

State leaders check out mobile job-training unit, program impacts

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The Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership showcased Tuesday its state-of-the-art Mobile Outreach Skills Training traveling educational unit at the Capitol.

Lt. Gov. Jeff Kottkamp, Florida House Speaker Larry Cretul, R-Ocala, and state Rep. Ellyn Bogdanoff, R-Fort Lauderdale, toured the onsite job training and mentoring program to observe demonstrations of the training equipment and lessons.

"With Florida's unemployment rate at 10.7 percent, we must be diligent in developing innovative programs to ensure displaced Floridians are trained and placed back into the labor force," said Florida MEP Board Chair Gene Lussier. "The MOST program accomplishes this by partnering with work force boards and local employers to identify available opportunities."

The Florida MEP utilizes a U.S. Department of Labor grant and state job-stimulus funds to operate the innovative program. Participants in the training represent a diverse pool of Florida's unemployed, including single mothers looking to get back into the workforce, those laid off from the manufacturing industry, and displaced aerospace workers.

MOST has received overwhelming response from those interested in participating in the program and employers seeking qualified job candidates.

The statewide program consists of practical skills, theory and hands-on curriculum that utilize a process of both computer-based 3-D simulations and hands-on self-paced training modules.

The two-week intensive job training and placement program provides a unique opportunity to not only receive job training, but also the promise of a job interview at the end of the session.

About 95 percent of program participants are immediately placed in full-time jobs with benefits following graduation. Additionally, continued on-the-job training and counseling has resulted in 85 percent of participants remaining in those jobs after six months.

The economic impacts of the Florida MEP on the Florida economy over the past five years include:

- Creating 2,520 jobs that otherwise would not have existed
- Retaining 5,180 jobs that otherwise would not have existed
- Experiencing \$128.8 million in cost savings
- Generating or retaining \$427.8 million in additional tax and non-tax revenues at the

federal, state and local government levels, including \$117.8 million at the state and local level

- Spending \$192.8 million on new investment

To be eligible for the program, each MOST participant must pass a basic education test and undergo a background check and drug screening. Prior to selection for participation in the program, each candidate is interviewed by a MOST representative.

For more on Florida MEP or the MOST unit, visit www.floridamep.org or www.timewisemost.com.