

Eastern Washington Partnership
WorkSource System Update
September 2016

Walla Walla Veteran's Nursing Home Nearing Completion

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is finalizing construction of the new 80 bed Nursing Home facility being built on the Veterans Administration hospital grounds, and has initiated recruitment for key administrative roles. The long awaited facility will provide round the clock, long term housing and medical support for veterans who lack resources to enter private residential facilities.

WDVA has chosen a "small house" model with residents grouped into separate living units that provide a more home like atmosphere. Certified Nursing Assistants will serve as primary care providers and staffing plans will ensure a minimum ratio of 1 staff per 10 residents (all 3 shifts.) Registered Nurses will provide supervisory oversight, and ensure skilled nursing capacity to triage and respond to urgent medical needs.

When complete, the facility is expected to employ 80 – 100 full time employees. The WDVA expects to receive the keys to the facility in December, and hopes to open for resident occupancy in February, 2017. Onboarding and training of employees will occur 6 weeks prior to the opening date.

WorkSource Walla Walla will host a recruiting and informational event for the new facility on September 22nd, from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. WorkSource staff will also deliver special workshop sessions to assist interested applicants in completing the required (on-line) state application. A second recruitment event is being planned for late October.

Kinross Mine Closure

Following the January announcement that the Echo Bay / Kinross Gold Mine in Republic would be closing, WorkSource Colville staffs have worked to maintain regular communication with Kinross management and closely monitor the status of employee separations.

The closure of the mine will impact roughly 180 Kinross employees, and approximately 10 on-site "Leased Firm" employees. The majority of impacted workers reside in Ferry County, however, an estimated 30 employees live in Stevens, Okanagan and Spokane counties.

A Trade Act Petition has been approved by the Department of Labor that will enable impacted workers to request retraining services, job search and relocation allowances, and Trade Readjustment Allowances (similar to unemployment benefits) if participating in approved training. Workers will also be provided all reemployment services afforded through the WorkSource system such as, skills assessments, employment counseling, and assistance with job search readiness activities such as resume writing and interviewing skills.

Layoff activity to date has been modest, with only 5 workers displaced. Per the companies projected closure schedule, layoffs will remain light until December when it is anticipated that the mine shut down will displace 80 employees. A planned closure of the mill in February of 2017 will mark the next large layoff, impacting an estimated 40 employees, with the balance of separations to be completed by June, 2017.

WorkSourceWa.Com

Following implementation of the new **WorkSourceWA.com** website in May, programming and development work has continued to eliminate bugs and improve customer usability. As anticipated, individuals with limited experience utilizing web based services have been challenged in navigating the site and initiating their profiles. WorkSource staffs have work diligently to help these job seekers and employers gain an understanding of the sites design and functionality, and have been successful (in most cases) supporting customers in establishing their profiles.

For job seekers and employers who previously utilized the Go2WorkSource website, a secondary challenge has surfaced in correlating prior account characteristics (e-mail addresses, date of birth & SSN discrepancies) through the required Secure Access Washington (SAW) system. If WorkSource staff are unsuccessful in resolving common data discrepancies, customers must then be guided to consult with technical support staff from Monster Government Services or the SAW help desk. Success rates in resolving account creation issues are generally good, providing the customer is amenable to working with the technical support personnel.

WorkSource staffs charged with reviewing and approving employer accounts have indicated that roughly 36 – 40 new accounts are requested each business day across the state system.

Reports that detail customer activity from the site are continuing to be developed, however staff accessible reports have not been finalized and validated at this time. It is expected that these reports will be performing in a more reliable manner by the end of the year, which will enable WorkSource partners to better account for activity, and share data with key stakeholders.