

**Calendar
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Developments:
*The Newsletter of
The Simpson County
Development Foundation*

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From the Executive Director

Nothing has changed as much in the world of economic development in recent years as the need for a skilled workforce. From manufacturing to medical billing, employers are looking for a work ready pool of potential employees. Very rarely will you find a company look at locating in a specific area without that resource of candidates for employment.

Because of our mission, the Simpson County Development Foundation is undergoing a process to make the county an ACT Work Ready Community.

What is "work readiness"? Most of us took the ACT college entrance exam before graduating high school to help determine our "readiness" for college. The ACT Work Ready System merges education and the workforce by setting standards and benchmarks to build a more productive employment pool and encourage economic growth. This initiative allows an individual to transition from secondary schools to employment with a certified set of work skills.

According to ACT Work Ready Communities information, "A 'work ready' individual possesses the foundational skills needed to be minimally qualified for a specific occupation as determined through a job analysis or occupational profile."

The foundation of a community's certification is based on individuals at the county level across current, transitioning and emerging workforce earning a "National Career Readiness Certification" and employers recognizing the NCRC. The NCRC is a portable, industry-recognized credential that clearly identifies an individual's skill set in applied math, workplace documents, and graphic literacy. Also, problem solving and critical thinking are areas of testing. There is another area of testing, called "soft skills", which define personal characteristics and behavioral skills that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance, and career prospects such as adaptability, integrity, cooperation, and workplace discipline.

The Simpson County Development Foundation needs all businesses in the county to support our efforts to help solve the problem of skill mismatches and gaps by aligning postsecondary curriculum with skills that meet employer's needs. We are coordinating with the secondary schools in the county for implementation of the process with the 2017-18 seniors as we attempt to match people with jobs and help satisfy our current employer's needs and make our county a more attractive place for an industry or business to locate here.

A National Career Readiness Certificate is earned by completing the three WorkKeys Assessments

- Applied Math
- Workplace Documents
- Graphic Literacy

Also available in Spanish:

- Evaluación de Matemáticas Aplicadas
- Evaluación de Localización de Información
- Evaluación de Comprensión de Lectura

Examinees that complete the Spanish-language versions of the assessments are eligible for an ACT National Career Readiness Certificate en Español.

After earning the ACT NCRC, students can easily set up an online account at myworkkeys.com that enables employers to verify their credentials quickly and conveniently. They'll also want to showcase their accomplishment by including information about achieving the ACT NCRC on their resumes and job applications.

Source: www.act.org



Elected Officials converse following recent Council of Governments meeting. L to R: Mayor Dale Berry, Magee; Mayor Todd Booth, Mendenhall; Mayor John Henry Berry, D'Lo; Rep. Noah Sandford, Dist. 90; Rep. Tom Weathersby, Dist. 62.

On Monday, July 17, 2017, the SCDF-sponsored Council of Governments met for breakfast and a program at Zip's Restaurant in Magee. At the well-attended meeting, our county mayors presented their goals and plans for their new term of office. The Council of Governments meets quarterly, and all elected officials are invited.



SCDF partners with CMPDD for website maintenance and design. The Foundation has contracted with Central Mississippi Planning and Development District [CMPDD] for maintenance and design services for our website simpsoncounty.biz. This partnership allows us more freedom to do our own maintenance and design, while at the same time availing us of CMPDD's expertise.

Although some of our updates are still pending, the staff invite all our members to visit our "new" website and to give us your advice on making it ever better and easier to use.

From the Executive Director Continued from Page 1.

Our business and manufacturing community's support for making Simpson County an ACT Work Ready Community is a key component for success. We have begun a series of face-to-face meetings with employers in our county to provide more details and to answer questions about the ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). Employers may support the NCRC by *recognizing* the certificate: that is, the employer is aware of the potential value of the NCRC as an indicator of workplace skills in hiring and/or promotion. Employers, who chose to do so, may *recommend* the NCRC: this means that the employer requests the certificate as part of the hiring and/or promotion process.

See Additional Information for Employers following page 3.

"By implementing the components of the ACT work readiness system, ACT Work Ready Communities across the nation are improving workforce productivity for everyone-from students coming into the workforce, to prospective and current employees, to transitioning workers-giving them opportunities to build essential skills and continue learning. As a result, businesses thrive and communities have a competitive edge in economic development." [ACT readycommunities.org.]

For those upcoming seniors who might not be thinking of college, or even college oriented seniors, ask your school guidance counselors about the ACT Work Readiness System testing. The plan is for testing to take place at Co-Lin Community College, Simpson County Center. The particulars about time and date will be announced after the school year begins.

In summary, this program allows employers to identify skill levels of current and prospective employees in order for them to be successful on the job. Individuals can compare their skill levels to those needed for jobs. Trainers and trainees can make appropriate decisions about jobs; identify strengths, and set training goals.



In the past few years, **SIMPSON LEADERS** – our Leadership Development program – has been very well received and favorably evaluated by the participants.



In order to form a new class for this fiscal year, we need a minimum of ten (10) participants.

Please call the Foundation Office – 601.847.2375 – if you are interested in participating.

MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME to our Newest Individual Members, who have joined since the beginning of calendar 2017:

Witt Fortenberry
Michael Kennedy
Marvin Lee
Steven Womack
Malory Yelverton

We are also happy to welcome back into membership **HOWARD INDUSTRIES** who has re-joined the Foundation in May 2017 as a Circle of Excellence Member.

Every member of the Simpson County Development Foundation is essential to attaining successfully our goals for the continued betterment and advancement of our community—Simpson County. Our goals are primarily economic; however, we are concerned with every element in the quality of life of our community. You, our Members, have a vital role in the success of each of the Foundation's projects and programs.

CALENDAR

REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS
For the Remainder of this Calendar Year

Simpson County Economic Development District
Quarterly
October 10, 2017
11:30 a.m.

Berry's Restaurant, Magee
Unless otherwise announced in advance of the meeting.

Simpson County Development Foundation

Executive Council

August 17, 2017

October 19, 2017

10:00 a.m.

SCDF Offices, Mendenhall

Unless otherwise announced in advance of the meeting.

Officers and Directors

September 21, 2017

November 16, 2017

10:00 a.m.

Civic Center, Magee

Unless otherwise announced in advance of the meeting.

Our bylaws state that regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held on the third Thursday of the following months: January, March, May, July, September, and November.

The Executive Committee meets in alternate months: February, June, August, and October.

The ANNUAL MEETING is in April.

There is no meeting in December.



Hire the best. Hire work ready employees.

Certified work ready communities helps you match employees to jobs based on verified skill levels

It can be tough finding just the right employee. So take the guesswork out of finding workers with the right skill set by participating in the your state's certified work ready communities (CWRC) initiative powered by the ACT® National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC™).

CWRC offers a suite of assessments and certifications that measure an individual's foundational workplace skills such as math, reading and locating – skills required for a majority of today's jobs.

Making a bad hire can be incredibly expensive, costing you training time and expense, not to mention lost productivity. But hiring candidates with an NCRC assures they will have the foundational skills required to quickly learn job-specific skills. And using the NCRC can even help you identify skill gaps, training, and promotion opportunities for your current employees.

Plus, your participation in certified work ready communities benefits not just your company, but your entire community. Your state's CWRC effort is helping job seekers in your area understand what skills employers like you are looking for, and it helps local educators prepare students for success.

Supporting a stronger workforce is easy. All you need to do is:

- Recognize the NCRC when applicants present one
- Recommend the NCRC for applicants and/or existing employees
- Require the NCRC, if your company has completed a job profile (job profiling is a job analysis system that identifies the exact skill levels required for success in a given position)

You may also indicate your company's support of your community's certification effort by visiting <http://www.workreadycommunities.org> and signing up.