



## **Mike Soules: Working together to make ready for local jobs**

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Job seekers in Ventura County now have access to another practical skills-training opportunity that offers a real advantage to starting or transitioning a career.

A new Biomedical Device Manufacturing Certificate of Achievement at Moorpark College and Ventura College was launched this fall — the first two-campus certificate program in the Ventura County Community College District and in the California community college system.

A tangible example of how working together can achieve results, the two-campus certificate idea began in 2012, the outgrowth of a lively discussion between business leaders and educators at a meeting of the Manufacturing Committee of the Workforce Investment Board of Ventura County (WIB). Thanks to their vision and collaboration, a certificate program to address a business need for talent has become a reality.

Public meetings of WIB industry sector committees (Clean/Green, Healthcare and Manufacturing) provide a neutral forum for results-driven discussions among representatives from business, education, labor, economic development, government and community organizations. Industry-specific work readiness skills have been identified for entry-level jobs in clean/green infrastructure, hospitality, manufacturing and health care.

The WIB continues to work on a long-term project with California State University, Channel Islands to facilitate development of a new clinical laboratory scientist field experience program through certification of local hospitals. Other WIB committee activities include taking a look at the development of interdisciplinary skills required for such specialties as water/wastewater management and mechatronics.

Ventura County recently received more good news with the announcement of two collaborative California Career Pathways Trust Grant awards, bringing a total of \$19.2 million in funds to benefit local students.

The projects will be supported at WIB sector committee meetings through facilitated discussions between educators and employers on curriculum and program development.

Opening the door to more opportunities for Ventura County, the WIB is a partner in the new Advanced Manufacturing Partnership, or AMP, for Southern California, coordinating the participation of local private and public entities in AMP SoCal activities through the WIB Manufacturing Committee.

AMP SoCal recently received a federal designation that positions the region (Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego and Ventura counties) for preferential consideration in competing for approximately \$1.3 billion in aerospace manufacturing and defense funds. One AMP SoCal-supported proposal already has received funding and other applications are in progress.

And, thanks to the collaboration and information sharing among the city and county representatives on the EDC-VC Economic Development Roundtable, the WIB has been able to develop and maintain a shared platform for business outreach and support: Ventura County Grows Business. Visitors to the website, ([www.venturacountygrowsbusiness.com/](http://www.venturacountygrowsbusiness.com/)) have quick and easy access to helpful business contacts and resources throughout the region.

Collaboration can be challenging, time-consuming and messy. However, with shared commitment, vision, hard work and patience, the outcomes are well worth the effort.

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