

Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce CDL Council Meeting Summary

April 26, 2016

Participants

Companies

- Averitt Express - Anita Victory, Human Resources Coordinator (CDL)
- Schneider - Wayne Elliott,
- Schneider - Crege Carter (CDL)
- Ozark - Glen McDonald
- FedEx Freight - John Hodge, Manager, Recruitment (CDL)

Staff

Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce

- Pauline Vernon – Vice President, Workforce Systems Alignment
- Latanyua Robinson – Career Navigation Services

Greater Memphis Chamber

- Anita Brackin – Director, Workforce Development & Education

The Manufacturing Institute, NAM

- Brent Weil – Senior Vice President, Education & Workforce
- Katherine McClelland – Director, Education & Workforce Initiatives

Thomas P. Miller & Associates

- Sara Hunt, Sr. Project Consultant

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

- Brent Weil discussed several of the factors impacting transportation and attainment of CDLs, including:
 - Insurance barriers impacting drivers below the age of 21 or 25
 - Background checks and drug screening of candidates

- Generational attitudes about over-the-road jobs and a desire for 8-hour workdays and work-life balance
 - Overall increases in freight volume and projections for continued growth in drivers
- Sara Hunt highlighted best practices in CDL training. Examples from across the country include linking to local Workforce Board and American Job Centers to access WIOA training funds, and making connections with other industries, such as oil and gas, health care, and construction. She also highlighted the forecasted top 10 occupations in truck transportation over the next 10 years in the Mid-South region, showing an increase in all but one of the occupations.
- 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.

Common Themes

- Employers agreed that there were many challenges in attracting talent into the industry, although employers did not indicate that there was any clear consistency among companies on creating their recruiting strategies.
 - A recruiting challenge that all employers agreed on was a large percentage of applicants who lack education prerequisites or fail the background screen.
- Many indicated that there are challenges with potential candidates understanding the requirements of the job, which vary for local, regional, or long-range drivers, including misperceptions about the lifestyle of the industry.
- Many companies indicated that they have taken on the challenge of training internally, with the lengths and intensity of training varying.
 - Some companies have even gone to the lengths of creating their own schools or partnering with schools to provide the training they need, but still have barriers of attracting students into the training programs.
- Employers all indicated that they will be looking to hire a large number of drivers in the near future, while also facing issues with turnover and challenges retaining talent.

Decisions and Recommendations for moving forward

- Companies expressed interest in finding common ground to improve recruitment into the industry and look for creative solutions to address opportunities in the future.
- Employers would like to expand the group and meet as a formal council bi-monthly to start moving the needle on strategies to address their talent needs.
- Several employers also expressed interest in participating in the Diesel Technology Talent Council to be formed. Staff suggested holding both meetings back-to-back to enable interested members to easily participate.