



# Iowa Workforce NEWS

October 2012 • Issue 26

## IWD Received \$3 Million Unemployment Insurance Grant

*Funding for System Improvements, Fraud Detection and Outreach Education*

Iowa Workforce Development was recently awarded just over \$3 million in federal grant funding to support a number of unemployment insurance initiatives targeted at reducing improper payments and improving fraud detection.

A significant portion of the funding will assist with implementing the State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES).

SIDES allows the department to electronically exchange Unemployment Insurance information related requests with multi-state and third party employers in a free and secure environment.

The electronic exchange of information increases

the response times for the system.

Additional funding within the grant provides:

- \$200,000 for employer and claimant messaging
- \$400,000 to implement the Treasury Off-set program which allows the department to collect federal income tax returns to cover overpayments
- \$660,000 to support IT security and contingency planning.

The grant funding will also provide additional dollars to support document scanning and to develop a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to better track customer contacts.

## Iowa Unemployment Rate Drops to 5.2 Percent

Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped to 5.2 percent in September from 5.5 percent in August. The comparable rate for September 2011 was 5.9 percent. Meanwhile, the U.S. unemployment rate for September also decreased by three-tenths of a percentage point, falling to 7.8 percent from 8.1 percent in August.

"The drop in the September jobless rate was welcome news, but we are still cautious about the job market" said Teresa Wahlert, director of Iowa Workforce Development. "The employment numbers continued to depict a slow and uneven recovery."

The number of unemployed Iowans decreased to 85,800 in September from 89,700 in August. The drop of 3,900 in unemployment represented the largest monthly loss in this measure for the year. The level of unemployed stood at 97,500 one year ago.



# Message from the Director

We recently embarked on a new initiative to help Iowa workers gain new skills to help them get back to work, and for employers to have access to a skilled and trained workforce. I am very happy to announce that we have our first Skilled Iowa success.

A Veteran who was recently placed in an internship at a central Iowa business was recently offered a permanent position after completing two weeks of his internship. "He has demonstrated he is a hard worker and has been reliable as far as attendance and punctuality go, and those are the most important things," said his new employer. He has accepted the offer pending the outcome of his physical and drug screening.

This Veteran benefited from an employer who was willing to offer him the opportunity to learn new skills while he continued to receive unemployment insurance benefits. The employer recognized that he had much to offer, quickly recognized that he would be an

asset to their operation, and offered him a job. It was a win-win situation for everyone involved. The Veteran got to learn new skills, and the employer had the chance to train a new worker without incurring that expense. Please share this information to potential interns and host employers as you continue to promote Skilled Iowa. The goal of the program is to get Iowans back to work, and provide trained workers for Iowa employers. I believe this early success demonstrates that the program works!

The number of employers who have signed on with our initiative continues to grow, and we are also hearing that more and more Iowans are interested in participating. Please make every effort to promote it whenever you talk to employers, claimants and job seekers. If you have any questions, need materials, or have ideas on how to make the initiative even better, contact Denise Schippers at (515) 281-7538.



**Teresa Wahlert**  
IWD Director

## Iowa's Employer Unemployment Insurance Tax Tables Improve for 2013

Iowa Workforce Development announced today that employers will see approximately \$100 million dollars in tax savings by moving from tax table four to table five. The average rate will fall from 2.4 percent to 2.0 percent for 2013.

"This is exciting news for Iowa businesses and the economy," stated IWD director Teresa Wahlert. "While states across the country have struggled with the stability of their Unemployment Insurance Trust Funds, Iowa has moved the

rates in a positive direction for businesses two years in a row."

In 2013, over 52 percent of Iowa businesses will experience a zero rate. Iowa is one of only six states in the country that provides a zero rate within the tax tables.

Additionally, the new employer non-construction rate will decrease from 1.5 percent in 2012 to 1.1 percent in 2013.

"The people of Iowa have our commitment to carefully manage the trust fund in the coming year to continue this beneficial trend for Iowa businesses. Iowa has one of the lowest UI tax rates in the

nation," stated Wahlert.

Iowa Workforce Development is the state agency charged with collecting unemployment insurance taxes from employers and operating Iowa's unemployment insurance payment programs for workers. Annually, Iowa Workforce Development identifies the appropriate table for the following year. Unemployment tax rates are based on wages and recent unemployment benefit payments. In 2013, the tax rate will move favorably to table five.

## IWD Leadership to Serve on National Committees

Iowa Workforce Development is pleased to announce that two members of the IWD Leadership Team will serve on National Committees.

International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions (IAIABC) Workers' Compensation Commission Chris Godfrey was recently elected to service as the 2012-2013 IAIABC Executive Committee in the role of Secretary-Treasurer. The Executive Committee provides strategic leadership and financial oversight for the Association and is comprised of ten agency executives and the Chair of the Associate Member Council. The eleven member board shapes IAIABC initiatives to "advance the efficiency and effectiveness of workers' compensation systems throughout the world."

National Labor Exchange (NLX) Operations Committee Workforce Services Division Administrator Lori Adams has been appointed to the Operations Committee of the National Labor Exchange. It is a two-year appointment. The NLX Operations Committee provides guidance and input for all programmatic and operations issues of the NLX. It consists of ten employer representatives and ten state workforce agency representatives.



# Need for Skilled Iowa Grows as New Data Shows the Middle Skills Gap Getting Larger

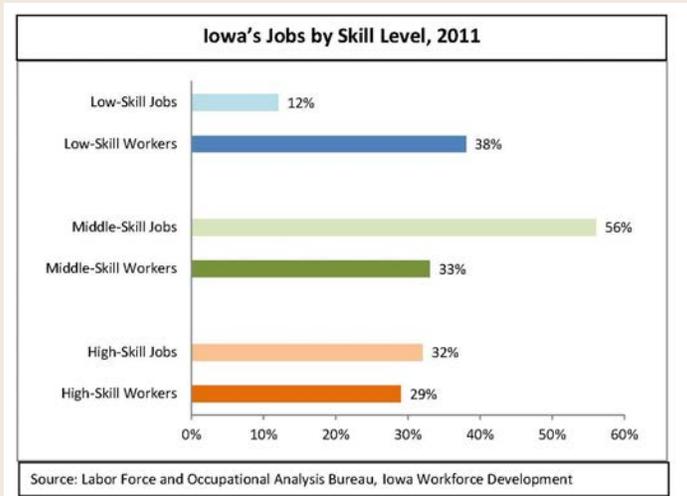
Recently released data for 2011 demonstrates a growing divide between Iowa's workforce and the growing jobs. 38 percent of Iowa's workforce is still classified as low skilled, however the job opportunities at this level have dropped by 10 to 18 percent.

Additionally, Iowa's job opportunities at the middle skill level have grown to 56 percent with no change in the percentage of Iowa's workforce that can fill the openings. Slight changes have occurred at the high skilled level, but the state is fairly evenly matched. Iowa's employers are continuing to recognize the need to be

involved in the Skilled Iowa Initiative. Nearly 700 employers are committed to recognizing the NCRC as a valuable tool for recruiting and hiring trained employees.

The recently launched Skilled Iowa Initiative was designed to upskill Iowa's workforce to meet the demands of Iowa's growing companies. As new jobs are created, the technical skills required to succeed in the job exceed what is currently available in Iowa's workforce.

The Skilled Iowa Initiative emphasizes the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) as a tool for certifying the skill set of



Iowa's to create a base of workers poised to succeed in Iowa's future economy. Previous data indicated that only 18 percent of Iowa's jobs were classified as low skilled but 38 percent of the workforce was at the low skilled

level. Additionally, 50 percent of Iowa's jobs were classified as middle skill however only 33 percent of the workforce had the required skill set. Iowa's high skilled jobs and workforce were fairly evenly matched.

## IowaWORKS Regions 6 & 7 Recognizes New Skilled Iowa Employers



Veridian Credit Union



Martin Brothers Distributing Co.



Thomas G. Friedman DDS



Family Management Credit Counselors

## Lakes Area and Kossuth County ECI's Held Joint Meeting

The Lakes Area Employers' Council ECI and Kossuth County ECI, met jointly on Sept. 19, 2012 at Iowa Lakes Community College in Spencer, Iowa. A total of 13 people were in attendance. Featured speakers were Debra Ostrem, Bureau Chief, Employment Statistics, Brent Paulson, Labor Force & Occupational Analysis Bureau Chief, and John Good, Regional Research & Analysis Bureau with Iowa Workforce Development in Des Moines.

Have you ever wondered what is included in LMI, where you can

access LMI information and how you can use it in your business? Businesses will learn how to access and analyze labor market information and identify resources that can assist with gathering and presenting LMI information for your customers.



## Southwest Iowa ECI Hosted Training Session in September

Southwest Iowa Employers' Council (ECI) and Iowa Workforce Development hosted a training session on Wednesday, September 19 on "Drug and Alcohol Testing Law in Iowa: Policies, Procedures and Supervisor Training."

Held at the Iowa School for

the Deaf in Council Bluffs, 63 employers attended the four-hour session. Anne Holden-Kendall, attorney with Dickinson Law led the session along with Sargent Chuck Gorman of the Council Bluffs Police Department.



## Number of Virtual Access Points in Iowa School Districts Continues to Grow

Whether students are trying to choose a career path or seeking information on jobs, IowaWORKS Virtual Access Points have all the information at students fingertips. IowaWORKS has a broad range of tools and services geared to specifically meet the needs of Iowa students.

To date, over 75 percent of Iowa's 351 schools districts are using or have committed to have IowaWORKS Virtual Access Points available for students.

IowaWORKS Virtual Access Point desktops allow students to navigate their way through the all information available online.

All Virtual Access Point desktops include links for:

- Career Assessments/Tests
- Computer Training
- I Have a Plan Iowa
- Iowa Labor Market Information
- Workforce, Education & Training Programs
- Financial Aid
- Junior Achievement Student Center
- Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Character Counts

All of the information and tools IowaWORKS has available online for students is organized under the I am a Student icon on the Virtual Access Point desktop.

# Workers' Compensation

## Des Moines Chosen as the Host City for 2013 Spring Forum

Iowa Workers' Compensation Commissioner Chris J. Godfrey has announced that the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions (IAIABC) formally selected the Iowa Division of Workers' Compensation as the host and Des Moines, Iowa as the host city for the

2013 Spring Forum. The IAIABC will bring participants from various jurisdictions, including international participants, to Des Moines from April 29 – May 3, 2013. The Forum is an inclusive meeting, inviting workers' compensation leaders to develop, learn, share, and grow in a unique educational

environment. This event offers workers' compensation professionals an opportunity to dialogue and develop new solutions and ideas to respond to industry challenges.

Commissioner Godfrey will be working with the Iowa Workers' Compensation Advisory

Committee to provide Iowa based topics and presentations and to highlight the best aspects of the Des Moines and Iowa community. The event will be held at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown Hotel and expects up to 200 participants.

# Unemployment Insurance Update

## UI Service Center Update

Implementation of a new service delivery model had caused our normally "slow" time of year to be a flurry of activity and change. The Unemployment Insurance Service Center (UISC) received over 20,000 phone calls in the first three weeks of September. The majority of the questions were about unemployment benefits; however, we also fielded questions on unemployment tax, wage and hour. The daily phone call volume was over 1,400 with an average of 190 calls going to our voice messaging system. Staff members from a few local offices were selected to return the voice messages and address the individual's questions or

concerns. The help of the local office staff has allowed for quicker responses and a better overall experience for the individual calling into the UI Service Center.

UISC staff had started going weekly training sessions that target specific UI benefits issues. These sessions encompass all employees within the UISC and cover topics that help fact-finders, the customer service team and benefit payment control. Management has a core list of what will be covered and received input from staff on topics. We hope these sessions reflect improved performance in accordance with DOL requirements.

## Memorial

*On August 25, 2012, the UI Division lost an incredibly valuable member of its leadership team. Michele Andre served IWD and the UI program in a variety of roles over the past 35 years, but as the head of UI Quality Control, she built a tremendous team of UI experts and camaraderie that has allowed them to keep the bureau moving forward in her absence. As a member of the UI Division leadership she provided exceptional counsel and was very helpful looking to the future. It is without saying that her passing came far too early and that she is dearly missed.*



# Unemployment Insurance Continued

## UI TAX DIVISION: MylowaUI System Update

MylowaUI (MIUI) went through a Payment Maintenance Process August 15 – September 10, 2012. During this time, our MIUI system was down to all external users as well as the majority of internal users. We created a historic MIUI site for all internal staff to use as reference to continue with their daily job tasks.

We were able to successfully accomplish many goals with this endeavor such as correcting

over/under applied payments, removing and identifying returned payments, correcting credits, and adding a payment identifier to each payment in MIUI. This payment identifier will make tracking payments in MIUI and the corresponding debt which was paid off with that payment, along with making the reconciliation of the general ledger a smoother process.

We are also very pleased to

announce that in October, staff will begin testing some very critical functionality within MIUI such as transfer of experience, wage adjustment, reverse payment, suspense account and corrections with our workflow process.

Successful testing and deployment of these functions will allow staff to continue to reduce back logs. Unfortunately, during this down time, Records Management was also down from Aug. 15<sup>th</sup>–Sept.

8<sup>th</sup> and unable to issue workflows to staff or process daily work. With MIUI being down we have a backlog of scanning which we hope to have processed by the end of October.

The MIUI Customer Service Team is available to assist employers and third party providers who need help working in MIUI. They have all kinds of questions from technical to very simple questions.

### On-Going UI Projects

There are a number of on-going projects. Updates on a few are highlighted below:

#### 1. ELECTRONIC NOTICE OF CLAIMS

Initial implementation of the electronic Notice of Claim occurred at the end of March. State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES) and E-Response allows us to send and receive notice of unemployment insurance claims electronically. We began with 15 employers who use the third-party administrator TALX. We are hoping to add an additional 200 TALX employers by the end of September and 2000 TALX employers by the end of the year. Non-TALX employers should be offered this service before the end of December.

#### 2. WEB CLAIM PROCESSING:

UI recently implemented "auto-processing" of UI claim applications filed over the internet.. Currently, 35-40% of claims are being filed without need for staff intervention. Service requests to IT are in the works to find ways to increase this number by processing special claims (CWC, Business Closing, Federal and Military claims). We have also implemented the work registration process on the web claim application so individuals can Register for work at the same time they file their on-line claim. Prior to the new implementation of the web claim, customers would have to file their claim and then would receive notice to either register on-line or go. Now, customers can file a claim and register for work all within the same application.



### Internship Matching

The implementation of the Skilled Iowa initiative has opened the door to additional reemployment opportunities for UI claimants. Requests for list of claimants to match up with Skilled Iowa training internships have been coming in and we are incorporating the requirement for completing the NCRC into our Reemployment Services (RES) and Reemployment Assistance (REA) programs.

### Revenue Collection

Revenue Collections is in the first stages of bringing all Unemployment Insurance collections into one area. Previously, collection of unemployment taxes for employers was handled in one section and collection of overpayment of benefits was handled in another. Staff is working on determining the best, most efficient way to make this transition and consolidation. They are working with legal counsel on writing procedures for the process. Hopefully this will make both processes more consistent in how they are handled and less confusing for employers and individuals receiving benefits.

# Noteworthy Employee Acknowledgements and Accomplishments

We appreciate the feedback we get from our customers. Here are a few noteworthy comments we've received:

– Larry Basar with Cargill Meat Solutions sent a note to thank Brenda Noe, Ottumwa, for all her help scheduling and coordinating the two job fairs Cargill held at the IowaWORKS office in Ottumwa. "These sessions have

been a tremendous success. These were not just mere hiring opportunities, the people we found through IowaWORKS were skilled mechanics. With the two sessions, we have hired five mechanics."

– Allison Tedrow with Ottumwa Job Corps Center thanked Linda Rouse, Ottumwa, for allowing her students to visit the local IowaWORKS office. "Everything

you talked with them about was exactly what they need to hear from someone. I am very appreciative of your time. Your information made a very positive impact on my students.

– Chris Nilles, Des Moines, received a thank you note from Mathelle Carlson from IPERS Improvement Association. "Thank you for being the speaker at the Annual Meeting of IPERS Improvement Association. Your presentation covered a

great deal of information about the services you offer. Please know that the work you do for others is important. Each and everyone who works with the public, sharing skills is greatly appreciated."

If you would like to send us your noteworthy comment, send it to: [kathryn.hommer@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:kathryn.hommer@iwd.iowa.gov) or 515-281-5407.



## Employee News

### Retirements

DeAnn Barnhill  
Dixie Beyer  
Larry Eamer  
Charles Estlick  
Kristine Moehr

### Anniversaries

5 Years  
Dawn Chamberlain  
Kathleen Norris  
Teresa Glick  
Glen Gassman  
Kiyokazu Matsuyama  
Sandra Dostal  
Corey Watt

Gina Robinson  
Teresa Wageman  
Jennifer Gerrish-Lampe  
Sheila Stoeckel

10 Years  
Lurdes Torres  
Frank Rubero  
Hilda Chavez

15 Years  
Kara Close  
Doug Brooks  
Julie Elder

20 Years  
Mark Keith  
Patti Allen  
Richard Anderson

25 Years  
Jeff Ellis  
Jon Heitland  
Juliann Putzier  
Richard Hyde

35+ Years  
Patrick Callan  
John Doidge  
Thomas Schieffer

## Iowa Workforce NEWS

1000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50319  
(800) 562-4692

For Deaf or Hard of Hearing, call Relay 711

**Terry Branstad**  
Governor

**Teresa Wahlert**  
Director

**Kerry Koonce**  
Communications Director

**Mark French**  
Web Master

**Kathryn Hommer**  
Marketing/Communications Coordinator

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program • Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request.