



NEWS RELEASE

Workforce Development Board

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Protech: ‘We’ve benefitted so much from (WDB’s) support’

When Protech Minerals LLC took ownership of Pfizer’s highly specialized mining and milling operations in the High Desert five years ago, finding workers was no easy task.

The company is one of the few providers in the United States of bentonite, zeolite and montmorillonite for the cosmetic, pharmaceutical and agricultural industries, requiring skilled workers and a careful attention to detail.

With the support of the San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board (WDB), the company now has 30 employees – nearly a quarter of whom came directly through the WDB job services pipeline.

“Our relationship is second to none. It’s just outstanding,” said Terry Suzuki, Protech’s Chief Operating Officer. “They came out, explained their various programs and helped us fill critical positions. They were on top of it from the start.”

One of the free programs Protech was able to take advantage of was WDB’s On-The-Job Training (OJT), which provides reimbursement for up to 50% of a new hire’s wage while they are in training. It’s part of a suite of services offered by WDB and its Business Services Team to help employers meet their workforce needs.

“Especially in times like this, with companies everywhere struggling to fill critical-need positions, the workforce development services available in San Bernardino County play such an important role in our continued economic prosperity,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman Curt Hagman.

For Protech Minerals, one of the great advantages of working with WDB is the screening of job candidates, which saves the company time, money and headaches. After a brief slowdown in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the company has seen business surge and needs a full staff to meet demand.

“I have nothing but appreciation and confidence in the county folks. We’ve benefitted so much from their support,” Suzuki said, singling out WDB Business Services Representative Michael Holtz.



"Michael took the time to understand our needs," he said.

Phil Cothran, WDB Chairman, said the Protech Minerals story illustrates the importance of building a pipeline of trainable workers to meet the needs of San Bernardino County's rapidly growing businesses. Recent studies by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) projects employment growth of 230,000 in the county over the next quarter century – an increase of more than 25%.

"We're one of the fastest growing economic centers in California, if not the country," Cothran said. "Through OJT and other programs, we're helping businesses grow while exposing job seekers to bold new employment opportunities."

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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](https://twitter.com/InlandEmpireJob); LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sanbernardinocountywdb>; and YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/SBCountyWIB>.