

AGIA Training Plan Steering Committee
July 18, 2007
Minutes

Present: Fred Esposito Mike Andrews (telephonic)
Guy Bell Wendy Redman (telephonic)
Tony Delia Janelle Vanasse (telephonic)
Mary Lou Madden Michelle Unrein (telephonic)

Absent: Karen Martinson Dave Rees

1. Introductions

Fred explained that Commissioner Bishop asked him to pull together two groups to help accomplish the task that the AGIA bill passage gave him, of developing a training program for putting Alaskans to work on the construction, maintenance, and operation of a gas pipeline. This Steering Committee has an important role in that process.

Tony Delia introduced himself as the executive director of HR for ARSC. He also oversees training and development.

Mike Andrews is the director of Alaska Works Partnership. They currently do some pipeline training with various outreach programs.

Janelle Vanasse is the principal at Bethel Regional High School. She formerly was the Executive Director of Yuut.

Wendy Redman is the Vice President for University Relations with the statewide University system.

Guy is the Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

Mary Lou Madden is helping Fred with the writing and organization of the training plan.

2. Setting the Stage: AGIA and the Commissioner of DOLWD responsibility for a plan.

AGIA has very specific language that directs the Commissioner to develop a training plan to train Alaskans. The Commissioner asked me to take the lead. This is a three part effort. The first part is an internal Department of Labor team made up of Division Directors and R&A that will help to feed information to the Steering Committee. The second group is this Steering Committee which is representative of education, labor, and industry to put together a vision for the creation of this plan. Wendy asked for clarification on the internal team.

Fred said the internal team will develop a timeline, lead the public inclusion process, provide data and information, provide the effort needed to steer through the political process, and prepare the plan for presentation. They bring resources, writers, and data. The third part is AWIB. It's not required that they're involved, but it makes sense that they would be involved. AWIB is going to be a big part of helping accomplish the public inclusion process. They will have an ad hoc group reviewing and providing feedback on the plan. We will need them to support and advocate the plan we produce.

3. Goal of the Committee: The DOLWD AGIA Training Plan Steering Committee is a team comprised of education, labor, and industry representatives. Our goal is to develop statewide strategy for the creation of a regionalized delivery system for vocational technical training and education in a logical, sequential and sustainable way in order to be prepared for the construction of a gas pipeline.

Fred read the goal of the committee.

Mike asked if Fred created this or if it was part of AGIA.

Fred said this is not from AGIA, this is language that I wrote as the goal of this committee. We want to take this opportunity to create a training plan that moves the system forward in a way that most of us have been pushing for, for a few years.

Mike said that we have laid a lot of groundwork. Hopefully we will build upon what we have already accomplished.

Fred agreed that our work is a way to bring together work done in the past and build on it.

Wendy said I am concerned that we are trying to get too big. How we provide gasoline training for AGIA is different than how we provide a new regionalized delivery system. What are we trying to do here?

Fred said we are trying to develop a plan that is somewhat flexible in nature. The gasoline itself is unknown. What we need is a statewide system that can handle these changes. There are other big economic projects that require the need for a statewide training system with or without AGIA. Wendy asked what it is that Fred thinks isn't in place now to provide training that we need for current industry needs, besides money.

Fred said the idea is we have had a lot of diverse institutions and programs that are all vying for workforce development dollars. There is a demand in rural Alaska to bring training closer to home. There has been some response by the state and federal government to support that. There are a lot of other training centers across the state popping up that are not accredited or coordinated in any way.

Wendy agreed that there needs to be statewide coordination. Those regional training centers need to be pulled in. There are a lot of reports out there that highlight everything that is going to be highlighted by this group and nothing has been done with those reports. Putting energy into creating a whole new plan is good, but if it doesn't actually result in an enhanced possibility of funding it will be useless.

Fred said we need to give the Commissioner a plan that is strong enough and good enough that the Legislature will be interested in funding it.

Wendy said we need a plan that is AGIA specific.

Janelle said we should stick to something very specific that is directly related to AGIA and say if you don't fund it, it's not going to happen. We need to put together an action plan.

Fred asked Janelle how she would change the goal to fit that thinking.

Janelle said she doesn't think the goal needs to be changed, just don't make broad strokes.

Wendy suggested quoting AGIA in the goal. Stay focused on getting the workforce prepared for this project, and include a supporting sentence on a statewide regional delivery system.

Guy said overall the mission or goal the Commissioner has is to develop a program to provide training to Alaskans and to maximize the accessibility of training so anyone who is interested has an opportunity to get training to go to work on this project. We do not have a fully coordinated system of training. It is everyone for themselves in the Legislature. There is no system for evaluating the funding requests. Regardless of a gasoline project there is a systems issue that Alaska needs to address. How can we do a better job to improve the system is not the plan, but it is an essential issue. Fred is interested in making this an essential component of the plan and so is the Commissioner.

Mike said this discussion is more of a public education system. There is a huge other force out there, the private sector.

Fred said that comment leads into Tony's background. Fred asked Tony how we can better bring these resources together and present to industry so they can interface.

Tony said what we have done is grow our own. We work with some training providers and we compliment their programs. We donate equipment to help compliment their training to fit our needs. We recruit from the training centers and we provide additional training to them to meet our needs.

Wendy said she would like this plan to be very focused. The Department of Labor Commissioner or someone such as AWIB needs to be reviewing budget requests that are coming from the different groups and making some recommendation. That is a way to get the regional centers pulled in. It is important that there be a way to pull these funding requests together.

Guy said we need to make sure the public system is feeding the private sector. We could have AWIB take on that role of coordinating.

Fred said if the AWIB became the group that prioritized training funding requests, they would not be making the allocations, just recommendations. We will include some specific AGIA language in the goal. As we look at development of a broader plan, we want to make sure the action plan is specific.

Mike said we should create a specific action plan and it would account for or include a statewide strategy that looks at regional delivery.

Fred said I agree as long as we can get to elements that include the strategies to regionalize.

Fred asked Marylou to rewrite the goal and get it back to the group.

4. Timeline/Calendar:

Fred said I sent out a calendar of the meeting dates for this group. Our next date is August 1.

These meetings will be in Anchorage. You can participate telephonically or travel if needed.

Mike said we need to be prepared and get documents out ahead of time and be flexible to reschedule or cancel meetings if needed.

Fred said we can be flexible to reschedule a meeting if we are not prepared for it. I sent out documentation produced in the past and a web link where we can store the different pieces we want to refer to.

Wendy said the Department of Labor does not have access to regional employment data and that makes it difficult to use them without refining their data.

Mike said R&A did an excellent job in Trends Magazine lately on data from regional areas.

Fred said we will send that out for review. I will have Brynn Keith do a presentation about the regional data they can get us.

Wendy said one other report to put up on the website is the report on non-construction related employment related to the pipeline. Wendy will get that report.

Fred said Dave Reese will be providing us with info on contacting industry. I will ask Dave to present that at the next meeting.

Mike said Alaska Works Partnership would like to present about what we are already doing to prepare for the pipeline. He said he could make a presentation.

Fred said he hopes everyone can attend in person. Contact Michelle to make travel arrangements before traveling. The August 1 meeting will be 10:30-4:00 with a lunch break. The things we have so far are to ask Brynn Keith to talk about data they are putting together for this plan and talk about the Trends article and how it might help get to more regionalized info about employment.

Approach industry, APICC and PARW, about info. Dave can probably present on what info they are putting out to their membership about employment and training related to AGIA. From there we are going to continue the work of the group to put together a plan. Mary Lou will be working with us and providing feedback from meetings and helping us to put together an outline and plan. Wendy said we will need to talk to both industry and providers before we can start putting together a plan.

Mike said he can make a presentation at the August 1 meeting.

Fred said that means August 1 will be an info gathering session. Then we can look at using the second meeting to work on elements of the plan. Everyone should have read and reviewed the documents and minutes from previous meetings before the second meeting in August. We won't spend a lot of time reviewing, we will begin working on how we want this plan to look and be displayed. Fred asked if everyone agreed with this.

Wendy said I think it would be great, but it might be a little ambitious. Pushing industry and providers into a discussion on one day might be a little much.

Fred said we will give it a try. If we decide it is too much we can ask one of the presenters to come back.