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Laid-off workers offered training program

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By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

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Four local agencies have teamed to create Training HQ, a program to quickly retrain laid-off workers for other jobs that are still in high demand.

Most dislocated workers will qualify for free training using federal stimulus funds, the agencies said Tuesday during a news conference at the Greater Owensboro Commerce Center.

Nick Brake, president of the Greater Owens-boro Economic Development Corp., said the partnership allows the community to "offer training quickly to workers looking for new or better jobs."

How the community reacts to the current recession and its rising unemployment rate will determine how well it succeeds in the future, Brake said.

Cindy Fiorella, vice president of workforce development for Owensboro Community & Technical College, said Training HQ will offer "short term training for quick jobs."

Programs offered include advanced manufacturing skills, electrical and mechanical maintenance, welding, emerging team leader, medical coding specialist, pharmacy technician, phlebotomy technician, certified nursing assistant and National Career Readiness Certificate.

All programs can be completed fairly quickly, Fiorella said. Some last six weeks, some two months, some 30 hours.

All are starting this spring to quickly retrain workers, she said.

"Jobs are available in these fields now," Fiorella said.

The program is a joint venture of EDC, the community college, Green River Area Development District and The Learning Community.

"Our community is blessed with opportunities for college degrees," said Tonya Logsdon, GRADD's associate director for work force development. "But people who are dislocated are not usually interested in long-term training. They need something to help them find a job now."

Fiorella said a free seminar about the program is scheduled for 7:45 to 11:45 a.m. Friday at the Advanced Technology Center on OCTC's main campus.

It will include workshops on exploring technical careers, exploring medical careers and job hunting on the Internet.

Pre-registration is not required, Fiorella said, but people can call 686-4444 to register.

Training HQ is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Center for Community and Economic Development on the college's downtown campus, 1501 Frederica St.

Computer access is also available for unemployment filing and other needs.

Training HQ also offers comprehensive assistance with career exploration and skill assessments, Fiorella said.

"The most urgent goal is to provide credentials that will help dislocated workers get back to work so they can support their families," she said.

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