

Initiatives in the Glades Spotlighted at Congressional Panel

CareerSource Palm Beach County's initiatives to increase employment and economic development in the Glades communities received national exposure when Ron Painter, CEO of the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), participated in a roundtable last week for the co-chairs of the House Rural Caucus in Washington, DC.

Mr. Painter said the room was packed with House Members as well as staffers from Member offices that represent rural districts as well as some urban areas. There were several questions during and after the roundtable, about whether and what policy changes were needed to better address rural issues.

In speaking about innovative programs in rural areas conducted by the nation's workforce boards, he told the attendees about our success to increase employment and economic development in the Glades communities. This collaborative effort was so successful that CareerSource Palm Beach County and its community partners were selected to receive the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Community Development Award/Rural Community of the Year in 2015.

Mr. Painter specifically addressed our:

- * Increased outreach to actual and potential major projects in the area. A direct result of this has been the addition of 3 new area employers and a fourth that is in progress. Together they are expected to ultimately provide more than 300 jobs.
- * Connecting project developers and organizations to buy local with purchases of more than \$25 million in products and services from businesses in the Glades communities since 2009.
- * Engaging with 143 employers in the Glades communities in 2017 to provide recruiting, hiring, training and related services to help them connect with local talent. CareerSource absorbs the cost of most employer services including recruitment, assessments and referrals of qualified job candidates; space and staff assistance for screening/interviewing candidates; and grants for training employees.

As a result of these initiatives, unemployment in these communities has been reduced from a 2011 peak of more than 40 percent to about 15 percent. During the past 5 program years, CareerSource has helped place 5,500 Glades area residents into jobs and provided more than \$1.7 million in training funds to local employers and residents.

"This is a great example of locals solving local issues when (given) the resources and freedom to do so," Mr. Painter said in response to our initiatives.

More information is available at: <http://www.careersourcepcb.com/GladesCommunities.aspx>