

A newsletter of the Suncoast Workforce Board (SWB)
By Mary Helen Kress, President & CEO
May 31, 2010

Meeting Schedule

June 1, Finance
Committee, 8:00 AM,
Jobs ETC, Sarasota

June 2, Suncoast
Careers, 8:30 AM, Jobs
ETC, Sarasota

June 3, 8:00 AM, One-
Stop Committee, Jobs
ETC, Sarasota

June 4, Blended
Workforce, 8:00 AM,
Jobs ETC, Sarasota

June 9, Bi-County
Healthcare, 8:00 AM,
Jobs ETC, Sarasota

June 10, Executive
Committee, 8:00 AM,
Jobs ETC, Sarasota

June 17, SWB Full
Board, 8:00 AM, Jobs
ETC, Sarasota

April Unemployment Rates*

Suncoast 11.8%
Manatee 11.8%
Sarasota 11.9%
Florida 11.2%
U.S. 9.5%

*Not seasonally adjusted

Learning Is Lifelong For All Ages

Various resources are available to our customers to improve their academic levels so that they will have the necessary skills to enter, remain, and advance in the workplace. The Suncoast Workforce Board offers three Learning Labs within Jobs ETC located in Bradenton, Sarasota and Venice that are staffed with State Certified teachers that assist customers with their academic goals. There are three components of the Learning Lab: Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Education Diploma (GED) preparation, and Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) remediation.

- **Adult Basic Education (ABE):** Offered to students who fall below the 9th grade level on the TABE assessment. These students are given assignments on the computer in reading, mathematics and language arts. They are also encouraged to review books that are in the Learning Lab library and ask questions of the teachers. Once the student has completed their assignments and is confident enough in their new academic skills, they can re-take the TABE assessment. If their scores increase to the 9th grade level or higher, the students are then promoted to the "GED Prep".
- **GED Prep:** Students practice for the GED exam. When a student is determined to be ready for the GED exam, they are referred to Manatee Technical Institute, Sarasota County Technical Institute, or Charlotte Technical Center to register for the exam.
- **TABE Remediation:** Customers who do not score high enough on the TABE assessment for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training programs have the opportunity to review and study the subject area that needs improvement. Once the student completes various assignments, they can retake the TABE in that subject area.

In addition, the Learning Labs are used by several agencies including community based organizations, sheriff's departments, police, Workman's Compensation, and one-stop partners. There have been many successes in the Learning Labs over the year, thanks to the dedicated teachers at each facility. For example, in Bradenton, 12 students took the GED exam and passed the first time. Thirty students have increased their TABE scores and have academically qualified for Workforce Investment Act training programs. Seven students have been promoted to the GED Prep and will soon be ready to take the GED exam. In Sarasota, 530 students have enrolled since July 2009. Twenty-five students passed the GED exam and 383 customers earned Literacy Completion Points (points earned by upward movement in TABE scores). Venice is currently serving 58 students of which 33 students have earned their GED, one of whom was 76 years old.

"The wisest mind has something yet to learn." -George Santayana (1863-1952), U.S. philosopher

