

Opportunities in the Glades Communities Growing

Faster Than Sugar Cane!

At the most recent meeting of CareerSource Palm Beach County's board of directors, Assistant Vice President of Business Services Charles Duval presented an update on the agency's activities in the Glades communities.

New opportunities for residents are growing faster than sugar cane! During the past program year, staff in the CareerSource Center in Belle Glade assisted in placing more than 4,000 Glades residents in jobs.

"CareerSource works in partnership with area business and community leaders, educational partners, and other key stakeholders in combined efforts to increase employment and economic opportunity in the Glades communities," Charles told board members.

Recent efforts include a Glades Job Fair, outreach to migrant and seasonal farmworkers, new training classes taking place in the CareerSource Center, and the Everglades Restoration Agricultural Community Employment Training program. Other community involvement activities include participating on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies committee, Farmworker Career Development Program Advisory board, Glades PATCH (Planned Approach to Community Health) board and the Leadership Palm Beach County Recruitment committee.

Charles, along with school district officials attending the meeting, also discussed ways we are moving forward together to provide apprenticeship training. These include the establishment of a construction academy (most recently with 85 percent of students obtaining credentials) as well as a mechatronics academy - the only such program in the county that offers training in robotics and advanced manufacturing.

Nearly 70 individuals graduated from the Adult Pre-Apprentice program last year. West Tech Principal Dr. Charlene Ford said that 235 students are participating in adult school at the West Tech Center and that a medical training program is being added.

Job training to help residents acquire new job skills or upgraded job skills is an important component to improving lives. CareerSource staff also engages with employers to provide recruiting, hiring, training and related services to help them connect with local talent.

During the past 5 program years, CareerSource has provided \$935,000 in training funds to local employers and residents. While the population in the Glades communities is less than 3% of the county at large, about 20% of CareerSource's budget, including 12% of training funds, goes to serving this area.

Outreach to actual and potential projects is another important collaborative effort, Charles explained. A direct result of this has been the addition of 3 new businesses in the area and a fourth that is expanding.

The CareerSource West Center, located at 1085 S. Main Street in Belle Glade, offers classes and facilities for job search, career development and consulting, and grants for job skills training. Schedules of workshops and hiring events are posted at www.careersourcepbc.com or call 561-829-2040.