

AGIA Training Plan Meeting  
i-Team & Regional Training Centers  
October 24, 2007  
Minutes

Present:	Commissioner Bishop - DOLWD	Fred Esposito - AVTEC
	Tom Nelson – ESD/DOLWD	Greg Cashen - AWIB
	Russell Nelson – BBNC	Debi McLean – Bristol Bay Campus, UAF
	Gina Pope – Bristol Bay Campus, UAF	Jerry Trainor, Interior Aleutians, UAF
	Evelyn James – Interior Aleutians, UAF	Eldon Davidson – SAVEC
	Norman Eck – NWABSD	Cheryl Edenshaw – Alaska Technical Cnt.
	Sandy Shronger Beaver – NWABSD	Debra Burdick-Hinton – AVTEC
	Jeff Selvey – NACTEC	Tony Delia – Arctic Slope Corp
	Corine Geldhof – DOLWD	Mike Shiffer – DOLWD
	Gerry Andrews – DOLWD	Fred Villa – University of Alaska
	Brynn Keith – DOLWD	Mel Brown – SAVEC
	Bob Herron – Yuut Elitnaurviat	LaMont Albertson – Yuut Elitnaurviat
	John Hakala – USDOL Apprenticeship	Todd Bergman – AWIB
	Karen Martinsen – SEACC	Guy Bell - DOLWD

Commissioner Click Bishop welcomed everyone and explained that there is a skills gap right now without a gas pipeline. AGIA tasks the Commissioner of the Department of Labor to develop a training plan. Commissioner Bishop said he wants to incorporate all the RTC's under one training request, and have one voice on funding. Commissioner Bishop wants the training centers to collectively bargain for training dollars, and get people into pipeline training. He wants to connect the dots on who does what for resources in this state.

Fred Esposito said he is hoping that the training centers can collectively come together and get more accomplished by joining together. The purpose of this meeting is looking for ways we can link together and partner on this effort. A letter went out to the training centers to ask them to submit their budget requests to the Commissioner of the Department of Labor so that he can incorporate those requests into one request to be used to coordinate and advocate for our training programs together. This way when we go to the Legislature and get asked about how we coordinate with other training centers we have a way to answer it and know where all the requests are and how they all connect.

Fred Esposito had an opportunity to speak to Karen Rehfeld about this. She wanted to know what the long term needs are for regional training centers. We have some programs not represented here at this meeting including St Mary's and Galena. This might not happen this year, but hopefully we can move forward. Fred asked for comments on the letter.

Eldon Davidson found the letter to be a breath of fresh air and he thought coming together as a group results in swinging a bigger bat. He thought it would help the regional training centers.

Lamont Albertson feels it is a good move, but his concern is that Yuut trains a lot of other areas outside of pipeline training and his board wants to be assured that other training such as health care are also being advocated for by the Department of Labor.

Fred Esposito responded by saying that the AGIA Steering Committee is a cross section of entities from across the state. They decided early on, that the plan would first address the existing skills gap for jobs that exist now to meet the needs of business and industry. The AGIA Training plan will provide guidance and direction to all regions to help ramp them up to meet the current needs.

Guy Bell stated that we are beginning discussions with Karen Rehfeld and have told her it was a good idea to bring all the organizations together and coordinate our requests in a way so we can deliver the best product to Alaskans seeking training. Each organization makes some efforts to get funding from the Department of Labor and also with their Representatives and Senators in Juneau. It is an “everyone for themselves” approach and does not always get the best product out. The Department of Education has a way they prioritize their new building and construction projects. Those schools with the highest needs are recognized and receive funding. There are winners and losers in this process but there is a criteria that determines who gets funding. Guy asked if there is a system that can be created to help pool resources and identify priorities for new construction, deferred maintenance, training supplies, equipment, instructors, etc. It is pretty unlikely we can get this together for the next Legislature but maybe we could have a system in place for the following year with a new Legislature. With the AGIA Training Plan you could take out pipeline and put in health care and it would be applicable. It could serve as a template.

Norman Eck suggested at least lobbying for the operational part as one comprehensive piece this time and then tackle the more difficult things the following year.

Fred Esposito stated that the bottom line is that in order for the system to move to the next step there needs to be more integration, either by the allocation of dollars or in deciding who delivers what and where.

Bob Herron asked if this paradigm shift with budget requests is just in the Department of Labor or if this is happening in other areas. He asked if the Administration is trying to get other departments to do this. Guy Bell responded that DOT has done this with the airports. Fred Esposito stated that while it might not be a state trend, we have seen this at the federal level with a coordination of federal training requests. The VTEP group was formed to get training providers to speak with one voice.

Corine Geldhof stated that this has not been a mandate by the Governor’s office, but in the last couple of years alone there has been half a billion dollars on the street that we could have gotten awarded for if we could show more regional integration.

Fred Esposito stated that the opportunity to leverage funding is better collectively, as well as getting industry funds.

Centers of Excellence was discussed. Certain regions would focus on certain training for a certain industry. Centers of excellence would be identified and they would get the highest priority for funds for training in that area.

Lamont Albertson explained that when the community colleges were lost and we became part of a larger University one thing that bothered him was the administrative structure at the University and Lamont wants it reflected that he is concerned about what structure will be mandated. Lamont asked if administration will just grow and more funds be used to support the state Department of Labor administration and less money at the regional training centers.

Fred Esposito said that Utah has seven regional vocational technical centers connected with one administration office that has minimal staff and just takes care of all the administration, record keeping, admissions, state certifications, accreditation, etc., but each center is operated and controlled locally. There is not a preconceived model of how this will look. A lot of models are being looked at and everyone is invited to be involved in the process and help define this. One level is just collaborating and sharing information about programs and needs. There might be a lot of levels to this. Lamont's point is well taken. We do not want to take our scarce resources and make them scarcer by skimming off the top to pay for bureaucracy.

Jerry Trainor explained that when he was at TVC, they all agreed that campuses needed to specialize in an area of expertise. The idea of Magnet Schools and Centers of Excellence is good, but we still need to be able to expose our local high school students to these careers, so we still need to have these programs at the local regional centers. Yes we need to identify Centers for Excellence to create depth, but we need feeder programs into those Centers of Excellence programs that train them for the next level.

Brynn Keith reported that Research & Analysis has been tasked with identifying what jobs will be created as a result of the gasline. Right now R&A is identifying the current gap which is Demand (employer needs) vs. Supply (students coming out of training programs). R&A is also finalizing the list of occupations that have significant gaps. R&A is laying out the foundational work now and then there will be some info that will be shared with the training providers.

The Training Plan focuses on basic skills and soft skills that employers are demanding, including: showing up for work, basic math & communication, and specific technical skills. There is a roll for everyone in this area. It is not just technical training, it is ABE.

Mike Shiffer discussed Work Keys and said that as we work out the strategies for deploying this in the state we will need assistance from the training centers on how to do that.

Fred Esposito summarized by saying this is a first effort; it is not going to stop here. Perhaps by the next budget cycle that starts late summer, early fall we can be better coordinated to present a unified budget and unified effort to Karen Rehfeld. Fred suggested having more sessions to meet and share information in the future. There is a strong role for the regional training centers in the AGIA Training Plan and there is a role for providing funding for those who participate and provide programs. There are a lot of incentives.

Tony Delia said ASRC is one of the largest employers in the state. We have a huge need for employees now. Tony has been directed by his board to do Alaska hire. There are a large number of drop outs in Tony's regions. ASRC has started some programs at the high school level called "Growing our Own". We bring our trainers in, we have internship programs, and the agreement is they pass drug test and complete their high school programs or GED. Now we are expanding to Sitka, AVTEC and anywhere our shareholders are and enticing them to get back into school. We hook them up with mentors, internships, and job shadowing. They finish high school or GED and then we try to get them into apprenticeship training programs. We hire quite a bit out of AVTEC. Some of our students have gone on to be welding inspectors and journeyman electricians. They had 72 interns this year, and 23 last year. Tony is going for 100 interns next year. We applied for STEP grant funding to expand the training beyond shareholders. We are not providing them a job, we are providing them a career. We have a 96% retention rate of our young people in these oil and gas jobs.

Fred said Tony has brought a lot to the table. Industry is saying get coordinated. It is hard to find out who is doing what & when. The public/private partnership is a great match.

Mel Brown noted that he could see the passion while Tony was talking and there needs to be passion involved. Young people need to see what they accomplish everyday. When they accomplish something worthwhile it gives them hope for the future. When you teach skills you see the results of your work each day.

Tom Nelson gave a presentation on Work Keys during lunch. Work Keys is a tool to provide assessment of career readiness. Information on Work Keys is available online.

Gerry Andrews presented on Apprenticeships. A registered apprenticeship means employment. Commissioner Bishop brought Gerry on to expand apprenticeship opportunities. Let's find an apprenticeship portable document for Alaska. We need a portable document for Alaskans to be competitive for pipeline jobs. This is not limited to construction; it could be applied to beauticians, health care, butches, bakers, etc. Apprenticeship is not training for training sake, we train only for jobs.

John Hakala reported that if AGIA happened tomorrow at least 1,800 apprentices would be needed for construction. We have NCCER in the schools. We have some regional apprenticeship programs. We are looking at expanding apprenticeships in health care and mining.

Fred Esposito summarized by presenting the following questions to the group:

- What is our shared vision for cooperation?
- How do we create a better connected and coordinated CTE system?
- How do you plan to participate in this coordination?
- What are the next steps and who really wants to work on this?

Fred Esposito stated that last year EDA funding was received to expand connected education. We did not expand until we connected with other agencies to be sure the training that we need to establish wasn't already provided. We have been visiting all the sites to determine site readiness, and what is the capacity to send and receive. Seven sites were identified: Ft Yukon, Bethel, Galena, Sitka, Bristol Bay, St. Mary's, and King Salmon. We used distance delivery in the meetings. It was determined that core academic skills are needed, as well as GED assistance, and entrepreneurship training. There are challenges with bandwidth. Connectivity needs to improve in rural Alaska. The eight organizations had received federal funding, and that's how they were chosen to be in this pool. This is one example of how we can all work together to improve our needs. We need to look for local opportunities for funding in each area, as well. The whole can be more powerful than each one working on their own.

The Sitka Education Consortium is not formal, but has worked for 14 years. Each of the entities contributing was named. \$14 million have been raised through this consortium. All the organizations share in the outcome. Their high school students could choose where they wanted to go. This is an informal but effective working relationship between everybody.

Todd Bergman reported that the Workforce Readiness committee with AWIB is charged to find out what services are provided and how to keep from having non-productive overlap in order to meet needs. Phone numbers and emails are available on the AWIB web site for this committee.

Jerry Trainor reported that Interior Aleutians programs identify projects and find people in the region to fill jobs in need. The focus is to go to the village to do the training there rather than pull people out of the village.

#### Key Points & Questions:

##### 1. What is the Shared Vision For Cooperation

- a. A one stop shop online where information is organized and we know what is available and what level of training is provided. ALEXsys or AKCIS could possibly do this. The Steering Committee suggested having it presented in a couple of different way. Each organization would be responsible for keeping info up-to-date. We need a database or clearinghouse of available trainers so people know who is available and if their curriculum & equipment is also available.
- b. Debi McClean emphasized having people travel and do training. Make the training as close to home as possible.
- c. Jerry Trainor stated that the University system is going to try and have their entire application process online. There are 200+ villages that have minimal or no connectivity though, so you have to be careful.
- d. Eldon Davidson stated that everyone is doing a little bit of everything. We should have a more coordinated effort. There should be a coordinated system to develop the career pathways.
- e. Karen Martinsen suggested it would be nice to have a website set up to continue the discussion. Get something up official and formal and fairly quick for whatever we are...a consortium. We need to be able to get together as a group and continue to communicate.
- f. Jeff Selvey stated that when students move onto additional training and drop out, we need to follow up with them and get them back into something. How do we recapture adult drop outs? Debi McLean suggested keeping steps small so people can easily get back in after they drop out.
- g. Fred Esposito stated that funding is the call to action. Our funding requests need to be coordinated, and in order to do that we have to talk.
- h. Lamont Albertson he wants to see what the Administrative structure is going to be before he signs on. If they really wanted to find out our Regional Training Center needs they would have gotten the directors together first to flush out our needs and then bring others in instead of already having an agenda to get us to agree with. Yuut can not sign onto this until they see what the Administrative costs will be.
- i. Eldon Davidson stated that the rural centers need to be stabilized with enough funding to stop the bleeding. UAA has a 60% native student drop out rate. Rural training centers can assist with that. They need more employees and we need to get together to provide more trained and skilled labor.
- j. Fred Esposito explained that there is an existing AWIB staff of four which is largely funded out of DOL (90%). It is an existing organization that is already funded that could at some level be charged with some of the administrative tasks so more overhead would not be created.

##### 2. Next Steps

- a. ACRC – AK Career Readiness Consortium. A leader is needed for the Consortium – someone to keep moving forward with objectives. Karen Martinsen suggested putting a position back at AWIB to get someone to organize and mobilize this group for funding strategies.
- b. Eldon Davidson stated he needs action. He really does not need another association to go to, does not need another meeting. What is needed to do to be ready in 7 years? It comes down to leadership from the state level.

- c. Mel Brown stated that if we have the fire power when we go to the Legislature we will be more effective. The presenter is key and they can really sell it. Fred Esposito said the intent is to have Commissioner level advocacy for our programs.
- d. Mel Brown wants to see a program that will reach everyone in the state that can get jobs on the gas pipeline or jobs back in their community. We need to go above and beyond protecting our turf.
- e. Evelyn James informed the group that getting a driver's license is next to impossible in rural Alaska. You need to provide access to DMV services. Eldon Davidson said they are buying a vehicle to use for driver's license and got this through industry partnerships.
- f. Lamont Albertson would like for the Regional Training Centers to get together and discuss their challenges before meeting with the larger group again.
- g. Karen Martinsen suggested bring program info and basic needs to the next meeting.

Most attendees had to leave to catch flights. Lamont Albertson, Fred Villa, Eldon Davidson, Fred Esposito and Deb Burdick-Hinton remained.

Fred Villa stated that this is really in alignment with what he has going on with the University system, state wide. They are working on performance based budgeting. Community campuses have a tough time with this. They are doing this as a collective group. From Fred Villa's point of view he needs to look at what programs are being delivered, what they are providing, is it being delivered in a shot gun approach, is it good for us right now, but also ask is this the most cost effective way to do this. I think you should not only bond together as a Regional Training Center but also bond with the University as well. Fred does not want to interfere with the group, but hopes at some point he can be there to let the group know what is going on with the University.

Fred Esposito feels the group agrees that at some point we need to get together regularly and talk about training, plans, curriculum, etc., so we are in touch with the bigger picture and have a smaller group that meets more regularly for collaborative management meetings.