CLOSING THE GAP AND BUILDING TOMORROW’S WORKFORCE
WHO WE ARE

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WHY SKILLED TRADES?

Retiring Workforce

45 years + = 53% of the skilled trade workforce

5:1-Retirement vs replacement
WHY SKILLED TRADES?

Arkansas

70,000 unfilled trades jobs, 82% of manufacturers report difficulties filling vacancies

Skilled labor market makes up a majority of the state’s overall workforce.
The Skills Gap in Arkansas

More than 82% of manufacturers report a moderate or serious shortage in skilled production workers.

Arkansas Skilled Trade Workers Are Aging Fast

The Gap is Widening

- Under 45 (33%)
- 45 and older (49%)
- 55 to 64 (18%)

Source: Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce
WHY SKILLED TRADES?

Nationwide

7 million unfilled jobs, the majority of which don’t require a four-year degree.

By 2025, 2 million unfilled skilled trades jobs if nothing changes.
"America is lending money it doesn't have to kids who can’t pay it back to train them for jobs that no longer exist. That’s nuts."

- Mike Rowe
WHY THE GAP?

- High school trades exposure
- Recession
- Lack of knowledge, interest, preparation
- Stigma associated with trades professions—Pop culture and the “corner office job”
- Family businesses-generational losses
IS THE GAP CLOSING?

- Secondary education tuition
- Employer strategies
- Discussions in the home
- Post-graduate employment statistics
- Satisfaction and relevance
- Purpose and growth
- Greater support/exposure
- Incentives, pay and benefits

Total student loan debt in the U.S. has reached $1.5 TRILLION
DAY 1—JUNIOR HIGH (8TH-9TH GRADES)

Career planning/pathways

1235 students, 4 counties, 50 vendors, 16 career clusters represented
DAY 2—HIGH SCHOOL (10TH-12TH GRADES)

Internships, apprenticeships, and job opportunities beyond high school.

1275 students, 3 counties, 56 vendors, 19 career clusters represented
WHAT WE DID WELL

• REMAIN PASSIONATE ABOUT THE CAUSE-DON'T LET YOURSELF LOSE STEAM.
• COMMUNICATE EARLY AND OFTEN, AND THEN DO IT SOME MORE.
• START PLANNING EARLY-JULY 2018 INITIAL PLANNING MEETING
• ENGAGE COMMUNITY LEADERS, MEDIA, CIVIC GROUPS, AND ANYONE ELSE THAT WILL LISTEN.
LESSONS LEARNED

• E-MAIL DOESN’T WORK. VISIT PEOPLE IN PERSON. PICK UP THE PHONE.
• GET ON SCHOOL CALENDARS EARLY (SUMMER BEFORE).
• TALK TO ADMINISTRATORS-FIND OUT WHAT THEIR GOALS/NEEDS ARE.
• GET INTO THE SCHOOLS IN THE MONTH LEADING UP TO THE EXPO.
• FIND INDUSTRY PARTNERS THAT ARE WILLING TO BE ON YOUR PLANNING COMMITTEE.
• ASK FOR HELP! PEOPLE REALLY DO LIKE TO SAY YES!
• FIND LEADERSHIP/FACILITATION STRENGTHS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS.
WHAT'S NEXT?

- MARCH 10-11, 2020—3RD ANNUAL RIVER VALLEY SKILLED TRADE EXPO
- SUSTAINABILITY PLAN
- DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION/501C STATUS
- SCHOLARSHIPS
- CONTINUE TO GROW BUT NOT OUTGROW-REMAIN DELIBERATE AND FOCUSED
- ELEMENTARY OUTREACH
- LOCAL INDUSTRY AND ACADEMIC CONSORTIUM