Commerce Secretary shares his vision for West Virginia

Q&A

Woody Thrasher, West Virginia's new secretary of Commerce, talks with RCBI's Becky Calwell about the economic challenges facing the state and what he sees as a path forward. Read the interview here.

RCBI named national leader in apprenticeships by DOL
The U.S. Department of Labor has recognized the Robert C. Byrd Institute (RCBI) as a national leader in workforce development for its apprenticeship efforts. Earning the ApprenticeshipUSA Leader designation places RCBI in the top ranks of more than 160 businesses, educational institutions, labor organizations and others from across the United States that highlight the value of apprenticeships and encourage greater adoption of the workforce strategy.

RCBI is home to Apprenticeship Works, the National Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Partnership. Working with partners across the country, Apprenticeship Works is making apprenticeship programs more affordable for companies and more accessible for employees. Through its Apprenticeship Works initiative, RCBI assists manufacturers in establishing Registered Apprenticeships in a variety of occupations, including machinists, maintenance technicians, press operators, 3D printing technicians, and robotics technicians.

Launch a business in 3 days during Startup Weekend

Join the excitement April 21-23 as RCBI hosts Startup Weekend Huntington, an entrepreneurial event designed to help start new business ventures in one weekend.

Startup Weekend is an intense, action-packed event where anyone can pitch ideas and work with a team to build a new business venture in just 54 hours. It's a coordinated effort to boost the number of startups in West Virginia, which has one of the lowest rates in the nation.

Successful entrepreneurs and coaches will offer guidance and inspiration as participants collaborate to create successful ventures. The weekend culminates Sunday, April 23, when teams pitch their ideas to judges.

Startup Weekend Huntington is sponsored by Google, BB&T, RCBI, the Lewis College of Business at Marshall University and TechConnect West Virginia.

Tickets are $10 in advance and $25 the day of the event. Details and registration form are here. For more information, contact Bryan Shaw at bshaw@rcbi.org.

RCBI to present popular 3D printing and coding camps

Registration is underway for summer STEM camps at the Robert C. Byrd Institute (RCBI). The popular 3D printing camps - open to middle school and high school students - offer children a fun way to explore this exciting technology. The camps are June 19-23 at RCBI Huntington; July 10-14 at RCBI Bridgeport; and July 24-28 at RCBI Charleston.

RCBI also will present a Python Coding Camp for middle school students who are interested in learning computer programming. The camp, July 31-Aug. 3 at
RCBI Huntington, will introduce campers to Python, a fun and versatile programming language. Register here.

Free workshop focuses on federal funding for innovation

Entrepreneurs and small business owners who want to advance innovative concepts through the commercialization process can explore federal funding opportunities during an SBIR Lunch & Learn April 18 from noon to 2 p.m. at RCBI in Huntington.

Innovators across the country (and right here in West Virginia) are accessing millions of federal dollars, resulting in important research that can be converted into new products, technologies and services while also creating jobs. SBIR and STTR grants allow businesses to conduct feasibility studies in Phase I (up to $150,000) and develop prototypes in Phase II (up to $1 million) for eventual commercialization in Phase III.

Our workshop will include an overview of the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grant programs by George Murray, deputy district director of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The free lunch and learn is sponsored by RCBI and TechConnect West Virginia. Register by April 13 here.

THE VIDEO FILE

Why build a house by hand when you can 3D print it
A startup company called Apis Cor has designed and built a 3D printer that can create a 1,420-sq.-foot house for just over $10,000. And it does it in just 24 hours.

Video highlights RCBI's role in economic growth
In case you missed it, check out Bobby Lee Messer's feature about RCBI on WCHS-TV's "River Cities Report."

Upcoming events
April 2017
April 1 - SkillsUSA state competition, RCBI Bridgeport, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
April 3 - Machinist/CNC student mini job fair, RCBI Huntington, 10 a.m. - noon
April 4 - Apprenticeship webinar: Return on investment, online, 2 p.m. EDT.
April 5 - HUBZones Luncheon, RCBI Bridgeport, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
April 12-18 - Fall registration for Huntington students, RCBI Huntington, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
April 13 - Fall registration for Bridgeport students, RCBI Bridgeport, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
April 13 - Raspberry Pi User Group, RCBI Huntington, 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
April 18 - SBIR Luncheon, RCBI Huntington, noon - 2 p.m.
April 21 - Huntington Job Fair, Big Sandy Arena in Huntington, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
April 21-23 - Startup Weekend, RCBI Huntington, times vary by day

Call 800.469.7224 or email mfg@rcbi.org for more information.

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