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Program developing local workforce earns top honors

Arapahoe/Douglas Works! receives national recognition for workforce development

GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO --- Arapahoe/Douglas Works! was one of only five Workforce Centers in the United States to earn the prestigious 2008 National Workforce Association *Workforce Development Award for Excellence*. It was recognized as an Outstanding Urban Workforce Development Agency from a field of over 2,900 Centers operating throughout the nation.

The agency was recognized for its sustainable partnership with the Douglas County School District, Arapahoe Community College, and a host of community employers, including CH2M Hill, Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Burt Automotive, Data Inc., Comcast, Air Methods, Qwest, Adam Aircraft, Sky Ridge Medical, Woodpert, Inc., and Jones Learning Services. This partnership, called the Expert Technician Academy, addresses the most acute skilled labor needs in information technology, biosciences, healthcare, aerospace, aviation, homeland security and energy and was funded by the Metro Denver WIRED Initiative's Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development grant. With almost 65,000 job candidates at all skill and education levels, including over 18,000 with a Bachelors degree or higher. Skills of these workers include management, financial, computer sciences, physical and life sciences, healthcare practitioners and support workers, technicians, construction, transportation and production workers, educators and administrative support personnel, an employer can find a qualified candidate to match virtually any open job.

If candidates with the proper skill sets cannot be found, then Arapahoe/Douglas Works! can provide occupational training through programs such as the Expert Technician Academy, which will serve 225 people throughout 2009, and thus far has graduated 18 computer technicians are in the process of testing at the ETA for their A+ certification. In addition, these participants have moved on to other ETA classes in either Net+ or Oracle programming which will lead to additional certifications.

"By working together we're addressing the current and projected skilled labor force needs of employers in these targeted industries," said Arapahoe County Commissioner Pat Noonan. "For workers, we're providing training in electronics, including opportunities to earn

certifications in various programs. This helps workers retain their jobs and increase their potential for promotion, while helping job seekers fine tune their hire ability.”

The next Academy begins in January 2009, when Net+, Internet Security and Electronics will be offered. To learn more call Susan Meek at 720-971-9830, or visit www.adworks.org.

The National Workforce Association is an organization dedicated to strengthening the nation's workforce development system. NWA is one of the largest of over 23 affiliates with NACo (National Association of Counties). NWA's goal is to: provide expertise and input to federal, state and local elected officials to enable them to make sound policy decisions about the workforce system and promote innovation and excellent performance in locally based workforce programs through conferences, training sessions, publications and peer-to-peer exchanges.

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