

Nevada to consolidate workforce development boards

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY -- A state agency announced this week it plans to consolidate three boards that oversee workforce development into one, resulting in \$5 million more in federal funds directed annually to helping train job seekers to find employment.

The plan, "Moving Nevada Forward: A Plan For Excellence in Workforce Development," was released by the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR).

Currently, funding is provided from the federal Department of Labor to the Governor's Workforce Investment Board and funneled to two local boards, one in Southern Nevada and the other in Northern Nevada. These boards in turn contract with public and private organizations to offer workforce training programs to youth and adult and dislocated workers.

But a recent audit of this system by the state Division of Internal Audits revealed that too many federal dollars are lost to administrative and duplicate costs.

"I have charged everyone in my administration with looking closely at the functions of their offices, boards and commissions to eliminate duplications and streamline services with the goal of leveraging resources already available and trimming unnecessary overhead," Gov. Brian Sandoval said. "This new plan calls for greater collaboration between workforce development and the newly restructured Governor's Office Economic Development, which earlier this year released its plan under the 'Moving Nevada Forward' label as well. A key area of focus for my administration is building the type of trained workforce that will support economic

diversification.”

Organizations currently contracted as service providers to citizens for workforce needs will continue in the same capacity, but will be managed by DETR staff instead of the northern and southern board offices. Federal funding designated for each of the local workforce investment areas will remain unchanged; no geographic area of the state gains or loses under the reorganization and existing providers can remain in place if they are delivering the appropriate level of service to the end-user.

“This new plan will result in a significant amount of funds being spent directly for much-needed services, as we are essentially removing an administrative layer of expense,” DETR Director Frank R. Woodbeck said. “Administrative functions would be moved to DETR and community service providers will continue to deliver direct services to job seekers.”

The restructuring is expected to be complete by December 2012.

The audit of the state’s two local workforce investment boards found the Southern Nevada agency spent nearly twice as much on administration and monitoring of its programs than its northern counterpart.

If the southern board cut its local expenses to mirror those of the northern Nevada board, another \$1.9 million would have been available to job seekers in fiscal year 2011, the review found. The audit showed the Southern Nevada board, called Workforce Connections, spent 21 percent on administration and monitoring compared to only 11.3 percent in the north.

Ardell Galbreth, interim executive director of Workforce Connections, said that major changes have been implemented to reduce administrative and other costs. He took the position on April 5.

Galbreth said last week the 2012 budget has been revised to

ensure that no more than 20 percent of the funding will go to program and administrative costs. The staff of 72 at the board is also being reduced to 34 by the end of the year if not before, he said.