



Volume 2, Issue 1  
April 2008

# Mercer County Workforce Investment Board

...Shaping Our Community's Workforce...

Dear Friends,

In today's economic climate, it's more important than ever that public and private entities in Mercer County come together to maintain the high quality workforce that already exists and help each other find ways to adapt and prosper. This spring's Workforce Investment Board Conference is designed to do that.

The County recently held its 3<sup>rd</sup> Economic Summit at Mercer County Community College, which highlighted our areas of strength and the obstacles we face in the year ahead. Once again, at the WIB Conference the private sector will sit side by side with local government representatives, both eager to keep Mercer County's economy strong and complex.

This conference is important because it forges relationships. Our Workforce Investment Board works year-round toward ensuring our economic vitality, and assists businesses of all sizes in Mercer County in obtaining top-quality services and resources. The WIB has a significant role in growing our local economy and helping businesses succeed through its ongoing development of a skilled workforce. Due in part to its dedication to this mission, small businesses and large corporations alike have thrived in Mercer County.

As County Executive, it is my hope that the WIB Conference will provide the information and inspiration that will help you grow your own business, get back on a professional career track, or identify a County program that can take you on a path to success.

Sincerely,  
Brian M. Hughes  
County Executive



Mercer County  
Executive  
Brian M. Hughes

## Partnering for Productivity...the WIB, One-Stop & You!

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Half-Day Conference sponsored by the Mercer County WIB, in partnership with the Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce and Mercer County Community College, will be held on Monday, April 28 from 8 a.m.—12 noon at The Conference Center at Mercer. The conference is designed to help employers learn how to use available resources to connect with potential employees. Participants will gain increased awareness of workforce development programs and services, and will make useful connections with individuals and agencies to strengthen partnerships between business and providers. A panel discussion will answer commonly asked questions about the One-Stop Career Center and the Workforce Investment Board, as well as information on partnering with the One-Stop Career Center and the future of the Mercer County workforce.

Speakers will include Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes and N.J Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development David J. Socolow.

Attendees are invited to participate in breakout sessions presented by local experts in the field, including Veterans and Returning Military Personnel, Youth, Customized Training, Transportation, and the Coalition on Affordable Housing (COAH).

## "Linked" to Success

Pamela Wargo came to the One-Stop Career Center in September 2007. She was recently laid off from a position as an assistant teacher and was worried about starting a new career. Pamela wanted to work in an office and needed to improve her typing and computer skills. She followed the self-led tutorials in the Workforce Learning Link and was quickly up to speed in Microsoft Outlook, Word and Excel. In November 2007, she was hired by Radiology Affiliates as a medical records clerk. She sent the following note to the One-Stop in December 2007: *Dear Luis, Dora and Anita, I love my new job! I would not be doing so well at it if not for the things I learned about maneuvering the computer at the Learning Center. Thank you for reminding me to believe in myself and to have the courage to start a new type of work at this later point in my life. God works in strange ways and during my short time with you, I was inspired by others who were trying to better themselves. Have a wonderful holiday and healthy and happy New Year. Many thanks, Pam Wargo*

## Spotlight on the WIB...

**Cheryl Dunn Badger**  
**Director of Technical Training and Development**  
**Dow Jones and Company**

*What do you bring to the WIB? Or, what has the WIB brought to you?*

At Dow Jones we believe that an employee's professional growth is directly tied to and responsible for the success of the company. We carefully plan development strategies to prepare our staff for changes in technology, culture, and the continuously changing job markets. I look forward to utilizing my expertise to help the WIB accomplish similar goals.

*With the growth in Princeton, especially along the Route 1 Corridor, how can the WIB best prepare the "future workforce?"*

I believe it is important to understand that workforce development is a "moving target." Years ago, companies trained employees and anticipated an individual's skills would suffice for years to come. This is no longer the case, as skills quickly *expire* and literally become extinct. It will be important for the WIB to stay on top of "what's hot," and what is needed in today's workplace. Additionally, a well-rounded individual is most likely to be selected for employment. This is the candidate who not only demonstrates job specific skills, but also has a good communication style, appears motivated, adaptable, and works well with a team. The WIB should spend considerable time building programs that address these qualities. I like to refer to these as "Foundational Traits."

***"If we fail to provide the tools and resources needed to improve productivity and performance we can very easily give up and lose our standing in the marketplace."***

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*Dow Jones recently received a Customized Training Grant from the NJ Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development. With the resources that Dow Jones has, why did you choose to go this route rather than with a private training company? How will you be utilizing this grant to enhance and retain your workforce?*

At Dow Jones, it is our vision to be the world's best provider of business and related content. To get there, we are committed to delivering excellent journalism, insight, data and technology. The company strives on operational excellence and the development of its employees. Like many organizations, financial resources are limited, however, the company remains committed to engaging its employees to be accountable for their own growth by providing the resources needed to do so. This grant will help us provide employees with ongoing training in production-based, business, and technical curriculum. If we fail to provide the tools and resources needed to improve productivity and performance we can very easily give up and lose our standing in the marketplace. To avoid such pitfalls enterprise training is fully integrated into our corporate strategy.

We have selected The New Jersey Institute of Technology to serve as our premier training provider for much of the training we plan to deliver. Their participation in the grant program was key, as we have worked with them for many years delivering successful professional educational programs.

## Hughes Taps Muoio to Lead New Office of Economic Development and Sustainability

Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes has named Freeholder Elizabeth Maher Muoio the County's new Director of Economic Development and Sustainability. Elected County Freeholder in 2000, Muoio began n her new role on March 1, 2008.

"I can think of no better candidate to lead the new Office of Economic Development and Sustainability, and it is with pride that I appoint Elizabeth Muoio," Hughes said. "This initiative has been a goal of mine since I took office, and I believe we can make Mercer County a governmental leader in finding smart energy solutions. Ms. Muoio possesses the leadership skills and critical thinking necessary to make this initiative a reality."

"Along with that, my administration plans to reach out to Mercer's business community and ask them to become partners in our fight for a sustainable and healthy environment," Hughes said.

As a freeholder, Muoio joined Hughes to champion for sustainability by calling for all new County construction projects to be performed in an environmentally conscious manner.

"I am looking forward to serving the people of Mercer County in this new capacity and am so pleased that the County Executive has created this office to help meet the environmental challenges facing us as a County," Muoio said. "In combining this new office with the Office of Economic Development, we dispel the long-held notion that expanding economic opportunity and protecting the environment must be mutually exclusive. Through partnerships with our business community, municipalities, and educational institutions, we can not only work to assist existing and new businesses in implementing sustainable business operations, but also take advantage of the growing global demand for sustainable industries."

Muoio takes over for former Director of Economic Opportunity Charles Hill, who resigned Jan. 4, 2008 to accept a position in the private sector.

## Hughes Names Velez New Director of One-Stop Career Center

County Executive Brian M. Hughes has appointed Virgen Velez the new director of the Mercer County One-Stop Career Center in Trenton.

"I am proud to announce Virgen Velez is the new director of Mercer County's One-Stop Career Center," said Hughes. "She is extremely knowledgeable about workforce development, and I'm confident the One-Stop Career Center will continue to provide the best service possible for our residents under her guidance."

Velez has spent all of her professional career in workforce development, and has been employed by Mercer County for t20 years. Prior to her employment with the County, Velez held various administrative positions for the City of Trenton in the Comprehensive Employment & Training Act (CETA) program and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs.

"I want to thank County Executive Hughes for giving me the opportunity to do what I love, which is helping people become gainfully employed and thereby improving their quality of life," said Velez. "I look forward to the challenges ahead in implementing the initiatives and priorities of the County Executive and the Governor, especially regarding prisoner re-entry and summer employment for youth."

Velez has been a Mercer County resident for the majority of her life, attended Trenton's public schools and graduated from Mercer County Community College and Rider University. Velez is also a founding member of the Mercer County Hispanic Association (MECHA) and is also active in the Garden State Employment & Training Association (GSETA), a statewide professional organization of workforce administrators. Velez currently resides in Hamilton Township and has two sons.



## One-Stop Career Center Celebrates 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary



The Mercer County One-Stop Career Center recently celebrated the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the consolidation of county and state offices at 26 Yard Avenue in Trenton. The weeklong celebration included the distribution of unity ribbons, a staff luncheon, a team scavenger hunt and interactive discussions between county and state partners.

The end of the weeklong festivities featured our office management on the hot seat while participating in "The One Stops Here," a game of questions related to workforce development and New Jersey trivia.

*Photo by Sid Levin, NJDOLWD*

Save the Dates!  
June 4th, 2008 & June 5th, 2008

26th Annual  
**GSETA**  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

BALLY'S PARK PLACE & CASINO ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY

The Garden State Employment and Training Association (GSETA) is a statewide professional organization. Their mission is to "promote leadership, knowledge and the advancement of New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System and its professionals".

The annual conference, scheduled for June 4-5, 2008 in Atlantic City, is geared towards improving workforce development strategies occurring across our nation. It draws participants from all levels including: direct service staff, managers, administrators, board members and others who are involved in workforce development. Past conference attendees included employers, adult educators, community and faith based organizations, county and local welfare agencies, vocational education professionals, various service providers, city and county governments, state officials, economic development agencies, labor organizations, elected officials, and community action agencies. The conference is open to all workforce professionals.

For conference information visit [www.GSETA.org](http://www.GSETA.org) or call (201) 413-7580 ext. 222.

**The County of Mercer**  
**www.mercercounty.org**  
**McDade Administration Building**  
**640 South Broad Street**  
**Trenton, NJ 08650**

**Brian M. Hughes**  
**County Executive**

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**  
 Lucylle R.S. Walter  
 Anthony P. Carabelli  
 Dan Benson ◇ Ann M. Cannon  
 Pasquale "Pat" Colavita  
 Keith V. Hamilton ◇ Tony Mack

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& Sustainability**

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**Workforce Investment Board**

Beverly Mills, Deputy Director  
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**WIB Newsletter Editor**

Kassia Switlik Bukosky

**Events Sponsored by the Mercer County WIB & One-Stop Career Center**

**Youth Job Fair**  
**Wednesday, June 11, 2008**

*Youth, ages 16-21, **MUST** attend an employability seminar prior to the job fair.*

*For more information, please contact Bob DePula, email: [bdepula@mercercounty.org](mailto:bdepula@mercercounty.org), phone: 609-989-6795*

**WIB MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mercer County Workforce Investment Board is an inclusive partnership of public and private employers and workforce related service agencies that contribute to the economic health of the community by addressing the employment and advancement needs of employers, job seekers and employees.

**Mercer County Workforce Investment Board Members**

Chair—John Simone, John Simone Realty, Inc.  
 Mary Gay Abbott-Young, Rescue Mission of Trenton  
 Renee Altman, Personal Computer Training  
 Cheryl Dunn Badger, Dow Jones and Company  
 Frank Cirillo, Mercer County Board of Social Services  
 Karen Clark, Horizon NJ Health  
 J. Scott Clemmensen, Capital Health System  
 Melvin Crawford, NJDOL-DVRS  
 Pat Day, Cenlar FSB  
 Don Dileo, AFL-CIO  
 Al Edenzon, Firmenich, Inc.  
 Larry Finkelstein, Transition Management Associates  
 Gary Gray, Bromley Center  
 Joseph Jingoli, Jingoli Construction  
 Joan Kane Josephson, Parker McCay  
 Edward Kurocka, OnSight Advisors  
 Michele Recla Liebtag, CWA  
 Carolyn Lewis-Spruill, City of Trenton  
 Rodney Lofton, Trenton Public Schools  
 Anna Lustenberg, Verizon

Connie Mercer, HomeFront  
 Eugene Marsh, Construction Project Management Services, Inc.  
 Nina Melker, The Bank of Princeton  
 Dennis Micai, Trenton Area Soup Kitchen  
 Beverly Mills, Mercer County Workforce Investment Board  
 John Mizin, Mercer County One-Stop Career Center  
 Elizabeth Maher Muoio, Office of Economic Development & Sustainability  
 Jim Purcell, Medina Consultants, PC  
 John Raines, Mercer County One-Stop Career Center  
 Beverly Richardson, MCCC-Kerney Campus  
 Katie Schondel, Trenton Marriott at Lafayette Yard  
 Kimberly Schneider, Mercer County Technical School  
 Nick Scozzari, Scozzari Builders, Inc.  
 Keith Secrest (Kinetics Industries, Inc.)  
 Michele Siekerka, Esq., Mercer County Chamber  
 Anthony Stewart, Hewlett Packard  
 Virgen Velez, Mercer County One-Stop Career Center  
 Zuline Gray Wilkinson, Union Industrial Home for Children  
 Kevin Zepp, Liberty Healthcare Services