

HOW DOES YOUR WORKFORCE GARDEN GROW?

CONFERENCE CAN HELP BUSINESSES CULTIVATE TALENT PIPELINE

BY LAURA BYRNES, APR, CPRC, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Along about now, urban farmers are nudging seedlings from their cold frame incubators into the ground in anticipation of spring gardens that will yield an abundant harvest. Of course, nothing will grow unless we have properly prepared the land and made the effort to nurture our crops – till, plow, dig, turn, hoe, water, and feed – in other words, *cultivate*.

It is apt that the term *cultivate* also refers to acquiring or developing a quality or skill – to work hard at, foster, nurture, encourage – the antonym of which is ignore.

We know what happens when we ignore that which must be cultivated: our literal and figurative gardens wither. Without the care and effort required, how can we expect anything to grow?

So it is with our workforce. One thing we know is that *unless we act* to cultivate our future workforce, there will be shortages in industries critical to our region's economic growth. And yet, many of our local businesses face tough and complex challenges in building their talent pipeline to meet future needs.

That's why CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion is holding the 2019 State of the Workforce Conference, *Cultivating the 21st Century Workforce*, on April 18 at the Hilton Ocala.

Through panel discussions and thought-provoking speakers, we hope to shine the light on the pathway for our future workforce. As our CEO Rusty Skinner explained, "Our focus is responding to the challenges of low unemployment, specifically developing a talent pipeline that begins with career awareness in middle school to transitioning graduates into the workforce."

The conference takes place from 7:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. and includes breakfast and lunch as well as the first annual *Bridging the Gap Award*, recognizing outstanding business collaboration. And because we want to make this amazing opportunity as accessible as possible, tickets are just \$25 per person.

So who will be there?

- » Michelle Dennard, president and CEO of CareerSource Florida
- » Sean Snaith, director of the University of Central Florida's Institute for Economic Competitiveness and a nationally recognized economist in the field of business and economic forecasting
- » Josh Davies, CEO of the Center for Work Ethic Development, an organization committed to the research and advancement of foundational work ethic behaviors.

- » Isabel Nieto, Duke Energy Corporation workforce development/project management consultant, will talk about how Duke's recruitment is redirected to high school graduates and the development of career and technical programs that support their needs.
- » Megan Richardson, vice president of consulting for Dynamic Corporate Solutions, Inc., a company that provides industry-leading human resources consulting, services and support to organizations of all shapes and sizes, from start-ups and non-profits to Fortune 500 and global companies.

There will also be a panel discussion featuring top education leaders from Citrus, Levy and Marion counties.

If you want to learn more, or register, please contact us at 800-746-9950.



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