



NEWS RELEASE

Workforce Development Board

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Workforce Development Board Helps Army Veteran

Nick O'Neill started his career in the Army working as a specialist on unmanned aircraft vehicles (UAV) and jumping out of planes. One jump ended it all when he broke his back. O'Neill enjoyed his UAV work and was eager to transition to civilian life once he was healed. Recognizing that aerospace was a strong industry in Southern California, he relocated from Northern California to Victorville in San Bernardino County to enroll in Victor Valley College's School of Aviation Technology.

During the first week of school, the San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board (WDB) visited the classes to share information on assistance available to students and veterans. It was during that visit that O'Neill was introduced to Workforce Development Specialist Christine Watson. For students such as O'Neill, the WDB can provide career counseling, supportive services such as books, parking permits, transportation assistance and certifications as well as uniforms, or tools if they are required to purchase the items as part of their education.

"Meeting Christine made such a difference," O'Neill said. "She helped with my transition to a new community, looking for ways to supplement the financial assistance I had from the GI Bill. She connected me to financial support for travel expenses and when I finished my coursework, found the financial aid necessary to pay for my FAA tests, which weren't covered by the GI Bill."

O'Neill also took advantage of the opportunity to participate in a WDB Job Fair where he was introduced to General Atomics, a leading designer and manufacturer of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), radars, and electro-optic and other related mission systems. The firm is a major employer in the High Desert with a large facility in Victorville.

"I knew that General Atomics specialized in unmanned aircraft systems, which is what I had worked on during my time in the Army. Thanks to the Job Fair, I was offered a position as an airframe and power plant specialist. I hope to move up the ranks quickly and show them what I can do," O'Neill said.

According to Christine Watson, to date, the High Desert America's Job Centers of California (AJCC) in Victorville has put more than 100 veterans back to work with the collaboration of the State of CA Employment Development Department (EDD) Veteran Reps and the WDB.



“The work we do to support our military veterans to transition to civilian life is so important,” said Tony Myrell, WDB Chairman. “Nick is a perfect example of the talent in our military. By stepping in, our WDB team was able to ensure his transition was successful and to the benefit of a strong local employer.”

About the San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board

The San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board (WDB) is comprised of private business representatives and public partners appointed by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. The WDB strives to strengthen the skills of the County’s workforce through partnerships with business, education and community-based organizations. The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors is committed to providing county resources, which generate jobs and investment in line with the [Countywide Vision](#).

The Workforce Development Board, through the San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency and Workforce Development Department, offers a variety of programs designed to help youth and adults identify career pathways and get the appropriate training and skills. Programs funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provide eligible youth, ages 16 to 24, access to a variety of career and educational services designed to help enhance job skills, develop leadership qualities, explore career options, participate in adult and peer mentoring opportunities, and take advantage of work experiences. In addition, the WDB operates San Bernardino County’s three America’s Job Centers of California (AJCC). The AJCCs provide individuals with job training, placement and the tools to strengthen their skills to achieve a higher quality of life. The AJCCs also support and provide services to the County’s businesses, including employee recruitment and business retention programs.

Employers and job seekers who are interested in the Workforce Development Board programs may call: (800) 451-JOBS or visit www.sbcounty.gov/workforce. Also follow us on: Facebook www.facebook.com/SBCountyWDB; Twitter @InlandEmpireJob; LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sanbernardinocountywdb>; and YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/SBCountyWIB>.