

What they say

“We have often heard that the three ingredients to business success is location, location, location. Washington State has the environment to make it a great business address. Yet, going forward, our state’s success in economic development will be most influenced by a different set of ingredients: talent, talent, talent Skill panels are the best workforce initiative that I have seen from the State. They are bringing the major collaborators to the table on industry’s behalf, [and] preparing residents for higher paying jobs in growth clusters.”

Rich Hadley, Spokane Regional Chamber of Commerce, President and Chief Executive Officer, letter of support to the Washington State Office of Financial Management, February 2005

“This [Skill Panels] is too big an issue for us to tackle on our own This will work because there is a real synergy to working together.”

Dan Absher, Absher Construction Owner, “Paving the way for new workers,” Tacoma News Tribune, February 2005

“I applaud you and your organization’s vision in facilitating these innovative partnerships between labor, industry and the education community. The healthcare apprenticeship program and the Pierce County Construction Partnership are model programs that we can only hope other sectors of the workforce and other regions will emulate.”

The Honorable Adam Smith, United States Congress, 9th District, Washington, in a letter to Colin Conant, Executive Director of the Tacoma-Pierce County Workforce Development Council, December 2004

“Business and schools existed in ivory towers. Business would say, ‘educations don’t meet my needs’ and educators would say, ‘business won’t help us.’ It wasn’t until the efforts of the Workforce Board and the local Workforce Development Councils brought parties together to sort through their differences and find ways to address both sides of system constraint (real-time need, institutional ability to respond quickly) that business needs began to be met.”

Jody Smith, MultiCare Health Systems, Human Resources Director, KUOW Radio Interview, August 2004

“Another new tool is the 32 “Skill Panels” developed over the last three years. Covering everything from agriculture and food processing to manufacturing, energy, and even game software development, these industry-led panels bring together employers and educators. They identify the skills required for jobs and develop the training programs to ensure that employees can master those skills.”

Don Brunell, Association of Washington Business President, “As Washington’s Economy Recovers Employers Can’t Find Qualified Workers,” AWB website editorial, 2004



“Carpentry is cool,” Alauna Stinson said. You probably never thought you would hear a 15 year old girl say that She was one of 50 eighth grade girls from three Spokane middle schools attending a half-day seminar on careers in construction at the Apprenticeship and Journeyman Training Center in Spokane Valley on Thursday . . . Spokane Public Schools, CCS, and the Construction Skills Panel lured the girls with the promise of “pizza, pop and power tools.”

Spokesman Review, “Middle school girls learn about construction careers,” June 2005

Shoreline Community College, near Seattle, received one of the first skill panel grants. A Center of Manufacturing Excellence was one result. Mark Hankins is the college’s director of business service. Vocational training at the college used to mean training machinists for Boeing Co., he says “The employers did not want workers interested only in repetitive work—jobs likely to be exported—but those who can gather and interpret information, understand technology, and work as a member of a team. The Center now awards a Certificate in Basic Manufacturing, but Hankins says that’s just a start. We’re completely revising our curriculum.”

Spokesman Review, “Building workers’ skills key to labor market,” February 2005