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First of Its Kind Statewide Drive-Thru Job Fair Served Nearly 4,000 People Statewide; Provided Safe Way for Unemployed to Get Connected With Hiring Employers

The statewide drive-thru job fair planned by Wisconsin's 11 workforce boards on July 15, proved to be a tremendous success, providing 3,972 unemployed individuals with information on 687 employers with roles to fill immediately. The event was sponsored and coordinated by the Wisconsin Workforce Development Association (WWDA), which unites all of Wisconsin's workforce boards in a coalition to address statewide workforce efforts.

While Wisconsin continues to suffer with record unemployment and the closure of most of its job centers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the drive-thru job fair was designed to get information about open jobs to those furloughed or permanently laid off. In 16 sites across the state between 12-4 pm, local Job Center staff in gloves and masks handed out sealed plastic bags with printed flyers indicating regional employers ready to hire. For most of the day, rain sputtered from the sky, but traffic was brisk and the supply packets had been nearly exhausted.

In Northeast Wisconsin, a site at the Riverside Ballroom in Green Bay served by the Bay Area Workforce Development Board saw 500 cars, while the site at the Oshkosh Chamber saw 400 cars with support from the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board.

“The line of cars passing through our drive-thru job fair demonstrates that our current unemployment situation in Northeast Wisconsin is going to be a larger challenge than we would have hoped,” said Anthony Snyder, CEO of the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board. “Our region went from record low unemployment to record high unemployment practically overnight and the resources from the federal and state government are not yet appropriated to serve this tsunami of unemployed Wisconsinites.”

Typically, in cases of large layoffs or rising unemployment, the U.S. Department of Labor releases dollars to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. In turn, each of the 11 workforce boards are provided funds based on a formula that includes unemployment, poverty rates and population. These dollars are used to staff and operate job centers. These resources also allow boards to hire career planners to help the newly unemployed navigate the unemployment insurance maze, conduct skills assessments, develop updated resumes and provide retraining along with books, mileage and daycare expenses for someone preparing for a new career. All of these services are completely free and are made available to help people get back to work faster and at greater salaries.

“The workforce boards across Wisconsin are dedicated to helping get someone back to work, preferably trained and prepared for a hot job in a growing industry like IT, logistics, manufacturing or healthcare,” said Snyder. “As we see more and more low-skilled jobs in retail, hospitality and other service industries going away, there’s never been a better time to consider

some upskilling and we will pay for it, assuming Congress and the White House allocate the funding.”

Links to scans of the flyers handed out during the drive thru job fair are found here:

<https://www.wvda.org/blog/2020/7/20/in-case-you-missed-the-drive-thru-job-fair>

For more information on the Fox Valley Job Centers or the work of the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, please visit www.foxvalleywork.org or call 920-720-5600.

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Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (FVWDB) is a not-for-profit building a world-class workforce in northeast Wisconsin. Serving six counties — Calumet, Green Lake, Fond du Lac, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago — FVWDB collaborates with a number of state and local workforce partners to help job seekers gain the skills needed to find employment and help businesses find the highly skilled workers they need.

FVWDB is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider.

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