

Vision: To insure a job ready workforce is available locally in the short and long term and to graduate our youth, unemployed, and underemployed into existing and anticipated jobs.

Mission: To build a system to support career pathways for Vermonters to take advantage of existing and anticipated employment opportunities in industry sectors with livable wage jobs.

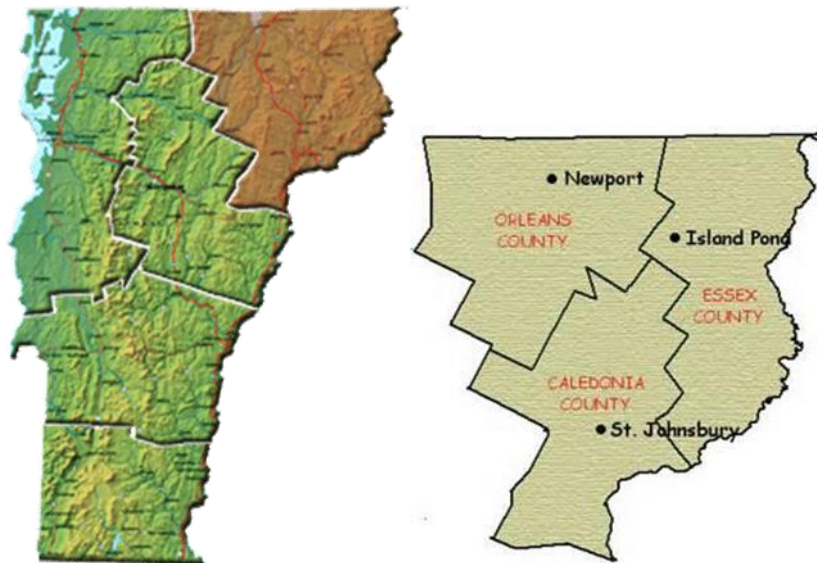
Report to Senate Economic Development Committee

January 29, 2014

Overview

Vermont's Northeast Kingdom (NEK) is the 2,000 square mile northeast corner of the state that borders Canada and New Hampshire. While the region is the most pristine and arguably the most beautiful region of Vermont, it is also:

- the most economically challenged,
- demonstrating the lowest educational attainment rates with 21% of the adult population has a four-year degree compared with the 31% statewide average,
- the highest unemployment rates in the state,
- suffering the loss of over 1,200 jobs through plant closures since 2000,
- ranking the highest poverty rates in Vermont.



Formation of the NEK Workforce Team

The Vermont State Colleges, Vermont Department of Labor, and the Vermont Agency of Commerce partnered to respond to current and emerging workforce needs of expected Northeast Kingdom economic development projects in December 2012. The goal of the team is to identify existing training and education to support workforce needs and identify skill and training/education gaps of potential employees across the industry sectors, (primarily construction, hospitality, and biotechnology). Every effort is made to engage current training and education providers and not recreate the wheel or duplicate existing programs in order to be responsive to new needs for education and training and better align existing resources within the VSC system, tech centers, high schools, colleges and a host of

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other organizations. This process aims to develop a shared vision of connecting the workforce skills with economic expansion:

- The NEK Workforce Team's serves to ensure that all businesses in the NEK can find the right people, with the right skills, at the right time,
- Focus on preparing Vermonters to fill emerging and existing positions,
- Raise the aspiration levels of students and unemployed and underemployed adults,
- Maintain a positive outlook on the development projects and subsequent employment possibilities for the region,
- Work collaboratively with all interested partners to support an effective system for workforce development,
- Serve as a clearinghouse for information and opportunities related to workforce development.

Accomplishments to date

- Developed training inventory and skills gap analysis report,
- Workforce data collected through primary and secondary sources,
- Hospitality Sector report released June 2013 and recommendations made to industry players,
- Innovation Engineering contracted to support project,
- Governor Career Readiness Certificate (GCRC) identified to support career preparedness tied to specific employers and sectors,
- GCRC linked to NEK Manufacturing Training Program training, Advanced Manufacturing training inventory completed.

Current Focus

- Engaged with NEK employers and established face to face contact schedule for 2014 (in process),
- Convening top 35 employers every financial quarter to insure open communication and continuously understand their needs,
- With the announcement of Flight Design's anticipated 110 manufacturing job over a 36 month period, we are working to identify positions and skills needed so to match to existing educators or propose additional training programs,
- Kingdom Career Connect targeting all NEK 8th graders scheduled for April 10, 2014 to introduce students to career options in well- paying sectors in the region and sign up for appropriate courses in high school,
- NEK "Workforce Hero" column in the Caledonian Record launches in Mid-February. Column will profile area resident who have utilized resources in the NEK, including NEKLS, North Country Career Center and other training/education providers to further their careers.

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