

BUILDING OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
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Congratulations to 2014 WIB Award Winners

VENTURA, CALIF.—Individuals and organizations working behind the scenes to support workforce training and career advancement are the recipients of this year's 2014 WIB Awards. The winners were announced at the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) of Ventura County's annual meeting, June 12 at the Ventura County Office of Education. The awards are presented each year to individuals, employers and organizations in the community who have played an important role in building a strong workforce in Ventura County.

"The WIB Awards pay tribute to business and community leaders who are making a real difference for workforce development in Ventura County. They are role models for results-oriented approaches to growing a skilled workforce that will keep our local businesses competitive," says Cheryl Moore, executive director of the WIB. "Their work is critical for the continued economic health of the Ventura County community."

WIB Youth Opportunity Award

The Santa Clara Valley Wellness Foundation in Santa Paula was one of two WIB Youth Opportunity Award winners. The award is presented to an organization for providing internships or employment opportunities that help to grow and strengthen Ventura County's future workforce. The Wellness Foundation offers a six and a half-week paid summer health internship program. The program is for six students in 11th and 12th grades from the Fillmore High School and Santa Paula High School district areas. In partnership with the Ventura County Health Care Agency, program participants learn about the various Santa Paula Hospital departments and clinic system, while learning workplace skills.

OmniUpdate, Inc. a Camarillo company that provides higher education customers with web and mobile technologies is the second recipient of the WIB Youth Opportunity Award. The company hires candidates from Ventura County colleges and universities. Available positions cover a range of jobs across multiple departments, from software development and IT to sales and marketing. All new hires go through extensive product training their first week and are encouraged to continue with professional development and online learning opportunities.

Internships at OmniUpdate, Inc. are paid, three-month positions. Since 2012, the company has employed 19 interns and six of those have transitioned to full-time employment. "It makes good business sense for us to foster people from within," says Gabrielle Walker, OmniUpdate human resources manager. "It's a philosophy that has worked very well for us. We train them in our work style and culture. From there, we can promote a home-grown person. Individuals get the opportunity to work for a cutting-edge company and add the experience to their resumes, no matter where they go or what they do."

WIB Collaborative Action Award

The Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise is one of three WIB Collaborative Action Award honorees. The award is for partnerships that help meet employer needs, improve the relevance and capacity of education and workforce training and/or support business expansion in Ventura County. The Rotary Club is recognized for using a \$5,000 grant to underwrite vocational scholarships that will help adults in transition to acquire skills for living-wage jobs in manufacturing—middle skill jobs that do not necessarily require a college degree.

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The Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce, a second award winner, initiated a partnership with the business community to enhance employment and educational opportunities for students. Members conducted a tour of the Simi Valley Adult School and Career Institute for 14 Simi Valley High School students to learn more about options after high school other than college. Students then toured two Simi Valley manufacturers, Computer Metal Products and Vanderhorst Brothers. Students also heard from representatives from Simi Valley Ford about the values and skills necessary to succeed in manufacturing or the auto service environment.

The third recipient of the WIB Collaborative Action Award is the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, Ventura County Chapter (SHPE-VCC). The organization is comprised of professional engineers who serve as role models in the Hispanic community. It offers a series of activities and programs including scholarships, career preparation workshops, STEM events (Noche de Ciencias or Night of Science, ExciteEngineer) and leadership conferences.

"SHPE VCC is committed and dedicated to helping increase the number of Hispanic children who pursue STEM-related fields of study," says Lizbeth Figueroa, SHPE-VCC president. "We provide programs free of cost that engage K-12 and college students in hands-on activities. Every year we believe we make an impact, and that in itself is the best reward any individual volunteer can receive."

WIB Champion for Prosperity Award

The WIB Champion for Prosperity Award is presented to an individual or organization for supporting workforce development in Ventura County through job creation, job retention and business expansion or attraction. Lilly Rudolph, a senior planner with the City of Ventura, is recognized for spearheading the city's economic development strategy effort. The strategy that she helped to create was built on a participative planning process and focuses on job development, business retention, attraction and expansion.

VSolvit, a Newbury Park technology services company also is a WIB Champion for Prosperity Award honoree. The company embraced an on-the-job training program to open its doors to three new employees and to upgrade the skills and offer advancement of three current employees. VSolvit has encouraged other businesses to engage in workforce development and has been an advocate for accessing no-cost and low-cost business resources available in Ventura County.

Members of the WIB include leaders from business, economic development, education, labor, government and community-based organizations.

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About the Workforce Investment Board

The Workforce Investment Board administers federal funds that help to support America's Job Center of California (AJCC) locations and other free job seeker, youth, and employer programs and services in Ventura County. For more information, visit www.wib.ventura.org.