

Workforce Boards *In Action*

The NAWB Publication for Business Leaders in Workforce Development

A publication of the National Association of Workforce Boards

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Local WIBs Make a Difference at Home

WIBs, Workers and Washington: Saving Agriculture

Located east of the mountains in Washington State, is one of America's great "bread baskets." Found along the wide Columbia River Valley, are 25,000 square miles of abundant fields and valleys where orchards are filled with apples, pears and cherries. The gentle climate also supports potatoes and a variety of vegetables that are harvested and shipped across the country and globally. Washington's growers, farmers and processors have long been world leaders in agricultural productivity, but now their world is becoming more hostile—as they face the same problems plaguing all U.S. business. Increased energy costs and environmental issues force them to raise prices—while off-shore prices seem always to be less. China is growing apples—even exporting them to the U.S. for processing!

At the core of all the challenges was the skill level of their workforce. To be competitive, growers and processors had to turn to effective technologies that could do things faster and cheaper, driving productivity up and prices down. The snag, as revealed in many industries, is the scarcity of workers with the skills to operate the technology. The existing workforce—some of it transitory—lacked the technical skills and the learning/language skills required.

Without skilled workers, business owners could not take advantage of the savings found in technology—and could not remain competitive.

The Tri-County Workforce Development Council (Yakima) and Director Patrick Baldoz, working with the growers and processors, cre-

To date they have trained more than 1,000 workers in both basic and technical skills



Tri-County Workforce Center

ated an effective, long-lasting strategy that has helped keep eastern Washington's agricultural/food industry competitive. With U.S. Department of Labor and state grants, the Board seized the opportunity to build a vast collaborative, eventually called the Eastern Washington Ag/Food Processing Partnership. The Tri-County Council was joined by the Eastern Washington Workforce Development Council, the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council, and the Northcentral Workforce Development Council—effectively representing the workforce system in the eastern half of the state.

The four WIBs were joined by representatives from organized labor, education, state agencies and, of course, the affected businesses.

The Partnership, working with key education organizations, created a multi-faceted, complex training system designed to reach workers on site and on flexible schedules that worked for business. To date they have trained more than 1,000 workers in both basic and technical skills. Careful monitoring has documented the fact that the average wages of the trained workers has increased every quarter—and, impressively, 97% of these workers are still on the job! The key has been the coordination: among the WIBs; between the workforce system and the businesses; and between the businesses and the educators.

For more information: Tri-County Workforce Development Council, 120 South 3rd Street, Suite 200-A, Yakima, WA 98901; Ph. 509-574-1950. WIB Chair: Cheryl Dale, Dowty Aerospace, Yakima. Tri-County Director: Patrick Baldoz

Small powerful WIB leads central Indiana into future

Smaller WIBs, serving rural areas, face challenges every bit as daunting as those faced in bigger cities. With fewer resources and smaller staffs they are required to knit together leaders and organizations from

Full Speed Ahead



Stephanie J. Powers
CEO, NAWB

Life is really hectic here at the NAWB offices. Most of you will assume that's because of the approaching Forum and you would be partially correct. Forum is a national scale event and one of our most popular member features, but there's more to NAWB than Forum.

Over the past several months we've released many products designed to help WIBs. Our compensation study and economic development course have been very well-received. We have new publications set to be released focusing on sector partnerships and WIB success models.

Our own *Workforce Boards in Action* is growing in scope and regularity. We are getting success stories from WIBs at a much larger volume than ever before and are adding pages and editions to get these stories out. I would encourage all of you to share your successes. These stories are valuable for many reasons.

Of course, Forum is still our signature event. This year's Forum promises to be bigger and better than ever. With over 200 workshop submissions, the quality of programming is very high. And, just in case you have not noticed, **former speaker House Newt Gingrich and former Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich** will be discussing the Global Economy and the American Workforce at Forum's Opening session. Full Speed Ahead. See you in March!


Stephanie J. Powers, CEO

many small communities to fashion solutions for big regional workforce problems. This is the case in north central Indiana where Workforce Development Strategies, Inc. (WDSI) is the Workforce Investment Board office serving six counties (Cass, Fulton, Howard, Miami, Tipton and Wabash). The area is characterized as rural with a population of about 235,000 in a number of small communities—the largest being Kokomo and Logansport.

While manufacturing has diminished some in recent years, it still comprises 38% of the local labor force in this WIB area. And, while there are a variety of types of manufacturing, the bulk of companies serve the automotive industry. Among the larger companies are a Daimler Chrysler transmission plant and Delphi Automotive Systems which manufactures automotive electronics components.

This forward-thinking WIB, led by Chair David Wihebrink and President/CEO Vicki Byrd, is seeking answers to the critical workforce realities facing the region: the loss of skilled employees through retirement and few available skilled replacement workers. These problems are further compounded as the WIB helps local plants incorporate advanced manufacturing processes that require even more highly skilled, “knowledge-based” workers. The problem is straightforward: will existing and future businesses and industries have a large enough pool of capable and skilled workers to remain economically competitive?

Wihebrink, Byrd and the Board are using both collaboration and information to tackle this growing problem. Collaboratively, the WIB has gathered all the major local economic development organizations, and together, they forged the federally designated North Central

Regional Economic Development District. Staffed by the WIB, this group has the leverage to coordinate regional programs across communities.

Working directly with manufacturers, they have gathered and produced meaningful information that identifies employer needs and employee skill levels. By interviewing 75 employers they have identified the top 50 critical occupations for the region. Taking this data, the WIB created curriculum guides for schools and used them to talk to school counselors and teachers about good manufacturing jobs for graduates and the skills needed for a strong, central Indiana economic future: good jobs and good wages.

This WIB symbolizes the success that can be achieved through partnerships and the leveraging of resources: bringing community, business and educational leaders into a powerful mix of information and programs that speak to kids about good jobs and bright futures.

For more information: Workforce Development Strategies, Inc., 1200 Kitty Hawk, Suite 208, Peru, IN 46970; Ph. 765-689-9950; www.wdsi.org. WIB Chair: David Wihebrink, Logansport Savings Bank. Vicki Byrd, President/CEO (Vbyrd@wdsi.org).

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NAWB Seeks Stronger Collaboration Between MSF Grantees and Local Boards

NAWB is working in partnership with the Department of Labor to expand and strengthen collaboration and partnerships between Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSF) grantees, and local Workforce Boards. This effort was designed to explore ways in which MSF grantees and local Workforce Boards can work more closely in addressing the needs of the nation's more than 2.5 million farmworkers.

NAWB'S Role in the New Initiative

Over the next year, NAWB will facilitate an ongoing dialogue between the National Farmworker Jobs Program's 167 grantees, key stakeholders, and the corresponding workforce boards. Specifically, NAWB will host three (3) regional dialogues between MSF grantees and WIBs in farmworker communities. These meetings, which will include 167 grantees and WIBs as well as employers and workers, businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders, will generate information that can be used to create an integrated strategic planning model. This model will be expanded into a pilot project during the second year of the grant and tested in at least two areas. These test sites will be used to determine how MSF grantees and WIBs can best engage in joint planning. The test sites will also provide an array of opportunities for WIBs to learn more from the expertise of the MSF grantees. In addition to planning, framing, and implementing these dialogues, NAWB will also complete other duties and responsibilities. Specifically, NAWB will: create closer linkages between MSF grantees, Workforce Investment Boards and other organizations that serve as advo-

cates for migrant and seasonal farmworkers; Work with the MSF grantees and the local Workforce Boards in updating and extending their assessment of the needs of farmworkers; Provide new opportunities for MSF grantees and WIBs to enter into dialogue with other key stakeholders; Support both MSF grantees and WIBs in linking migrant and seasonal farmworkers to local, regional, and national organizations that provide complementary services; Test collaborative efforts through a joint strategic planning effort; and Provide other support services.



Each of the above activities will be supported through continual research and analysis. For example, NAWB will compile a promising practices manual that identifies successful MSF grantee and WIB partnerships. NAWB will also engage in activities that are designed to discover ways for Workforce Boards and MSF grantees to collaborate. This joint planning effort is an opportunity for Workforce Boards to provide an array of opportunities for farmworkers within their one-stops, and for them to learn from the expertise of the farmworker program.

The Kick-Off Meeting

On Thursday, October 16, 2003, NAWB held the kick-off meeting for this initiative. Attended by Stephanie J. Powers, NAWB CEO; David Strauss, Director of Association of

Farmworker Opportunity Programs; John Beverly, Administrator, USDOL Office of National Programs, Alina Walker, Chief, USDOL Division of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs; Gloria Salas-Kos, Project Officer, USDOL Division of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs; and Diane Swift, State Director of the Indiana 167 program, and representing the Indiana State Workforce Board, this meeting initialized the MSF/WIB Dialogues Project by identifying key stakeholder groups and audiences for the effort.

The participants also outlined the elements of a communications profile for each identified stakeholder group. A workplan for the three dialogues has been completed. During the kick-off meeting, Ms. Powers, NAWB's Chief Executive Officer, reiterated the critical importance of the inclusion of all key stakeholders in the dialogues and the research component of the project so that maximal success can be achieved.

Additional Information

Additional information on this project including dates, times, and places for the dialogues will be posted on the NAWB website @ www.nawb.org. NAWB also encourages its members to submit their ideas and perspectives regarding how National Farm Worker Jobs Program grantees and WIBs can strengthen services to migrant and seasonal workers by e-mailing the program manager, Pat Carroll, at carrollp@nawb.org, or calling her at 202-775-0960, x 109.

Virginia, MN: LTV's workforce is back at work

by Bob Kelleher, Minnesota Public Radio
LTV Steel closed its Hoyt Lakes taconite mine and pellet plant three years ago, and 1,400 employees lost their jobs. Iron Rangers feared a new exodus that might turn their small communities into ghost towns. But that hasn't happened. A new report finds most of the workers are still in northeast Minnesota, and most have jobs.

"Most people expected when LTV shut down that there would be a mass exodus from the area. Schools would shut down. All the houses would be for sale," says Ufford. "Amazingly, 88 percent of folks who found employment are still up here in northeast Minnesota."



Workforce Center supervisor Michelle Ufford says about 800 displaced workers are again working, and most of them have jobs on the Iron Range.

That's not to say they have comparable jobs. Iron mining jobs have some of the best wages and benefits on the Range. Ufford says the average wage for replacement jobs is lower, but still isn't bad.

"The average wage of people, total, in all wage ranges and in all groups, is about \$15.27 per hour," Ufford says. "It's a nice average wage. I mean truthfully, considering a lot of people did take less."

For some, re-employment took a long time. Most of the miners were older, in their 40s, 50s, or 60s. Few

were willing to leave the Iron Range.

"People were willing to take far lower wages to stay in the area," Ufford says. "As time marched on, the percentage of people that accepted jobs, at say eleven bucks an hour or less, increased a lot. They were unable to find anything higher. They wanted to stay, so they took whatever they could get."

No single industry absorbed the workers. Seventeen percent were able to get jobs with other iron mines. At least 30 are known to be self-employed in small businesses like consulting.

When LTV Corp. dissolved, its retirees lost benefits like lifelong access to health insurance. Ufford thinks some workers have taken jobs just for the benefits.

"I think that's a major deciding factor when people are looking for work. A lot of the people that are taking those lower wage jobs take them because they get benefits," Ufford says. "I wish that we could have some harder core numbers on that, but that's not something that we track."

Workforce Center officials credit an aggressive retraining and re-employment effort by government and private organizations. On average, those who completed retraining make more than those who didn't.

But most of the credit goes to the workers themselves, according to career counselor Bill Skradski.

"The success of a program, or the success of a particular project like this is — we can all sit back and pat ourselves on the back for the services that we provide," says Skradski. "But, the individuals themselves are the instruments, you know. They went out and did what they needed to do."

Matt Crep is a former industrial

electrician at LTV who is now working temporary jobs in the Twin Cities. When he's between jobs and comes home to the Iron Range, Crep is finding fewer former workers with spare time.



Career counselor Bill Skradski says most of the credit for the good news from Hoyt Lakes goes to the workers themselves.

"I'm from Hoyt Lakes, and when I go around, now when I'm off, trying to find somebody to have coffee with, you can't find anybody," says Crep. "So, it looks like, at least in our little town, most everybody that wants to work, seems to be working."

The Workforce Center's Michelle Ufford says LTV provided a good study for what works and what doesn't. Some of the Hoyt Lakes strategies have already been used again in Grand Rapids, where the local paper plant downsized.

"We don't often get such a large sample size of dislocated workers that we can look at, in hindsight, and say, 'Here's the training. What was effective? What wasn't? What fields pay the best? What really don't? Where did people struggle? where did they not?'" says Ufford.

It may be good news to the Iron Range. But there are still a couple of hundred displaced workers without full time employment. For them, perhaps the best news would be a good paying job.

If your WIB has a success story you'd like to share nationally, contact Dan Gibson at gibsond@nawb.org



Mystery Shoppers Help NoVA One-Stops Improve Services

The Northern Virginia Workforce Board has developed an innovative way to test the quality of area One-stops for job seekers with disabilities—the mystery shopper.

Funded by a grant through the Department of Labor, anonymous volunteers visit One-stops and report back on issues of importance to job seekers with disabilities, such as: physical accessibility, the quality of services and receptiveness of staff.

George Liacopoulos, of St. Johns Community Services, monitors the quality of the grant, “In working with the One-stop centers, we wanted to bring in the perspective of people with disabilities on the services for job seekers with disabilities.”

Bruce Patterson, of Metro Region Service Source in Alexandria, is one of the project’s sub-contractors.

“They (mystery shoppers) go in, conduct the visit, and then sit down with a staff person with the data collection instrument...we are looking to garner as much different information as possible.”

While the intent is to gather disability-related information, Patterson and Liacopoulos believe that One-stops and all of their customers will ultimately benefit from the visits.

“The purpose of the grant is to create services that reach out and provide better services to people with disabilities. We also hope the program generates information that One-stop managers can use to improve their all of their services. It’s something that they can use after the life of the grant for folks without disabilities as well.”

Marketing the Smaller WIB, Do the same rules apply?



*Celina Shands,
President/CEO
Full Capacity
Marketing*

All WIBs have the need to be valued and recognized. But is the playing field equal? The bad news is no; the good news is that the same marketing rules apply to all. Smaller and rural WIBs can make a significant impact just as effectively as their larger counterparts.

Smaller WIBs and rural areas have to become “fuel-efficient” marketing machines. With sometimes larger areas to cover, it becomes even more important to have a systematic marketing approach. There may be significantly fewer news media outlets and wider geographic areas, calling for more creative, grassroots tactics.

Step 1: Get organized: Create a marketing sub-committee with Board and line staff. Identify a lead and assign at least one staff person to provide information on programmatic issues, budgets, goals etc.

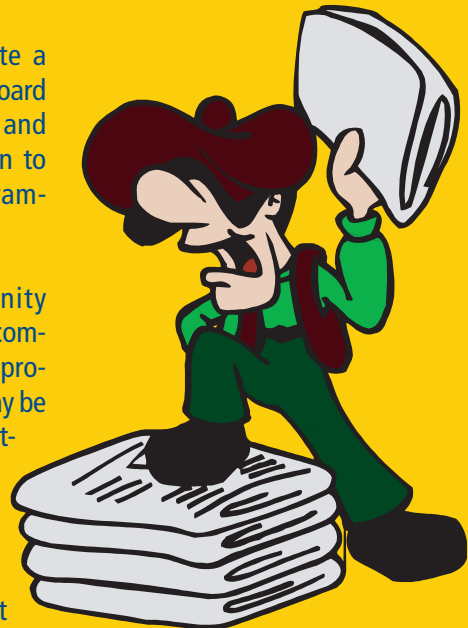
Step 2: Conduct a community audit. Often, rural areas have community events that offer prime promotional opportunities. There may be small community flyers or newsletters that are posted in stores or distributed in the community. Create a comprehensive list of outlets so that promotional efforts can be leveraged against these opportunities.

Step 3: Make friends with your local newspapers. The smaller papers are generally starved for articles and new information. Create a team of

writers that can generate ongoing articles about special events, opportunities with the Board and available services at the One-Stops.

Even though smaller WIBs and rural areas face unique challenges, grassroots tactics can significantly impact brand awareness and create a value both in the Board and in the One-Stop services.

Celina Shands, President/CEO, Full Capacity Marketing, Inc. assists Boards and workforce development professionals across the country with how to integrate marketing as part of the WIB. For more information on seminars and services, or to sign up for her National Marketing Workgroup, go to www.fullcapacity-marketing.com or call (858) 735-2883.



Making friends with your local media is always a good idea. They are more open to getting your stories out into the community since local coverage is their main priority.

WIBs participate in ODEP conference

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) from around the country participated in a Department of Labor policy training conference designed to improve employment prospects for people with disabilities.

The conference, held on October 26-29 in Washington D.C., was jointly sponsored by the Employment and Training Administration and the Office of Disability Employment Policy. WIBs played a part from the very beginning—literally.

NAWB Board member Michael Zelay was part of the opening panel that included Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy W. Roy Grizzard, Jr. and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Employment and Training Administration Thomas Dowd. Zelay, of Flint, Michigan, recognized the work that had been done around the country and stressed the role that WIBs could play in each state. “WIBs could really be the nexus for employment services and business.”

Through the Employment Training Administration (ETA) and the Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Department of Labor has awarded 88 grants totaling \$57 million dollars. Attendees included new and current grantees.

“The ETA and ODEP are concerned and coordinated in their efforts. The conference is designed to give administrative grounding to new grantees. But it’s also about information sharing and letting people know about the resources that are available to them.” stated Joan Wills, who is the Principal Investigator for the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWDY), a group of disability and workforce

development organizations, funded by the Department of Labor.

Among the WIBs that shared information about their efforts were Courtney Wilson of the Hampton Roads Workforce Network in Hampton, Virginia and Clyde McQueen of the Full Employment Council in Kansas City, Missouri. Wilson detailed her participation in a 19-member employment network that allows her access to many more job leads than she would have working alone.

“It’s really improved our ability to open up many new opportunities and level the playing field for people with disabilities. What businesses like about using the network is that they have access to alternative work pools and they only have to meet once.”

McQueen also spoke spiritedly about WIBs becoming more demand-driven and tailoring their services to meet the emerging needs of business.

“You have to ask yourself, ‘how do I align myself with business and think of them as a customer?’”

National Workforce and Healthcare Leaders Speak Up at DOLETA's Health Care Industry Workforce Development Forum

At the end of October, the Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration hosted three Health Care Industry Workforce Development Forums in Washington, D.C., Salt Lake City, Utah, and Chicago, Illinois as part of the Business Relations Group’s High-Growth Job Training initiative. Healthcare policy makers, reimbursement experts, practitioners, educators, and public workforce leaders were nominated to participate in this forum by respected healthcare and workforce organiza-

tions including NAWB.

The High-Growth Job Training initiative is a strategic effort to improve the public workforce system’s responsiveness to the needs of the labor market. This initiative targets the nine fastest growing industries with the highest demand for highly skilled workers: Health Care Services, Information Technology, Biotechnology, Geospatial Technology, Automotive, Retail Trade, High Tech Manufacturing, Construction, and Transportation. The public workforce system is investing \$12 billion dollars into meeting the recruitment and retention needs of demand-driven industries.

Gay Gilbert, Director, Business Relations Group, addressed the Salt Lake City Forum and challenged the 45+ contributors to validate healthcare workforce needs and challenges, discuss the causes of the needs and challenges, and develop model solutions that address these issues. Participants met the challenge by defining workforce priorities, recommending solutions for the industry’s workforce issues, and developing action plans in three sub-group areas: Demographic Trends and Labor Market Shifts Affecting the Pipeline, Recruitment and Retention, and System Capacity.

Rosa Carlson, TCWIB Director, Tulare County Workforce Investment Department; Sue Caparelli, CEO, Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence and WIB Board Member; Catherine McCray, Director of Human Resources, Lucy Corr Village and President for ASHHRA's Virginia Chapter; Helen Parker, Regional Administrator, USDOLETA, Regional Administrator; Castel Vaughn Bryant, Campus President, Miami Dade College were among the many participants

committed to demographics research, coalitions and partnership building, and legislative testimonies as progress catalysts for the health-care industry's responsibility to recruit, train, retain, and retrain a well-educated and loyal workforce.

"Competition is great, but we are fishing from the same pond," said Mary Ousley, Executive Vice President, Sunbridge Healthcare Corporation and co-sponsor of the event. Healthcare institutions are looking for the right worker with the right skills at the right time. While all acknowledge there is no quick fix, they are looking for a "jump start" to success.

Establishing career ladders, increasing the capacity of community colleges to teach various healthcare fields, creating community partnership templates, and re-attracting past healthcare workers were among the many solutions offered by the group for softening the skilled healthcare worker crunch.

When it comes to healthcare professionals' curriculum, participants saw a strong need for leadership development becoming part of curriculum and on-going professional development. Workers proficient in math and science topped the essential skills list. The need for support services such as childcare, transportation, ESL, and domestic violence education were echoed by each of the sub-groups as essential for long-term recruitment success.

For more information regarding USDOLETA's Business Relations Group, High Growth Job Training initiative, or Partnerships for Jobs initiative, call 202.693.3949. Additional information on career information, salary and employment outlooks, and career exploration tools can be found at the O*Net Center at www.onetcenter.org.

NAWB Launches Information Luncheon Series

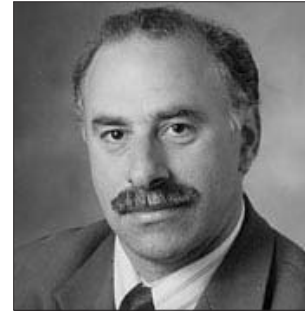
NAWB hosted the first of its policy luncheon series in Washington D.C. The luncheons are designed to promote lively discussion with nationally known experts in the workforce development field. They are held at the NAWB headquarters office and are open to member WIBs. The first speaker was Dr. Harry Holzer. Dr. Holzer is a professor of Public Policy at Georgetown University and former Chief Economist at the Department of Labor. Dr. Holzer spoke about the declining participation of young males in the workforce.

It appears that minorities, particularly African-Americans, aren't participating in the current workforce?

The young men in our study were ages 16-24, not enrolled at school, and with a diploma or less. We studied participation rates for Hispanic, White and African-American males over the course of 20 years, from 1979-2000. African-American youth participated at a much lower rate than Whites or Hispanics. It's 62% for Blacks vs. 79% for Hispanics vs. 82% for White youth.

What trends did you see over the course of the 20-year span?

Participation for all groups dropped during the time frame, but much more so for blacks. The participation rates for Whites and Hispanics dipped but remained remarkably steady, particularly in the 90's. But participation among blacks declined 5% from 1989-2000. This was not only more than Whites or Hispanics who each



Dr. Harry Holzer

dropped 1%, but there was also more of a decline in the 90's than there was in the 80's. So, this 5% drop occurred while the rest of the country was in the middle of the biggest economic boom of its history.

What accounts for this?

Several factors. Declining wages and a skills gap. In the 70's there was more racial discrimination against blacks, for example. But also there is more competition for jobs among blacks, other minorities and women. Women were propelled back into the workforce in the 90's because of welfare reform. With opportunities in the illegal sector and aggressive enforcement of child support laws, there was also less incentive to work.

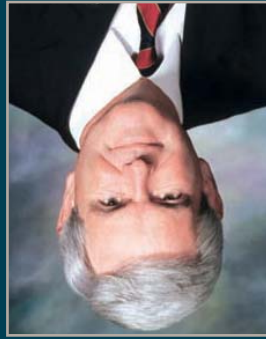
What can be done to increase workforce participation of youth?

It's important to do skill building and reach these populations as early as possible and provide business services. We must increase financial incentives for low-wage workers and work supports for ex-offenders. In addition, some child support reforms might offer more incentives to work, particularly for ex-offenders who build up alimony charges while imprisoned. They have very little incentive to get a job and participate in the workforce.



Robert B. Reich is the Maurice B. Hexter professor of social and economic policy at Brandeis University and its Heller Graduate School. Before joining Brandeis, he served as the nation's 22nd Secretary of Labor during President Bill Clinton's first term. As Secretary, he also oversaw the enactment of the Retirement Protection Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the first increase in the minimum wage since 1989. He served as an assistant to the Solicitor General in the Ford Administration and headed the policy planning staff of the Federal Trade Commission in the Carter Administration.

ROBERT B. REICH



Newt Gingrich was first elected to Congress in 1978 where he served the Sixth District of Georgia. In 1995, he was elected Speaker of the United States House of Representatives where he served until 1999. The Washington Times has called him "the indispensable leader" and Time magazine, in naming him Man of the Year for 1995, said, "Leaders make things possible. Exceptional leaders make them inevitable. Newt Gingrich belongs in the category of the exceptional."

NEWT GINGRICH

No longer is globalization limited to the transfer of low wage, blue collar jobs to workers in other nations. High wage, high skilled jobs are being outsourced abroad in record numbers. Wherever there is a competitive workforce, the free market reacts and jobs follow. Join with your colleagues for this lively, stimulating discussion between two notable and highly respected policy leaders. A discussion with Newt Gingrich, former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and Robert Reich, former Secretary of Labor

The Global Economy and the American Workforce

OPENING GENERAL SESSION

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