

Made in the Mid-Willamette Valley: Job Growers Incorporated

Company Name: Job Growers Incorporated (formerly Enterprise for Employment and Education)

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Business Description: Job Growers Incorporated is a nonprofit organization serving Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties. A 28-member board of directors, with a federally-mandated 50 percent plus one membership from the private sector, governs the overall workforce investment policies of Job Growers.

Our core mission is to grow economic vitality through forward thinking, collaborative partnerships with economic development, education, and other organizations, and wise investments in human potential. Through these partnerships and investments, Job Growers supports businesses in their efforts to grow and remain competitive in the global

economy. ... We facilitate skills training and career readiness for adults, and connect youth to business and career opportunities, so that they are better able to enter the competitive job market and be an asset to local businesses and the community.

Employees: 39

Business Specialties: We support businesses in a variety of ways, including five business consortia; Mid-Valley Food Processors Consortium, High Performance Consortium, Metals Consortium, Secondary Woods Consortium, and the Mid-Valley Staffing Association. These consortia provide opportunities for member businesses to collaborate, leverage scarce resources and create coordinated solutions to workforce problems. Consortia-sponsored workforce trainings are scheduled throughout the year for member businesses and their employees through the use of training dollars targeted for this purpose.

Job Growers provides training resources to

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businesses and rapid response teams to businesses dealing with layoffs or closures, and on-the-job training packages that can reimburse as much as 50 percent of a trainee's gross earnings during the training period.

Job Growers partners with the Oregon Employment Department to staff WorkSource Oregon Centers in Salem, Woodburn, Dallas and McMinnville. In the centers, county residents find help with skill level assessments, access to many on-line trainings, assistance with career decision-making, access to scholarship funds to help pay for job training and help with all aspects of job search.

Job Growers also manages five contractors providing services to in-school and out-of-school youth aged 16 to 21 in the three-county area.

Business History: Workforce programs have been in existence since the 1960s and have been structured in different ways over the years. When the federal Workforce Investment Act became law in 1998, the state was divided into workforce regions, and the Region 3 workforce board known as the Mid-Willamette Jobs Council was created. It then became the Enterprise for Employment and Education, and that name was changed in early 2010 to Job Growers Incorporated.

Essential Business Philosophy: Growing economic vitality in Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties can only happen with collaborative partnerships, and Job

Growers collaborates with economic development, education, and other public and private enterprises to help invest WIA funds wisely.

What is most Challenging in Work: The current economy is hugely challenging. Many of our businesses have challenges in this economy. They are trying to keep their skilled staff and also are having to compete in a global economy where every efficiency counts.

Our region, like the state as a whole, moved from a tight labor market and 5 percent unemployment to double digit unemployment in a matter of months in late 2008 and early 2009. Nearly 27,000 residents of Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties were unemployed in November 2010.

This is an especially tough economy for youth. Research shows that the earlier a youth can have work experience, the more likely it is that he/she will succeed at work later in life. With skilled people out of work,

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youth are having a hard time finding employment.

We have received three federal grants, one for health care job training and two for green jobs training, but resources are constrained by the size of the need.

What trends do you see happening in your Industry: Skills and education will increasingly be essential to getting a good job. This workforce trend has been developing slowly over the last 30 years, and as we recover from the recession, will become more important than ever. When a college education is not required, long-term training is likely to be the requirement to access a job with good wages. Training and apprenticeship programs will become more important, more popular and more competitive.

A related trend is that there will be a need, in many if not most sectors of the economy, for employees to be continually learning new skills as technological change continues to transform the way we do business.

And finally, the historical trend during the past 30 years of workforce development has been declining workforce investment funds - funding for workforce training peaked in 1979, and has shrunk considerably since then.

Company Affiliations: We are members of the Strategic Economic Development Corporation, the McMinnville Economic Development Partnership, and most

Chambers of Commerce in Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties.

Major clients: Our "clients" are the 11,000 plus businesses of Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties. We need to help these businesses stay competitive so that they can provide good jobs for our residents. Some 27,000 unemployed residents of our three counties are potentially our clients as well as any and all workers who need skill upgrading, or who are working part-time but want to work full-time.

For additional information, contact SEDCOR at (503) 584-7303 or email sappleby@sedcor.com.

SEDCOR, the lead economic development agency for Marion and Polk counties, is pleased to offer you a glimpse of the multitude of products and services being manufactured and provided by local area companies. SEDCOR's membership is composed of more than 500 business and community leaders who support our mission to enhance and diversify the economy of the Mid-Willamette Valley.

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The advertisement features the USA TODAY logo at the top left. The main title "AutoPilot" is in a large, bold, black font, with a blue airplane icon to its right. Below the title, a smartphone screen displays the app's interface, showing a flight schedule with details like "USA TODAY Meeting" and "AS BNA to MD Landed". To the right of the phone, the text reads "The new travel app for iPhone® and iPod touch®". Below this, it says "Presented by: Hampton" with the Hampton logo. At the bottom right, a blue button with white text says "SEE HOW IT WORKS »".

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