



NEWS RELEASE

Workforce Development Board

CONTACT:

Sandy Harmsen
Executive Director
909-387-9862

sharmsen@wdd.sbcounty.gov

March 30, 2016

Report: Local economy robust



The San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board (WDB) commissioned Virginia-based Chmura Economics and Analytics to conduct an in-depth analysis of the Inland Empire. The analysis was designed to determine what necessary actions should be taken to assist growing industry sectors and strengthen the workforce talent pipeline. The findings were presented by Kyle West, Applied Economics and Technology Advisor at Chmura Economics.

“Studies like this ensure that we are utilizing the best strategies and approaches for our workforce,” said James Ramos, Chairman of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. “This data confirms that we are allocating federal dollars in the appropriate areas.”

Of the eight identified industry sectors, six are forecasted to grow in the Inland Empire: Healthcare and social assistance; transportation and warehousing; manufacturing; construction; utilities; professional, scientific and technical services. These are industries the WDB has previously established as target sectors.

West explained there is a higher probability of driving long-term employment gains due to the forecasted growth sectors. For example, the resurgence of growth in the construction sector shows an abundance of jobs available in the skilled trades. This is a major opportunity for the local workforce to build careers as an alternative to traditional post-secondary education.

The report shows since 2012, eighty-eight percent of employment growth in the Inland Empire has been driven by the six projected growth sectors. Three industry clusters forecasted to grow rapidly in the near future are construction, healthcare and utilities.

The regional employment rate is expected to rise 3.5 percent over the next year, a statistic that outperforms the state of California and the nation. Additionally, the local population is growing at a rate that is double that of California, particularly in the minor age group 18 and under.

“There is an opportunity to elevate the quality of life in this region because of the projected population of young people entering the workforce and the correspondent rise in employment options,” explained West. “It’s incumbent on this region to guide youth to successful career paths, then tremendous economic gains will be reaped.”

The Workforce Development Board has various programs for youth aged 16 to 24 designed to help them achieve academic and employment success. Participants receive services such as occupational skills training, counseling, internships, job placements, mentoring, tutoring, leadership development, and support services.

According to West, manufacturing is deemed the most important sector of economic activity as it has widespread economic impacts. Statistics report the average wages are 20 percent higher than the average of all industries. This is a good opportunity for the growing population of young workers who would replace scores of retiring workers.

"The presentation validates that we are taking a well-balanced approach to the target sectors," said Workforce Development Board Executive Director Sandy Harmsen. "It demonstrates that our strategies for developing policy are appropriate and efficient."