driven Solutions

(Continued from page 8)

Breakout Session 3, **Workforce Topics** was led by Moderator Randy Prince, Senior Business Development Manager, Illinois Manufacturers' Association (IMA) and Panel Members: Terri Bryant, Illinois State Senator; David Friess, Illinois State Representative; and Patrick Windhorst, Illinois State Representative.

Dr. Deb Barnett, Executive Director, Southern Illinois Now and Nick Holdinghausen, Coordinator of Regional Development & Marketing, Southern Illinois Now presented a final afternoon session to complete the event. **SI NOW: Regional Overview** celebrated workforce development successes with stories and statistics for our region.

The Workforce Summit was made possible by contributions from the following sponsors: Illinois Manufacturers' Association (IMA), Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC), John A. Logan College, Man-Tra-Con Corporation, Moss Enterprises, Pepsi Mid-America, Prysmian, and Southern Illinois Healthcare. ■

What people were saying about the Summit

***"Excellent keynote speaker.
Very motivating.
Great explanation of what
leadership should look like."***

***"It was great hearing from the
diverse perspectives on AI use in
the workplace. The ethical use
conversation was insightful and
I think will continue to evolve
with the technology."***

***"Well attended and many
great resources in one place."***

***"It was very informative,
great networking, and I learned
new things... awesome event!"***



Dr. Deb Barnett and Nick Holdinghausen from Southern Illinois Now present a regional overview — highlighting workforce development successes with stories and data.



Randy Prince from IMA (right) moderates the "Workforce Topics" panel discussion with Illinois State Representatives David Friess (left), Patrick Windhorst, and Illinois State Senator Terri Bryant (center).

Employer Success: Pepsi MidAmerica



Statewide IWP Business Leadership Award Winner!

Pepsi MidAmerica exemplifies what it means to be a leader in workforce and economic development in Southern Illinois. Through innovative apprenticeship programs, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to upskilling workers, Pepsi MidAmerica has demonstrated sustained investment in building a more skilled, resilient, and economically viable local workforce. Their efforts have had a measurable and lasting impact on the region, making them a deserving candidate for the Business Leadership Award.

Leadership in Workforce Development Activities

Pepsi MidAmerica has been a driving force in strengthening the local workforce system, particularly through the creation of apprenticeship programs in two critically needed areas: mechanics and commercial driving (CDL). Both roles require technical skill and are difficult to fill in rural regions like Southern Illinois. In response, Pepsi MidAmerica developed structured,

in-house apprenticeship programs that not only offer training but also lead to industry-recognized credentials. These programs are designed to take individuals—many of whom have no prior experience—and give them the skills necessary to thrive in high-demand fields. To date, a growing number of participants have entered these programs, gaining access to rewarding, long-term careers and helping to close critical labor shortages in the region.

Contributions to Economic Viability

Pepsi MidAmerica has made significant contributions to the economic strength of the region by creating structured, sustainable career pathways for individuals with limited prior training. By offering on-the-job learning paired with formal instruction, the company helps previously unskilled workers transition into skilled roles with higher wages and long-term growth potential. One powerful example is an employee who began his career at Pepsi MidAmerica in 2019 in an entry-level warehouse role. With only a high school education, he advanced through the company's CDL

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Apprenticeship Success: Joseph Tennant

Man-Tra-Con presented Joseph with an Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion from the U.S. Department of Labor in October 2025. Joseph had been an apprentice in an On-the-Job Training program (OJT) at Crisp Container Corporation since last year. The Apprenticeship Illinois program helped pay for a portion of his wages as he trained to be a CDL driver at Crisp Container.

Joseph previously worked as a corrections officer in Sneads, Florida before moving back to Southern Illinois. After settling in, he was hired as a salesperson for Black Diamond Harley Davidson in Marion.

With a wife and a child on the way, Joseph needed a better paying job. He applied multiple times at Pepsi MidAmerica and was eventually hired in September 2024. After 3 months, he transferred to a CDL position at Crisp Container where he completed his CDL apprenticeship training.

Joseph enjoyed his experience in the training program, the instructors, and getting to know the other drivers. *"You have other employees that come in from different depots, so you take that time you have with them, you make friends with them, and make it the best. So, it's all around a really good experience,"* Joseph says.

Joseph advises anyone thinking of applying for a job at Pepsi MidAmerica. *"It is really hard in today's economy to find a job that consistently pays your bills. Being 22 years old, I've told many younger 20-year-olds, 'I recommend Pepsi a lot.' This job pays my bills. I have 2 kids now and a wife that doesn't work. This job helps me pay the bills so that she can stay home with our kids,"* Joseph says. ■



Apprenticeship Success: Jamonta McKnight

Man-Tra-Con Employer Services Coordinator Abby Russell presented Jamonta with an Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion from the U.S. Department of Labor in August 2025. Jamonta had been an apprentice in an On-the-Job Training program (OJT) at Crisp Container Corporation since last summer. The program helped pay for a portion of his wages as Jamonta trained to be a CDL driver at Crisp Container.

Jamonta had been working at Pepsi MidAmerica in Marion, Illinois, for about 6 years before transitioning to CDL driver training. He began his employment with Pepsi as a builder—building out cases of product. After 6 months, he was promoted to a checker position, and then a forklift driver position. Eventually, he was promoted to a supervisor position in the Builder department, where he worked until he became a CDL apprentice in an OJT program at Crisp Container in August 2024.



Jamonta talks about what he likes best about being a CDL driver for Crisp Container. *“Being home every night... Both of my kids are in high school and I’m still making basketball games and everything. Being able to work, get my CDL time in, and be home at night with my family, it’s an amazing thing,”* Jamonta says.

Jamonta loves working as a CDL driver for Crisp Container, and plans on staying for a long time. *“I had a couple of guys ask me about the program. They worried about passing the test, about being out there, being away a lot. I’m like, it’s actually one of the best things I’ve ever done for my career. This program was very helpful for me. You get your experience under your belt. You get to stay home every night, and still get to spend time with your family. I think that was an amazing thing... so I’m very thankful for it,”* Jamonta says. ■

Employer Success: Pepsi MidAmerica

(Continued from page 10)

apprenticeship program and is now a fully licensed CDL driver. He is the program’s first graduate and proudly shares that he “started at the bottom, but now at the top.” His story is just one of many that illustrates how Pepsi MidAmerica is transforming individual lives while also addressing workforce gaps that hinder local economic growth.

Leadership with Partners

Pepsi MidAmerica’s partnership with Man-Tra-Con, a local workforce development organization, and John A. Logan College has led to innovative training programs under the Incumbent Worker Training initiative. This collaboration has enabled Pepsi MidAmerica employees to attend classes in Industrial Electricity and Welding—two key skills for their manufacturing facility. These classes not only

improved technical competencies but also boosted employee morale and earnings potential.

Pepsi MidAmerica is not just a participant in the local workforce system—they are a proactive leader. By identifying key workforce challenges, developing targeted solutions, and partnering with educational and workforce institutions, the company has elevated the economic and professional prospects for hundreds of individuals in Southern Illinois. Their apprenticeship programs, internal promotion pipelines, and training partnerships are models of workforce and economic development that other companies in the region are beginning to emulate. Pepsi MidAmerica’s visionary approach and proven results make them a standout example for our region. ■

Employer Success:



Statewide IWP Workforce Solutions Award Winner!

D&D Electric, LLC, has developed an innovative workforce solution that opens access to clean energy careers for underserved and justice-involved individuals, while supporting regional economic growth. Through a blend of classroom instruction, hands-on training, and skills-building workshops, the company prepares participants for entry-level employment in the solar energy industry.

A powerful example of this initiative is D&D Electric's partnership with the Illinois Youth Center in Harrisburg, Illinois. Through this collaboration, the company employed two formerly incarcerated youth as full-time laborers, starting at \$15 per hour, after they completed a three-month solar training and workforce readiness program. This effort demonstrates how second-chance employment, paired with structured training, can transform lives and promote community reintegration. It also shows the company's deep commitment to inclusive hiring and long-term impact.



D&D Electric and Man-Tra-Con were honored by the State of Illinois and Apprenticeship Illinois at a Proclamation Event for their work with Solar Energy apprenticeship programs. Left to right: Emily Perks, D&D Electric Co-Owners Darla & Dave Martin, and Kim Watson.

D&D Electric actively works with Man-Tra-Con Corporation and other local Workforce Employment Programs, On-the-Job Training (OJT) initiatives, and Apprenticeships to recruit from underserved communities. These partnerships help connect individuals who may lack prior experience or certifications with meaningful job opportunities in a growing field. Their outreach emphasizes diversity, equity, and access, ensuring the clean energy transition is inclusive.

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Apprenticeship Success: Corey Hacker

Corey was enrolled in the Aviation Program at SIU when he heard about the Apprenticeship Program (AP) offered through Man-Tra-Con and Apprenticeship Illinois. He enrolled in the AP program and was able to earn wages while in school and working at Crucial MRO as an apprentice.

"I went to school at SIU for Aviation. I was basically stuck in a lot of retail jobs and I just wanted something different. I started at SIU and luckily Mark and Stacy were kind enough to offer me a position here at Crucial. I just happened to hear about Man-Tra-Con, and things just kind of all started working out," Corey explains.

Corey felt supported throughout the program, "A lot of the teachers were really nice and appreciative of effort. They were eager to help people who were learning. If any challenges came up, the instructors were always there to help. Man-Tra-Con was also eager to help in terms of tools. They were eager to help me get my license and everything. It was a great support system, really."

In October 2025, after he completed the AP program, Man-Tra-Con presented Corey with an Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion from the U.S. Department of Labor. Corey is now working full-time at Crucial MRO in Murphysboro, Illinois. ■



Employer Success: D&D Electric, LLC

(Continued from page 12)

Currently, nine employees are enrolled in the program, receiving comprehensive training in solar technology, warehouse operations, and residential energy systems. Before entering job sites, all participants complete on-site safety training, including the required OSHA-10 certification. Entry-level laborer positions start at \$18 per hour, include benefits, and do not require previous experience—lowering barriers to employment and accelerating workforce entry.

The program's success is tied to strategic collaboration. D&D Electric partners with correctional institutions, local workforce boards, and training providers to deliver tailored workforce solutions that align with both labor market demand and community needs. These partnerships are essential to the program's design, implementation, and growth.

In the past year, the initiative has significantly contributed to the company's expansion and the development of a skilled local labor force. It addresses key workforce gaps in the renewable energy sector while supporting economic mobility for individuals who have historically been excluded from such opportunities.

The outcomes reflect the strength of the model: job placements for individuals facing systemic employment barriers, a growing clean energy workforce, and stronger community connections through purpose-driven partnerships. The program not only equips participants with technical and safety skills, but also instills confidence, structure, and a clear pathway toward career advancement.

D&D Electric, LLC, stands out for their innovation, inclusivity, and tangible impact — integrating new methods of service delivery, fostering strong partnerships, and producing real economic outcomes for our region. ■

Apprenticeship Illinois Roundtable Discussion

Man-Tra-Con Corporation hosted a roundtable discussion with local employers, highlighting the benefits of the Apprenticeship Illinois Program. The event was held at Man-Tra-Con's regional office in Marion, Illinois, on July 31, 2025.

The discussion included presentations from **Illinois Manufacturers' Association, Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC), Man-Tra-Con Corporation, Pepsi MidAmerica and Shawnee Health**. Over 40 people attended the roundtable event including representatives from Construction, Education, Healthcare, Law Enforcement, Manufacturing, Mining, and Social Services organizations. After each presentation, attendees were able to ask questions and get additional information about implementing an Apprenticeship Illinois program at their organizations. ■



Sarah Hartwick from IMA explains tax credits employers may receive as participants in the Apprenticeship Illinois program.



Amy Murphy from IMEC talks about how the Apprenticeship Illinois program helps attract high quality employees, increases retention rates, and fosters employee loyalty.

DCEO Deputy Director Julio Rodriguez Visits Man-Tra-Con and the American Job Center during Southern Illinois Workforce Development Tour

Man-Tra-Con Corporation was honored to host a visit from Julio Rodriguez, Deputy Director, Office of Employment and Training from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and DCEO Downstate Workforce Development Regional Manager Bryan Ellis in July of 2025.

Mr. Rodriguez met with Man-Tra-Con frontline staff and management over lunch at our regional office in Marion, Illinois. He talked about future clean energy workforce development plans for the region, answered questions, and offered advice to frontline staff on serving customers, especially those with difficult barriers to employment.

After lunch, Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Ellis, and Man-Tra-Con staff visited the Pepsi MidAmerica Crisp Container plant in Marion, Illinois, for a tour of the facilities, and a discussion on how the Apprenticeship Illinois program has helped Pepsi develop a skilled workforce.

The group met with Pepsi Director of Training Tim Leake and Pepsi Vice President of HR Justin Shewey, Apprenticeship Illinois program graduates, and Pepsi staff members who conducted the tour.

Next, Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Ellis visited Man-Tra-Con's auxiliary office at the new Southern Illinois Multimodal Station (SIMMS) in Carbondale, Illinois. City of Carbondale Economic Development Director Steven Mitchell gave the group a tour of the nearly completed project, and talked about future phases of the SIMMS project, expected to be completed in early 2026.

The day ended with dinner in Marion. Man-Tra-Con was happy to spend the afternoon and evening with Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Ellis. We were excited to hear about DCEO's plans for our region, especially the new Climate and Equity Jobs Act (CEJA) project currently under development. ■



Julio Rodriguez (center, left) tours the Pepsi MidAmerica Crisp Container plant as Justin Shewey, Vice President of HR and Pepsi staff demonstrate the equipment.



DCEO Deputy Director Julio Rodriguez and DCEO Downstate Workforce Development Regional Manager Brian Ellis at the Crisp Container plant with staff from Pepsi and Man-Tra-Con.

Man-Tra-Con opens office serving residents of Jackson County

Man-Tra-Con Corporation has opened an auxiliary office at the new **Southern Illinois Multimodal Center** in Carbondale, Illinois.

The general public is welcome to use the resource room equipped with phone, copier, computers, and Internet access while seeking employment or training.

Career Specialists are also available to work “one-on-one” with customers who meet WIOA eligibility requirements.

The office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and may be accessed from inside the main Amtrak entrance by walking towards the restrooms on the left and following the signs to our doorway at the end of the corridor. Customers may call 618-428-4460 for assistance. ■



City of Carbondale Economic Development Director Steven Mitchell (right) gives a tour of the Southern Illinois Multimodal Station main entrance hall.



Center Photo: Brian Ellis from DCEO and Kevin Clark (right) from Connect 360 explore the resource room at Man-Tra-Con's new office space. Bottom Photo: DCEO Deputy Director Julio Rodríguez (center right) tours Man-Tra-Con's auxiliary office at the new Southern Illinois Multimodal Station.

Message from Our Chair

Man-Tra-Con celebrates the remarkable achievements accomplished over the past year in serving a diverse range of individuals, from youth to dislocated workers. By providing tailored programs, innovative training opportunities, and dedicated support, we have empowered individuals to overcome challenges and have a successful career. These milestones reflect our commitment to the community that we serve in equipping people with the proper skills and resources needed to succeed in today's dynamic job market.

Together, we are building a workforce that reflects strength, adaptability, and excellence—a workforce that will not only make Workforce Area 25 proud but also serve as a beacon of progress for all of Illinois. Our shared commitment to collaboration, community growth, and continuous workforce improvements ensures a brighter future, where every individual has the chance to thrive, contributing to a better Illinois for all.

Thank you,

Terance Henry
SIWDB Chair



Special Thanks

Thanks to our chief local elected officials, board members, advisory members and partners who care enough to give of their time and talent to craft a strong workforce for Southern Illinois.

Chief Local Elected Officials

Tim Atkisson
Cliff Lindermann
Bruce Morgenstern
Tamiko Mueller
Kevin Weston

SIWDB Members

Jason Ashmore
Wayne Bigham
Greg Bouhl
Christina Carroll
Aaron Christ
Matt Donkin
Ron Ellis
Julie Geiger
Laura Hammonds
Terance Henry
Steve Hughart
Tony Iriti
Joan Jablonski
Debra Keelin
William Lo
Brenda Malone
Cary Minnis
Steven Mitchell
Tamiko Mueller
Rosie Naumovski
Kirk Overstreet
Erik Perks
Jeremy Pinkston
Shelley Pyle

Troy Ray
John Rendleman
Mary M. Roe
Sandy Snowden
Jerry Womick

Advisory Members

Ron Ferguson
Karl Maple
Jim Marlo
Stephanie Robinson
Tyler Young, Jr.

One-Stop Operator

Crosswalk Community
Action Agency

Partner Agencies

Carbondale Community
High School, Rebound
Crosswalk Community
Action Agency
Illinois Department of
Employment Security (IDES)
Illinois Department of
Human Services (IDHS)
IDHS: Division of
Rehabilitation Services
Illinois workNet

John A. Logan College,
Adult Education Program

Land of Lincoln, Legal Services

Man-Tra-Con Corporation

MERS/GOODWILL,
Senior Community Service

Rend Lake College,
Adult Education Program

Western Egyptian
Opportunity Council (WEEOC)

Staff to the Board

Stephanie Robinson
Tammy Kirk

Man-Tra-Con Corporate Board

Deborah Barnett
Christina Carroll
Rex Duncan
Matt Donkin
Linda Flowers
Terance Henry
Mary M. Roe
John Gulley
John Washburn