

# Washington State University's Pathways to Prosperity Goes Big: Partners with Governor's Workforce Development Summit

## Inspiring 1,192 attendees at 27 locations across the state!

**Issue:** "Workforce Development" is a hot topic and a national concern demonstrated by news and agency attention. According to the President's Council of Economic Advisors report, "Strengthening the Rural Economy – The Current State of Rural America", rural communities face unique labor force challenges. These include lower incomes, higher poverty rates, smaller proportions of working age individuals (20-64), steady declines in population, higher proportions of residents on disability, and educational attainment lagging below urban areas. Conversations with federal and state agency workforce development providers highlighted service delivery challenges in rural Washington such as resources distributed by federal and state funds based on population level, eligibility limitations, and work in rural areas being more costly, in part due to lack of connectivity (i.e., broadband). This results in many rural leaders, employers and employees not having access to the critical skills and understanding of resources available for comprehensive business, community, and economic development opportunities.

**Opportunity:** Washington was one of six states to receive National Governors Association funding to develop a work-based learning policy framework and identify strategies to connect 16-29 year-olds with middle-skills career opportunities in STEM-intense industries (NGA, 2015). Work-based learning blends work experience and applied learning to develop youth and young adults' foundational and technical skills to expand their education, career and employment opportunities. This 18-month program has several deliverables including a Governor's Summit. The Washington work-based learning team includes approximately 70 organizations – education, industry associations, workforce development, labor, etc.

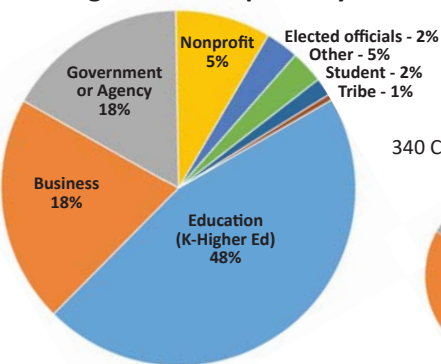
**WSU's Solution:** Pathways to Prosperity, a 2016 NACDEP Educational Technology Team Award-ee, connects multiple sites simultaneously to provide an interactive webinar featuring a specific topic followed by well-designed and adaptable activities facilitated by local community leaders. WSU's distributed conference model had already proven successful in overcoming barriers of time, distance and expense to provide economic development resources for rural communities (Rozier, 2011.) This new partnership offers an opportunity to connect urban and rural leaders to address the challenges related to workforce development.

**A great match:** Combine the energy and excitement of a highly visible, place-based Governor's Summit in a high population area with a well-designed distributed conference method to reach remote businesses and community leaders.

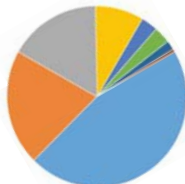
**The result:** 852 regional site attendees joined 340 at the central site via technology!

**The future:** Leverage this network of engaged communities in a Fall Pathways to Prosperity Conference around workforce development.

### 852 Regional Participants by Sector:



340 Central Site Participants:  
a similar mix



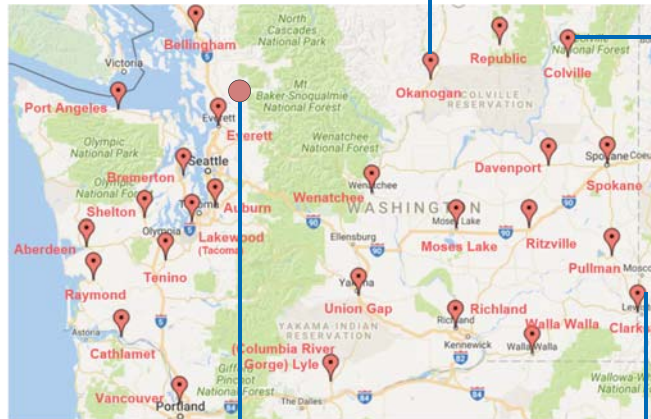
#### Okanogan - pop. 2,569

"What we kept hearing throughout the day was, "I want to be a part of the solution" and "I want to make this happen". It was such a positive discussion and really helped to open our community members up to thinking creatively and collaboratively towards developing new and exciting Career Connected Learning opportunities for youth in our area."

Kristi O'Neill, Career Connections Specialist, WorkSource



I also have a new job as of today! I am a Career Connections Specialist... and guess what???? My supervisor was so moved by the Summit that we've decided that my focus will be on coordinating efforts locally to connect youth and WVC students to mentorship opportunities, apprenticeships, internships and all that magical stuff!



#### Central Site



Nespelem,  
pop. 256

Three elementary students from Nespelem School represented the youngest group at the Governors Summit. This robotics team is working with the EV 3 Lego Robots, learning coding, added sensors and lessons with the Mars Space Challenge. There are anywhere from eight to thirteen students on any given evening. This program is a partnership with Nespelem School, Nespelem Valley Electric, QJDP and WSU Colville Reservation Extension 4-H Program.

Linda McLean, Director, WSU Colville Reservation Extension

(Proudly showing off her 4-H colors with Governor Insee!)



#### Colville, pop. 4,706

The Canine Crusaders Robotics Team from Kettle Falls, WA engaged attendees with their robot, their experiences and award-winning marketing campaign: #looklikeanengineer

Debra Hansen, Director, WSU Stevens County Extension  
Rod Van Alyne, Director, Workforce Development Council  
Jeff Koffel, Executive Director, Economic Development



#### Clarkston, pop. 7,317

WSU Extension organized presentations from local schools and Walla Walla Community College and concluded the day by touring the brand new WWCC Workforce Training and Business Center Building on the Clarkston Campus which will open this fall. The complex includes a 16-station aluminum welding facility that will train students for employment in the Jet Boat building industry; a machine fabrication building; and a business center/classroom area that will have space for rent for start-up entrepreneurs.

Mark Heitstuman, Director, WSU Asotin County Extension  
Glen Landrus and Lynn Carey, Teachers, Asotin High School  
Derek Brandes, President Walla Walla Community College  
Chad Miltenberger, Dean of Clarkston Campus, WWCC

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- P2P NGA News Release (2015). Available at: <https://www.nga.org/cms/home/news-room/news-releases/2015-news-releases/col2-content/states-look-to-increase-career.html>
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