



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey
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PRESS RELEASE

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MAYOR MORRISSEY ANNOUNCES NEW MANUFACTURING TRAINING INITIATIVE EFFORT FOR NORTHERN ILLINOIS REGION

ROCKFORD – Mayor Morrissey, as chief executive officer of the local Workforce Investment Board and as the Mayor of Rockford, the federal grant recipient for federal workforce training funds for the region, announced a major initiative and regional partnership today to provide customized employment and training solutions to manufacturing employers and job seekers throughout Northern Illinois.

“Our Workforce Investment Board has lead a regional partnership effort comprised of eleven Northern Illinois counties, economic development agencies, workforce and community-based organizations, educational institutions, and manufacturing employers to provide customized employment and training solutions to employers and workforce participants through a competency-based work-centered training system that integrates classroom/lab-based and work-based training,” stated Mayor Morrissey.

“Our manufacturing employers need well-trained workers now, and we have many people who need jobs now. This fast-tracked training approach will allow participants to receive stackable credentials and/or industry-recognized certifications based on personalized career and training plans that build on the skills workers already have, and get them into the workforce quicker. I commend Chairman Paul Callighan and Darcy Bucholz, Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Board, for leading this economic development effort with our regional partners,” stated Mayor Morrissey.

“Our Northern Illinois Manufacturing Region has applied for \$1,231,960.00 in grant funds through the Illinois Pathways Program administered by the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity,” stated Darcy Bucholz, Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Board. “This statewide initiative is a program designed to support college and career readiness for all students to explore their academic

and career interests while also supporting new statewide, public-private partnerships known as learning exchanges that better coordinate investments, resources and planning for those programs,” noted Bucholz.

The grant application and Illinois Pathways grant would benefit the entire northern Illinois manufacturing sector region, comprised of Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Kane, Kendall, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, and Winnebago Counties, by providing customized employment and training solutions to employers and participants through a work-centered training system that integrates classroom/lab-based and work-based training.

The Northern Illinois regional partnership service delivery model will focus on addressing shortages in occupations involving machining, welding and industrial maintenance. Positions that are experiencing employment shortages in the region includes assemblers, machinists, computer controlled machine tool operators, welders, welding machine setters/operators, industrial machinery mechanics, robotics technicians, mechanical engineering technicians, and A&P mechanics.

“One of the key features of this regional service delivery model will be to address issues in identifying and recruiting talent, developing a workforce with the skills necessary to obtain and sustain employment, and creating a process that will produce more effective results for employers and job seekers,” stated Paul Callighan, chairman of the Workforce Investment Board. “We are hopeful that as a leader in manufacturing in the State of Illinois, we will be successful in our grant request.”

“The key to this model is that it will help address changes at both the service delivery and system levels of our education and training programs. This initiative will help us create a fast track to removing barriers by connecting pre-college to career tech coursework. By developing personalized career and training plans, integrated bridge programs, work-centered training, and competency-based credentials, it will greatly assist our high school redesign efforts to develop High School Academies that will better prepare and link our students and future workers to career pathways,” stated Mayor Morrissey. “We are excited about the collaboration and program.”

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