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# GET CONNECTED

Dedicated to the Workforce in Boone, Stephenson and Winnebago Counties

**2019** ANNUAL SUMMARY

July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

THE**WORKFORCE****CONNECTION**.ORG

# OUR MISSION

The Workforce Connection helps support economic growth in Boone, Stephenson and Winnebago Counties. Our mission is to create a competitive, skilled and educated workforce by providing a system for individuals to gain meaningful employment in response to the needs of business.

The Workforce Connection's vision is to **advance the economic vitality of the region** by providing a **qualified workforce** through an integrated, accessible, **employer-driven system**, utilizing our collective resources to develop human capital for existing and emerging opportunities.

# 2019 REFLECTIONS



BY **DR. LISA M. BLY-JONES**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WOW! We are flexible and can pivot on a dime. Over the last year, we have seen record low unemployment and record highs, all in the span of one year. Overnight, our public workforce system got an upgrade and I can't imagine going back to the way things were. We implemented virtual services and offered digital literacy to those who found themselves lacking current technology skills. Whenever our society faces an economic downturn, as much as we put into business and industry, we should be willing to make a similar investment in human potential and human capital. People are the greatest asset in our regional economy!



BY **FRANK ROTELLO**, BOARD CHAIR

"When we launched our 2020-2024 regional workforce plan during a press conference with Mayor McNamara, nobody could have anticipated what we were about to experience with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fortunately, the strategic plan was put together using a bottoms up approach leveraging TWC committee structure that incorporated stakeholder input to develop the plan. Because of the alignment and focus of the TWC Board, Staff, and One Stop Operator provider, the organization was able to pivot quickly to meet the challenges and impact of COVID-19 on the region.

During these challenging times, it is remarkable how the organization was able to leverage new technologies while working remotely to effectively continue to serve individuals and employers in the region.

TWC is also working to obtain additional funding and creating new, innovative programs to address the needs of our region. The Workforce Connection is an asset and resource for our region. Through the hard work, dedication and results achieved by the organization, we have built a stronger brand and improved critical stakeholder relationships positioning TWC for continued success into 2021 and beyond.

I personally want to thank the Chief Elected Officials, TWC Board, TWC Staff and the One Stop Operators (Rock Valley College, Goodwill, IDES) for their passion, commitment and dedication serving individuals and employers in our local workforce areas. "

# BOARD

## OFFICERS

### *Chair*

**Frank Rotello, CEO**

Alpha Controls & Services LLC

### *Vice Chair*

**Michelle Cassaro, Chief Financial Officer**

Chicago Rockford International Airport

### *Secretary/Treasurer*

**Amy M. Ott, President**

Boylan Catholic High School

### *Immediate Past Chair*

**Karen Brown, Director, Human Resources**

Highland Community College

## CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS

### *Chair*

**Mayor Thomas P. McNamara**

City of Rockford – Grant Recipient

**Frank Haney (Winnebago County Board Chair)**

Winnebago County

**Karl Johnson (Boone County Board Chair)**

Boone County

**William Hadley (Stephenson County Board Chair)**

Stephenson County

## BOARD MEMBERS

**Mark Adams, Store Manager**

Countryside Markets

**Ben Bernsten, President**

Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois

**Eric Black, Human Resource Recruiter**

Alorica Inc.

**Scott Bloomquist, Superintendent**

Boone/Winnebago Regional Office of Education

**Nathan Bryant, President & CEO**

Rockford Area Economic Development Council

**Todd Cagnoni, City Administrator**

City of Rockford

**Len Carter, Chief Human Resources Officer**

FHN

**Fred Delarosa, General Manager**

Embassy Suites Rockford Riverfront

**Pamela Lopez-Fettes, Executive Director**

Growth Dimensions of Belvidere and Boone County

**Suzanne K. Fischer, Vice President**

OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center

**Einar Forsman, President & CEO**

Rockford Chamber of Commerce

**Alan Golden, President**

Northwestern Illinois Building & Construction Trades

**Dr. Daniel Grohens, Rehab. Services Supervisor**

IL DHS – Div. of Rehabilitation Services

**Jerry Guinane, VP of Human Resources**

SwedishAmerican Health System

**Bob Guirl, Community Member**

**Geri-Dee Hayden, Vice President**

Commercial Banking

First National Bank

**Angela Hite-Carter, Executive Director**

Student Service & Alternative Learning

Rockford Public Schools #205

**Greg Harle, Training Director**

Plumbers & Pipefitters LU 23

**Vanessa Hughes, President**

Hughes Resources

**Beth Young, Vice President/Chief Executive Officer**

Operations

Rock Valley College

**Paul Logli, CEO**

United Way of Rock River Valley

**James Pirages, Attorney at Law**

Hinshaw & Culbertson

**Jordan Priest, President**

617 Enterprises

**Kraig Reichwald, VP of Manufacturing**

Custom Metal Products

**Craig Steege, Campus Director**

Rasmussen College

**Mark Stefanic, Director of Projects**

Supply Core

**Dr. Rudy Valdez, Project Manager**

Kaney Aerospace

**Mark Williams, Executive Director**

Greater Freeport Partnership

**Ed Wood, VP of Human Resources**

Berner Food & Beverage

**Jeff Zeal, Local Office Manager**

Illinois Department of Employment Security

## BOARD STAFF

**Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones, Executive Director**

Executive Committee & Operations Management Council Staff Liaison

**Chris Connors, Planning & Quality Assurance Manager**

Youth Council Staff Liaison

**Cathy Cornelius, Board Assistant**

**Mike Johnson, Grant Compliance Specialist & EO Officer**

Performance & Accountability Committee Staff Liaison

**Robert Jones Jr., Business Account Manager**

Employer & Public Engagement Committee Staff Liaison

**Amanda Sink, Strategic Initiatives Manager**

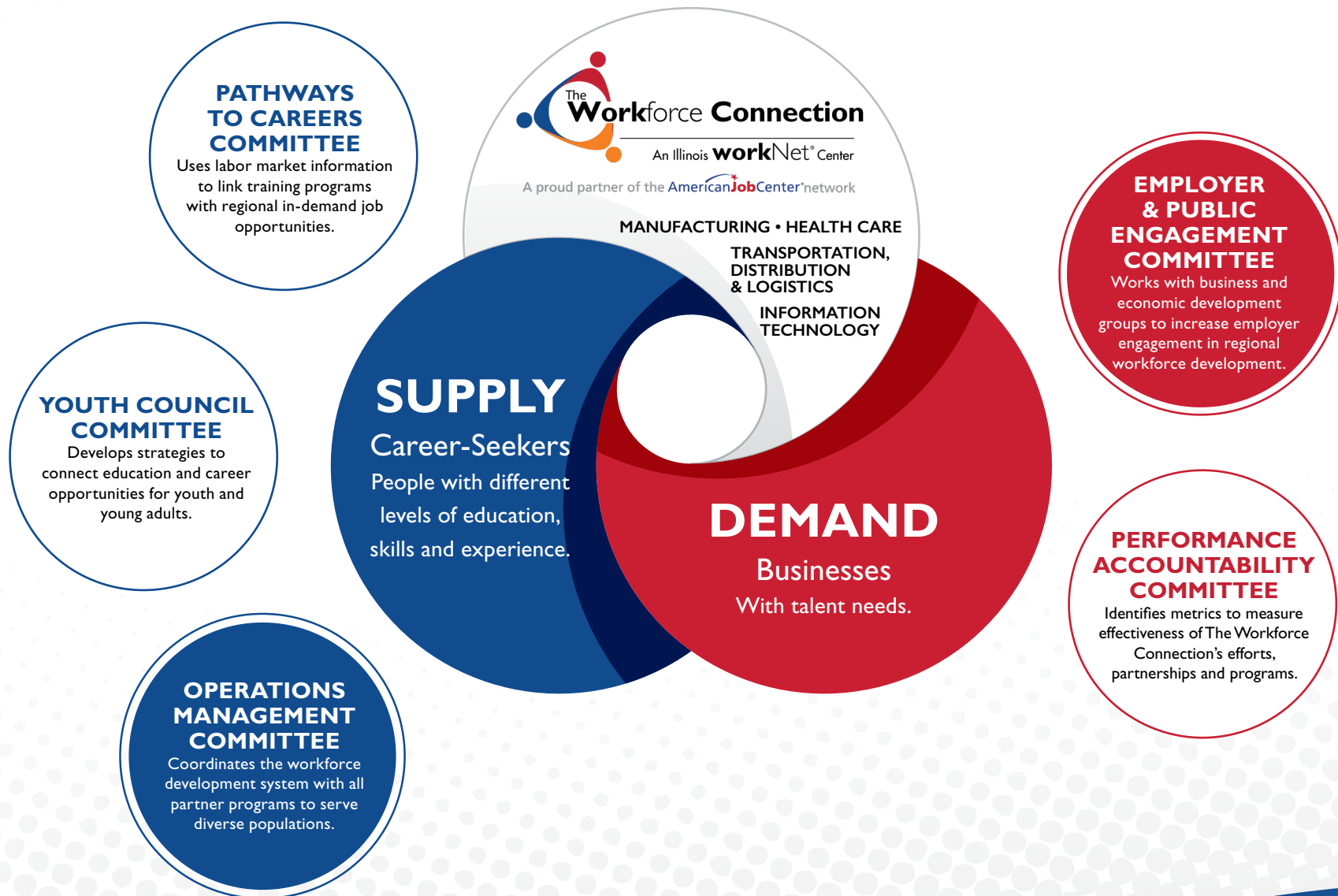
Pathways to Careers Committee Staff Liaison

**Dan White, Fiscal Manager**

Finance Committee Staff Liaison

# GET CONNECTED

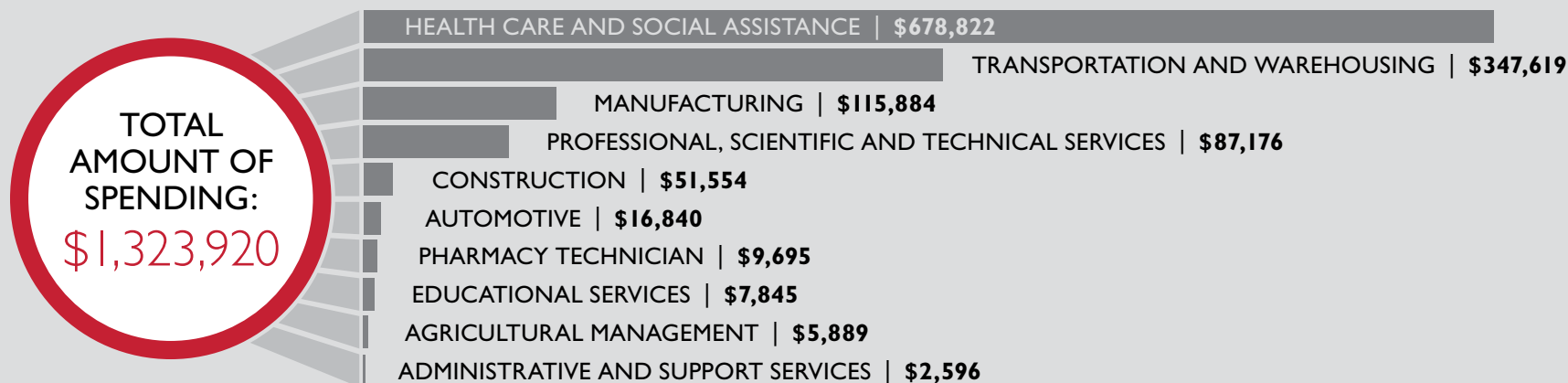
Your local workforce board serving Boone, Stephenson and Winnebago counties



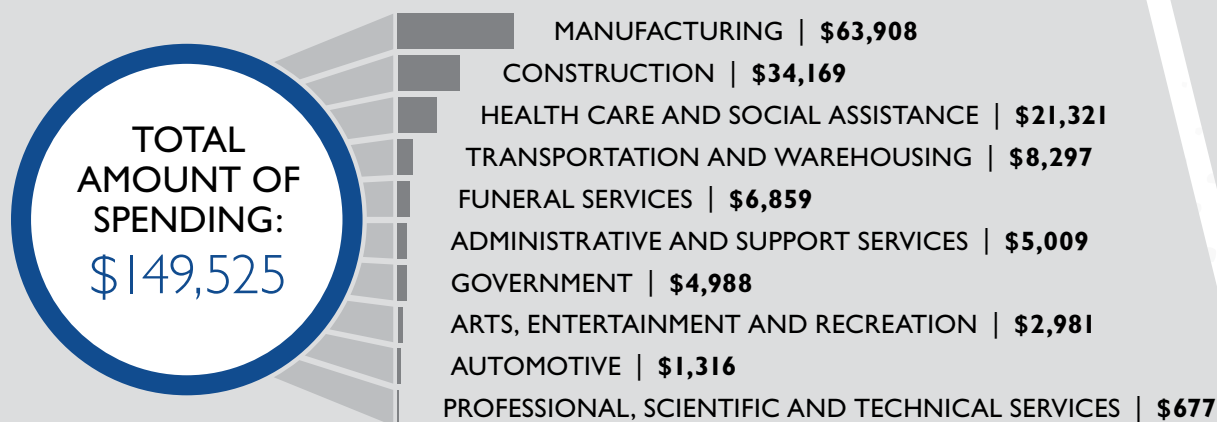
# CONNECT WITH EDUCATION

The Workforce Connection has a network of regional training partners that provide career and technical training and on-going support during training.

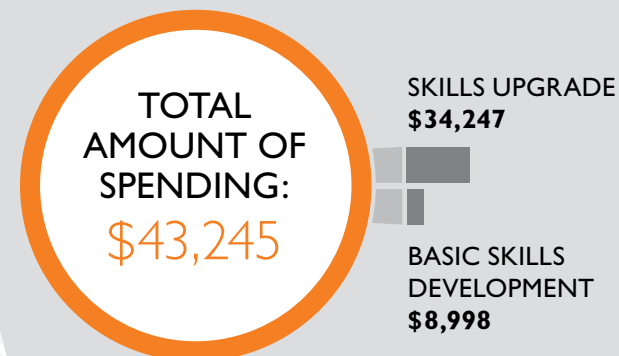
## OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING



## ON-THE-JOB TRAINING



## BASIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS UPGRADE



# EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

## EMPLOYER SUCCESS STORIES



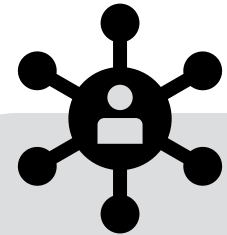
Northern Precision Plastics molds custom plastic parts for a variety of industries. Early in 2019, they had a goal to become ISO 9001 registered, basically formalizing a Quality Management System. They are a small business and did not have the internal resources to put everything in place and train their employees. They needed outside help which was not in the budget. Terry Roche, President, heard about the availability of incumbent worker training through The Workforce Connection and it was a perfect match for their company. They were able to train their employees and are proud to say they are now an ISO 9001 registered company. They have already seen positive results with having recently acquired a new customer that has the potential to increase sales by 10%. The process has improved their operations, through better tracking of processes resulting in increased efficiency.



FHN received resources and funding to support workforce development so that they could meet the needs of patients, as well as the community they serve. This allowed FHN to offer scholarships to the community to become a Certified Medical Assistant or Certified Nursing Assistant and grow within the organization. FHN also received program outlines and models to set up an apprenticeship model. Additionally, FHN was able to upskill their current workforce in order to meet the needs of their patients with the shortages in phlebotomy. During COVID-19, several staff were trained to work in the emergency room to support the additional patients they had that they were not accustomed to prior to the pandemic.



The Industrial Maintenance Accelerated Program (IMAP) Project which included Nuestro Queso, Anchor Harvey and Danfoss, upskilled their current staff in order to meet the maintenance technician needs for all three employers. The incumbent worker training gave training to their maintenance technicians, which would not have been available to Danfoss otherwise or would have taken months or years to acquire. This allowed the three employers to give employees the opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills, and make a much faster impact on their business.



### INCUMBENT WORKER DOLLARS

\$114,850

SPENT WITH EMPLOYERS TO UPSKILL THEIR CURRENT WORKFORCE



21,934

ILLINOIS JOB LINK ACTIVE RESUMES



28,805

CAREER CENTER VISITORS



36,052

CAREER CENTER SERVICES PROVIDED

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## CONNECTED ACROSS THE REGION

“The Workforce Connection holds an incredibly important role in our community. They bring for-profits, nonprofits, private businesses, educational entities, and public entities together to drive our community’s discussion around workforce development. With an aging workforce coupled with a strong economy, workforce development is at the heart of our regions success today and tomorrow.”

*Mayor Tom McNamara  
City of Rockford*

“Despite where we’re at, finding quality talent is still difficult and it’s necessary that we remain connected to organizations such as The Workforce Connection. As someone who sits on the State Engagement Board as well as sitting on the local Workforce Connection board, we know we have a great resource and great asset, but we also know we need to continue to reinforce awareness of that throughout our region to take full advantage and grow and prosper in our region.”

*Einar Forsman, President & CEO  
Rockford Chamber of Commerce*

“The partnership that we have aligned with The Workforce Connection is extremely important to deliver the services and programs that are offered directly to our employers. The services that we get from The Workforce Connection and the partnership level we have is certainly something to look forward to, particularly moving into the apprenticeship programs. All of these will be part of our ongoing efforts to improve our economic health and well-being in Stephenson County.”

*Mark Williams, Executive Director  
Greater Freeport Partnership*

“On behalf of the Boone County area, we appreciate the partnership with The Workforce Connection. We’ve been able to tap into their expertise on a changing business climate and the needs across our region. We’ve also been able to connect that with their programs and services that are available to our businesses. Especially in this essential time, this has been really critical for what our businesses need today and what they need tomorrow.”

*Pamela Lopez-Fettes, Executive Director  
Growth Dimensions of Belvidere  
and Boone County*

## OUR EMPLOYER PARTNERS

AAR Corp.	Keep Northern IL Beautiful
Adkins Energy	Kids Around the World
Aircraft Gear Corporation	Kikifer’s Academy
American Red Cross	Lifescape Community Services
Anchor Harvey Components	Loescher
Area Mechanical	Lucy’s #7 Burger Bar
B&B Tool	Machinist Mate One
Belvidere Chamber of Commerce	Mechanical Inc
Boone County Health Department	Midway Village Museum
Bourn & Koch, Inc.	Midwest Packaging & Container
Boys & Girls Club	Nelson Carlson
Brian Pinkstaff-State Farm Agency	Northern Precision Plastics
Burpee Museum	Northwest Community Center
Carrie’s Pooch Paradise	Nuestro Queso
Corpro Screentech	Pierce Consulting Group/Transamerica Financial Advisors
Crandall Stats & Sensors, Inc.	Proof Training
Custom Metals	Quality Transport
Cyber Eye Tech Solutions	Quantum Design
DairyHaus	Rock River Valley Food Pantry
Danfoss-Total Project	Rock Valley College
Elite Fasteners	Rockford Quality Grinding
EWT/3DCNC, Inc.	Rockford Rivets
Fairhaven Retirement Center	Rockford Specialties Company
FHN	Schubert’s Speed Shop
Glaucoma Associates of IL	Seabreeze Non-Emergency Ked. Trans
Goddess Salon	Stateline Boys and Girls Club
Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois	Stateline Solar
Grace Funeral and Cremation Services	Stewart and Associates
Great Northern Instore	SwedishAmerican Health System
Greater Freeport Partnership	The Canine Crunchery
Greenlink Energy Solutions, Inc.	The Discovery Center
Growth Dimensions	Total Plumbing and Heating LTD
Heritage Aero	Tri Star Metals, LLC
Hi Temp dba Blue Water Thermal	Tuffy’s Auto Service Center
I. Spinello Locksmiths	Ultrasonic Power Corporation
Integrative Medical Solutions	Winnebago County Housing Authority
ITW Shakeproof	



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#### OFFICE **LOCATIONS**

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307 W Main Street, Freeport, IL 61032



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**THEWORKFORCECONNECTION.ORG**

#### **THE WORKFORCE CONNECTION DISCLAIMERS**

The Workforce Connection – an Illinois WorkNet Center and partner in the American Job Center network.

This program is funded by The Workforce Connection, Inc., IL Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, and the U.S. Department of Labor.

The Workforce Connection is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

All voice telephone numbers on this website may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment by calling TTY(800) 526-0844 or 711. Contact the Equal Opportunity Officer at 815-395-6626.

This program is subject to the provisions of the "Jobs for Veteran's Act" Public Law 107-288, which provides priority of services to veterans and spouses of certain veterans.