

## Hello SE Michigan 21<sup>st</sup> Century Career Transition Workgroup!

Wow! What an exciting gathering last month!

For those who missed it our meeting last month took place on September 22 at Lawrence Tech University where the Education and Workforce Committee from Automation Alley hosted a symposium called “Voice of Business: IT – Understanding the Talent Needs of the Information Technology Sector”. Many of our workgroup members participated and had the opportunity to hear from some great speakers and panelists.

Jane Montecillo, CEO of HP Enterprise Services shared some insightful observations on IT talent needs, including the reality of raised performance and skill set expectations. She shared that on top of technical skills, soft skills (including a customer centric mindset) are still critical, and that the best skill of all is a love of learning. Everything changes – and changes fast in IT! Elliot Forsyth, VP and COO at the Workforce Development Agency, Michigan Economic Development Corporation also shared some of the renewed focus at the state level. In particular he reminded us that workforce development *is* economic development, that there are lots of reasons to be optimistic about job growth in Michigan and that growth in this state will truly be “talent driven”.

Both of their presentations are available for review at the Automation Alley web site. To access the presentations go to [www.automationalley.com](http://www.automationalley.com). Then go to “Event Resources”, then 2011 Events and the Voice of Business IT block.

There was also a great panel presentation sharing different views and perspectives on the IT field and their talent needs. We then met in break out groups with different members of the panel, giving the participants a chance to ask direct questions, make networking connections and to start to establish relationships with these critical employers. We’ll keep in contact with Automation Alley and their partners to get additional summary information from the event. I will pass that along as we have it.

And I think you have all by now seen the notes and reminders about the NEI sponsored event next Wednesday, October 26, focused on the Human Capital Needs in SE Michigan’s Alternative Energy Sector. This meeting will take place from 8:30 – 12:30 at Next Energy. Here is the link for registration. <http://neweconomyinitiative.cfsem.org/what-are-the-human-capital-needs-of-southeast-michigan-s-alternative-energy-sector>

Listening to the voice of the customer this way is critically important for all of you in front line positions servicing job seekers and those seeking education leading to a job here in SE Michigan. But we also know that listening isn’t enough. We have to keep focused on and moving forward with actual job placement. That will be the theme of our next formal Career Transition Workgroup meeting. **We will meet on Thursday, November 10, 2011 from 1:30 – 4:00 at a location TBD (I am looking for ideas for a location that is central and can hold 25-35 people). We will look together at the challenges and barriers facing front line staff in placing**

**customers in jobs, as well as brainstorm possible solutions. We will also look at best practices in this arena. Amy Cell, Senior VP of Talent Enhancement at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (and former 21<sup>st</sup> Century Steering Team member) will join us to share what is happening at the state level in job placement and where she sees the best opportunities to help business customers find the right talent and help job seekers find the right employment opportunities.**