

Mid-South Diesel Technology Talent Council Meeting

**Tuesday, October 4, 2016
Memphis Chamber of Commerce
Meeting Notes**

Meeting Participants

Attendees

Bobbie Abram, MATA
Curtis Capps, TAG Truck Center
Benjamin Dancy, Ryder
Nathan Gideon, Averitt Express
John Hodge, FedEx
Doug Mack, TAG Truck Center
Glen McDonald, Ozark Motor Lines
Kelly Norman, PTL
Susan Schubert, MATA
Joey Scott, TAG Truck Center

Companies

Averitt Express
FedEx
MATA
Ozark Motor Lines
PTL
Ryder
TAG Truck Center

Staff

Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive
Workforce

- Latanyua Robinson
- Pauline Vernon

Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce

- Anita Brackin

Workforce Resources

Arkansas State University Mid-South

- Jeff Lackie
- Emilee Sides

TCAT

- Cassandra Brown

Introductions

- Anita Brackin provided information about the Memphis Chamber, including that it is here to support the development of talent for their companies, but also support with other services like with pothole services
- Pauline introduced the Greater Alliance for a Competitive Workforce (GMACW), which is a true alliance in bringing together employers to support their talent needs, working with education and industry to ensure that employer's talent needs are met. GMACW is tasked with looking at how potential shortages and skills gaps may be affecting companies in the region and how regional education systems can be leveraged to help meet demand
 - Sector councils were initiated 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 four councils include Process Technology, Steel Fabrication, Diesel Technology, and CDL

The Regional Skills Gap

- Katherine McClelland from The Manufacturing Institute presented on the labor market trends in the sector highlighting the current and projected skills gap in Diesel Technology. This included nine county Memphis region information on:
 - Industry demand over the 10 year period by county, comparing the region to national trends
 - Average yearly earnings
 - Steps to close the skills gap, including perceptions
 - Target occupations to further explore in the Mid-South Region, including bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists

University of Memphis Southeast Transportation Workforce Center

- Stephanie S. Ivey, PhD from the University of Memphis provided an overview of their work on [Job Priorities and Needs Report Phase 1: Southeast Region](#) and additional information on the Southeast Transportation Workforce Center, which is part of National Network for Transportation, funded out of the Department of Transportation. They are looking at a larger, national picture with the report and their work, but also work with the local school systems.
- Their areas of expertise are women, vets, freight and logistics. Addressing the issue of changing the perception and awareness of career opportunities is the first goal.
- They also recently released a [Phase 2 Summary](#), which focuses on women in transportation, freight (including distribution and logistics), and military transition to the transportation workforce

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.
- MemphisWorks has now launched both a phone application for Android phones and a website that shows the academic options, careers in the area, etc. for students to see where they can find jobs in the area. They can also find academic programs and do career exploration. Other things to note about MemphisWorks include:
 - Locally focused, only being promoted in the Memphis Area with Memphis jobs
 - If you're hiring locally they are statistically more likely to stay in the job
 - Have the opportunity to start even in the middle school level
 - Have 200 local videos then 600 videos nationally to show jobs – focused on first job to first line – attempting to reach people that are looking to grow careers
 - Schools can also follow up with students if they look at academic programs
 - Has free online learning opportunities for students looking to enhance skills like math remediation, also basic financial literacy so that students can earn online badges – of awareness and acknowledgement, not academic
- The main marketing focus for MemphisWorks is at the high school student level and the Workforce Investment Network (WIN), working with career and technical education (CTE) teachers, at community centers and anyone with wraparound services, as well as part of Memphis Ambassadors and youth mentors. In school, career counselors can also review student's applicants to help make improvements, etc.
- GMACW team can give demonstrations to churches or other groups that may have their own workforce entities

GMACW Education Updates

ASU Mid-South

- ASU Mid-South offers Certifications in three phases:
 - Phase 1: Certificate of Proficiency, including engines one and two – adult students start with, high school students aspire to this in their 2-year program; 12th grade get steering, suspension and powertrain;
 - Phase 2: Technical Certificate, including electrical 1 and 2, steering and suspension, powertrain, HVAC
 - Phase 3: Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree – general emphasis in diesel technology plus general education credits and electives like welding, etc.

- Have transfer agreements in place for the option of a four-years for a bachelor's degree if students are interested
- Enrollment: 101 students in high school, adults included have another 32 just in the diesel program
 - High school students come to campus for 1.5 hours throughout the day through dual enrollment, meaning high school credit plus free college credit with books all included
 - adults or traditional students are on campus in the evenings because of space and instructor limitations
 - Currently have 5 females enrolled in the program, and are now focusing on the middle school level if they want to attract students by high school
 - Admission is 2.5 GPA – looking for all types of students
- Instructors are stressing safety and employability skills like showing up on time, and thinking about how their choices now will affect their future
- They try to do tours so students can get an idea of the workplace and work culture
- ASU has a “live work” policy where companies can bring in a truck that has some need and the students can repair it, or employers can bring their own technician in to work through it with the students

Shelby County Schools

- Next Fall there will be a transportation focused high school –an all-encompassing high school for transportation occupation, diesel technology, aviation, transportation and logistics
 - The goal of the school is to show the huge diversity in the occupation areas
 - Expected to be able to make announcement in the next month on that
 - GMACW, the Memphis Chamber and TCAT are all also involved

Common Themes

- Employers stressed the importance of employees arriving on time and with a strong work ethic and said they would like to see this being emphasized in the classroom
- All employers agreed that the academic programs need to better prepare students for the technology and related elements that are being used in the industry. Specific recommendations include:
 - Students need additional training in software and focus on improvements there since the first tool that technicians go to is a laptop. Employers stated that laptop application should be at the top of the list for training, after treatment systems because they're having difficulty finding the software and EPA awareness is very difficult

- o Students must be able to follow a flow chart;
- o Students need to have the technology skills to match the technical skills they're getting, and employers agreed they would like to see more emphasis on electrical training early on rather than engine rebuild
- o Safety is becoming more and more prominent and should be focused on, saying cleanliness should also be included alongside safety, including working clean and putting things back where they go
- Employers would like to see an improvement in a marketing perspective for these careers because they believe that students are not aware of opportunities that exist but feel MemphisWorks could help with this. Regarding communication, employers also expressed interest in:
 - o Creating a pool of talent and creating the strategy needed to get to students and potential employees
 - o Career fairs – many employers said haven't been involved in them yet, but are interested in the future
 - o A strategy to communicate this to the schools and the community itself, and also thinking about reaching the parents so they can reach the kids
 - o All employers agreed that they need to better promote the women in the industry

Employer best practices

- Student loan reimbursement: many companies present use this as a tactic to recruit top talent
- SkillsUSA competition: employers would like to see the City of Memphis start to look at things like, bringing the competition to Memphis, and thinking of Memphis as a technology city – ASU competes in Skills USA but in Arkansas
 - o ASU added that this is also an opportunity for recruiting for employers as well
- Career placement: Employers mentioned that they have a career services coordinator, have a virtual career center, and have employers do mock interviews which helps employers find talent and also helps student refine their skills

Decisions and Recommendations for moving forward

- The Council nominated Benjamin as Chair, Joey Scott as Vice Chair
- Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 7, 2017
- Employers agreed to send a list of the technology and systems that they're using
- Focuses for the council moving forward: increasing technology, getting the word out about the opportunities, soft skills, safety and cleanliness

- U of M may plan a parent career fair so that they can help students become aware of the sector opportunities and would include the Council
- Possibility for a Diesel Technology focused career fair in the future