

**Diesel Technology Talent Sector Council
Meeting Notes
July 12, 2016**

Attendees:

Companies

Memphis Area Transit Authority/ Mid-South Transportation Management, Inc.

- Susan L. Trimble-Schubert, Director of Human Resources
- Bobbie Abram, Director of Maintenance

Staff

Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce

- Pauline Vernon – VP, Workforce Systems Alignment
- Latanyua Robinson – Business Services Manager

Greater Memphis Chamber

- Anita Brackin – Director, Workforce Development & Education

The Manufacturing Institute, NAM

- Katherine McClelland – Director of Education & Workforce Initiatives

Workforce Resources

Tennessee College of Applied Technology

- Tyjuan Stitt – Diesel Instructor

University of Memphis

- Shepherd Tate, Southeast Transportation Workforce Center

Guests

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce

- Holly Parker – VP, Economic Opportunity

Welcome and Introductions

- Pauline Vernon provided an overview of the work of the partners in the Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce (GMACW), including initiating sector councils based off of the recommendations of the [Brookings Focus Report: A Roadmap for Transforming the Metro Memphis Economy](#), and the alignment of the GMACW partner schools to better meet the talent needs of the high demand regional sectors.

The Regional Skills Gap and Role of GMACW Partnership

- Katherine McClelland presented on the labor market trends in the sector highlighting the current and projected skills gap in the CDL and Diesel Technology sectors. This included nine county Memphis region information on
 - average growth in the sector over the next ten years
 - average age and demographic information about the current workforce in the
 - average yearly earnings
 - target occupations in the sector for growth and pathway alignment, and
 - academic pathways in the diesel technology sector.

Southeast Transportation Workforce Center (SETWC)

- Shepherd Tate from the University of Memphis SETWC provided an overview of the Center and information on the recently completed *Job Priorities and Needs Report: Southeast Region*. The report confirmed that both CDL Drivers and Diesel Technicians were listed as priority occupations for the region.

Overview of MemphisWorks.com

- Latanyua Robinson provided an overview of MemphisWorks.com, the online platform for students, educators, and employers designed to increase interest and connection points for future jobs and careers. The site includes a growing number of videos showing jobs in the Memphis area as well as opportunities for employers to post jobs directly on the site.

Employer Discussion on Skills Gaps - Common Themes

- Unions play a large role in the Diesel Technology sector, especially for the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA). This includes wages, training and education, and hours worked (full-time vs. part-time).
- CDL - Employers reported that although the education and training happens in the Memphis region, students and employees must travel to Nashville to take the certification exams
 - TCAT informed the group that the training for the instructor's B License has been completed and just needs access to buses in order to complete the testing.
- Employers mentioned that they would like the unions to be more aware of the workforce challenges as well as the education and training opportunities in the Memphis region to help them buy in on the skills gap and getting people into the regional academic programs.
 - Because of union employee contracts, there are challenges with internships and apprenticeships because of part-time employee.
 - In order for students to be apprentices' they must be full-time employees, however TCAT offered that they could create a partnership with students in the academic program for 1 day a week
 - Employers indicated that individuals would need more than just a high school education to become an apprentice, and that typically a prospective apprentice would need a CDL license to start in that sector. However, the demand is currently so high that they would likely offer a job or apprenticeship without the certification as long as they receive it within 90 days.
 - They offered that high school students could work toward their CDL at the GMACW schools then align that to the CDL and Diesel Technician pathways.
- Employers and educators agreed that there needs to be common understanding about the certifications needed. For example, union contracts stipulate that employees must have 609 certifications while schools may be focusing on 609 because it provides a broader array of education.
- Employers also mentioned they would like to see new employees come with some basic experience so they can partner with a more senior technician on site.

- o They agreed on the need for basic knowledge, ASE certifications, and AC certifications.

GMACW School Program Overview

Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT)

Students

- Currently have 35 students enrolled with an open enrollment program.
- TCAT is also working with Trezevant High School as a Tennessee Board of Regents approved location for offering college credit as well as an evening program for people living in the area so that adults can take these courses (TCAT does not offer an evening program)
 - First year focuses on SP2, Safety & Pollution Prevention Training Certificate, with the first phase is electrical and brakes, and they would like to have all the safety courses done first trimester
 - TCAT would like to see this expanded to a summer program with an internship program as part of it so that students can have a summer job as well

Curriculum

- TCAT offers a diesel technician diploma as well as certificates for students who have progressed to a job but have not received a full diploma
 - Students are also able to come back to school and pick up where they left off in the program because it is an all competency based curriculum
- Will have the chance to purchase tools, can get to the apprenticeship/mechanics helper level, can understand brakes, steering & suspension, HVAC
- TCAT, after 1 year have a co-op program to get hands on experience, completes the training then online, attends school one day a week
 - Currently have 8 on co-op

Additional information - CDL

- TCAT would like to see more second chance programs for the drivers because a large percentage of students coming through have some kind of criminal records as well as a focus on veterans. Tennessee has done an immediate convert from military license to an occupational license so that they can work in the industry, and would like to see employers taking advantage of that

Arkansas State University Mid-South (ASU Mid-South)

Students

- Currently have about 90 total students enrolled with high school and postsecondary students, ages ranging from 18-45, with most adults come in the evenings to take their courses.
 - Around 50 high school students enrolled last year. Students come to campus one and a half hours each day and receive college credit that counts for electives in high schools.
 - Students start as early as 10th grade and complete their certificate by end of 11th grade, with courses counting toward next certificate, with some students earning their Associates Degree by 19 years old
- Students are often first receive their entry level certificate and go into industry

Curriculum

- ASU Mid-South offers certificates and associate degree in diesel technology, as well as general education classes, welding certifications, industrial maintenance, hydraulics and pneumatics, and additional electricity and electronics classes.
 - The certificate program is 15-months and includes preventative maintenance, brakes, engines 1 and 2, with 2 including engine break down, diagnostics, and rebuilding.
 - The technical certificate is a year-long program that includes electrical suspension, HVAC, and the students also take freshman level English and math courses.
 - Interested students can also receive a Bachelor of Science at Montana State University – Northern.
- ASU has 3 full-time instructors, and 2 adjunct professors.
- Their goal is to implement the ASE Student Certification that can be provided for those without work experience.

Additional Information - CDL

- ASU Mid-South looking at a regional approach within the state of Arkansas to do initial training at their location, then doing an intensive 2-week training at Newport prior to testing there. They will have one school pilot the program before others take it on, starting in Blytheville this fall
 - Newport is a four-week program, can take up to 20-25 students per cohort
 - Currently seeking companies that are trying to hire, and who will pay for some of the extracurricular costs for the 2-week intensive training (housing, meals, etc.)

Recommendations moving forward

- Federal law prohibits CDL drivers under the age of 21 to do interstate travel, however companies could look into in-state specific opportunities to engage those students until they are 21
 - Small companies in sectors like construction could also look to this option
 - MATA may look to their next contract to include students under 21 with the restricted CDL
- GMACW can support bringing CDL certification exams to the Memphis region so that potential or incumbent employees do not need to travel to Nashville to complete exams
 - Can support TCAT in completing this process and make connections with MATA for access to buses, and look to expansion at ASU Mid-South