

# Cause to Celebrate National Workforce Development Month Throughout the Year

By Laura Byrnes, APR, CPRC, Communications Manager



Typically, September is recognized as National Workforce Development Month. I expect this year, the 19th, will not prove to be the exception, though it is too early as of writing this for the annual proclamation marking it as such. Still, I figure this is as good a month as any to recognize the forces that play an important role in the economic vitality of our community, region, state, and nation.

After all, September starts with Labor Day when we celebrate the

social and economic impact of the American worker. And in a few weeks, nearly 1,000 of Florida's frontline and leadership workforce professionals, including many from CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion, will participate in intensive professional development sessions at our annual summit.

Sure, CareerSource CLM's mission is all about workforce development, but successful workforce development is really about collaborating with public-private partners, too numerous to mention here, to build prosperity for our region, state, and nation.

It's also about the local business representatives who serve on myriad economic and workforce boards, including our own board of directors led by Chairwoman Rachel Riley, director of nursing for Citrus Memorial Hospital. Other Citrus County private-sector directors are Albert Jones, AutoZone store manager; Kevin Cunningham, broker/owner of RE/Max Realty One and a past board chair; Mike Melfi, consultant; and William Burda, owner of Business Resources of Florida. In addition, Citrus County is well represented by Bruce Register, economic development director for the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners; Debra Stanley, coordinator of special academic programs for the Citrus County School Board; Ted Knight, United States Marine Corps League; and Theresa Flick, director of program operations for the Key Training Center.

And it is most definitely about the professional frontline staff at our career centers and affiliated Talent Center as well as mobile resource units in Citrus, Levy, and Marion counties. These are the folks providing fee-free services to businesses and job candidates. We'll have much more on this next month.

It is thanks to the concerted, all-hands-on-deck efforts of economic, education, and workforce partners in Citrus County, and throughout our region and state, that Florida has actually experienced significant progress, to wit:

- For at least the seventh consecutive year, *Chief Executive Magazine* ranked the Sunshine State as the second Best State for Business (behind Texas).

- Florida came in at #12 in CNBC's annual "America's Top States for Business." Described as "not only an attractive destination for visitors but also a great place to get some capital for your business," ranking fourth in the nation for access to capital.
- Once again, Florida broke the Top 10 list of *Forbes Magazine's* Best States for Business, coming in at #7. The state's ranking was fueled by a robust Economic Climate, which *Forbes* ranked #4 in the nation and #2 ranking for Fastest Projected Job Growth.
- Florida ranked #3 in Growth in Number of Small Businesses and #6 overall as Best State to Start a Business; significant in that, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, about a fifth of all startups typically don't survive past year one, and nearly half never make it to their fifth anniversary.

None of this happens in a vacuum but by working together to identify and meet the needs of businesses and job seekers. That's something to celebrate not just during National Workforce Development Month but throughout the year.

Laura Byrnes, APR, CPRC, communications manager at CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion, is Accredited in Public Relations, a Certified Public Relations Counselor and a Florida Certified Workforce Professional. She would love to hear from you and learn what kind of information you'd like to see each month. Please contact her at (352) 291-9559, (800) 434-5627, ext. 1234 or lbyrnes@careersourceclm.com.

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