



**SANTEE-LYNCHES**  
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING**  
**Tuesday, December 5, 2023 - 5:00PM**  
**Via Zoom**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

Calvin Hastie (Vice-Chairman), Dr. Vanessa Canty, Dr. Joshua Castleberry, Charles “Scottie” Hayes, Gail Lemmon, John Hornsby, Debra Young, Tiffany Myers, Robert Edwards, Emily Peele, Kanzora Robinson

**Members Absent:**

Jeff Burgess, Berri Outlaw (excused), Celeste Taylor, Virginia Pryor, Teresa Justice, Samuel Lowery, Mike Murrow

**Workforce Development Staff Present:**

Dennis Cyphers, SLRCOG Executive Director  
Areatha Clark, SLRCOG Deputy Executive Director, Workforce Development Director  
Steve Berger, SLRCOG Business Services Lead  
Freda Amerson, SLRCOG Workforce Development Operations Coordinator  
Esmonde Levy, SLRCOG Workforce and Economic Development Manager  
Linda Jackson, SLRCOG Administrative Director

**Guests:**

Ray Jackson, SC Works Operator/Center Manager, Eckerd Connects-Workforce Development  
Margarita Servance, Career Coach, Eckerd Connects-Workforce Development  
Ashlyn Chastain-Brown, SC Department of Employment and Workforce  
Brenda Gardner, SC Department of Employment and Workforce  
Caitlyn Brazell, SC Department of Employment and Workforce

**I. Welcome and Call to Order**

Vice-Chairman Calvin Hastie called the Santee-Lynch Workforce Development Board of Directors Meeting to order at 5:00PM. A quorum was present.

**II. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Ray Jackson provided the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. Introduction of Guests**

Ms. Areatha Clark, Deputy Executive Director, and Workforce Development Director introduced staff and guests.

**IV. Approval of Agenda – (M)**

Vice-Chairman Hastie called for a motion to approve the agenda. **A motion was made by Mr. John**

**Hornsby and seconded by Dr. Joshua Castleberry.** There being no discussion, Chairman Hastie called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

#### **V. Approval of Minutes – August 22, 2023 (M)**

Vice-Chairman Hastie called for a motion to approve the minutes of October 24, 2023. **A motion was made by Dr. Joshua Castleberry and seconded by Ms. Tiffany Myers.** There being no discussion, Vice-Chairman Hastie called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

#### **VI. Special Presentation**

Ms. Brenda Gardner, SC Department of Employment and Workforce, gave an informative overview highlighting various workforce data in the Santee-Lynches area. She began the discussion with highlights on different events held since June. She started by briefing the Board on the e-STEAM event. She stated that the event was held October 4<sup>th</sup> downtown Sumter and was kicked off with a parade. Various photos were shared, and she informed the Board that the total attendance was estimated at 6,500 people. She also stated that there were 90 plus exhibitors and stage shows were conducted roughly every 20 minutes. All activities provided focused on empowering the guests through the e-STEAM initiative (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).

Ms. Gardner briefed the Board on the manufacturing expos that were held for 8<sup>th</sup> graders throughout the various counties. She provided photos and recognized several participating companies such as Honda, Continental, Georgia Pacific, STL, and the Roy's Wood Project. She also explained that there were classroom tours provided as well. She thanked everyone who was involved and participated in the expo project.

Ms. Gardner explained her partnership with several career specialists to conduct field studies which is focused on high school students. Currently there have been two conducted. They conducted one at Coca Cola in September and another at BCA in November. Another field study was conducted with Emerging Leaders which focuses on high school juniors, and they meet monthly. She also provided the Board with a brief discussion about the 4H jobs definition plan and asked them if there were any questions on these projects.

Ms. Emily Peele informed the Board of the Graduating to Greatness program that is being provided that benefits companies such as Continental Tire. Ms. Gardner explained that Graduate to Greatness is a program for upcoming graduates who may need assistance with developing a career path. A job fair is offered to help them find employment and to interview on site with employers. She provided the Board with the upcoming date of Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at the South Hope Center. Ms. Gardner stated that companies are now being recruited to assist with this program.

Vice-Chairman Calvin Hastie also asked the Board if there were any questions and thanked Mrs. Brenda Gardner for the updates.

#### **VII. Executive Director Report**

Mr. Dennis Cyphers, SLRCOG Executive Director, thanked Mrs. Gardner for her updates and the work that is being done by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce staff. He discussed with the Board, pointers from the COG Board meeting that was held the week before. He informed them that labor force growth is anticipated to slow down by .5% over annual return due to an aging population and expected slower growth in the Hispanic communities. He stated that labor force participation rate is projected to decline almost 2% until the year 2030. Mr. Cyphers explained to the Board that the unemployment rate looks great, but the labor force participation is dismal at best. He stated that South Carolina was the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest growing state throughout the pandemic even up to this past year. The state

grew 500,000 between the last census, but 75-85 percent were individuals aged 55 and up. These individuals are not typically participating in the current workforce, creating the decline due to statistics based on population.

## VIII. Reports

### SC Works Operator Report

Mr. Ray Jackson, SC Works Operator/Center Manager presented the SC Works Center Report for July 1, 2023, through November 17, 2023.

#### **Chart 1: Area Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Data Table (October 23)**

The table below shows the monthly not seasonally adjusted Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment data for Sumter, SC in October 2023.

Area	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Preliminary
Clarendon	12,214	11,742	472	3.9%	Yes
Lee	6,563	6,322	241	3.7%	Yes
Sumter	42,655	41,084	1,571	3.7%	Yes
Kershaw	30,094	29,172	922	3.1%	Yes
Santee-Lynches	91,526	88,320	3,206	3.5%	Yes
South Carolina	2,465,108	2,391,378	73,730	3.0%	Yes
United States	167,774,000	161,676,000	6,098,000	3.6%	No

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, SC Dept of Employment & Workforce

Mr. Jackson stated that the chart above shows Area Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment data reported by each county in the region. Mr. Jackson reported updated numbers for the month of October for unemployment: Clarendon County’s unemployment rate is 3.9%; Lee County’s is at 3.7%; Sumter County’s is 3.7%; and Kershaw County’s is 3.1%. With these changes in the percentile, the overall forecast shows a .5% percent increase from September to October.

#### **Chart 2: Area Profile –Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Distribution Table**

Santee-Lynches currently ranks second at a 3.5% unemployment rate. Mr. Jackson also stated that the highest rate was obtained by Lower Savannah at 3.6% and the lowest was Trident at 2.5%.

##### **Area Profile for Santee-Lynches, SC**

###### **Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Distribution Table**

The table below shows the workforce development areas with the highest preliminary unemployment rate in South Carolina for October 2023. These figures are not seasonally adjusted.

Rank	Area	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Preliminary
1	Lower Savannah	129,125	124,415	4,710	3.6%	Yes
2	Santee-Lynches	91,526	88,320	3,206	3.5%	Yes
3	Pee Dee	154,164	148,858	5,306	3.4%	Yes
4	Waccamaw	193,707	187,403	6,304	3.3%	Yes
5	Upstate	195,024	188,815	6,209	3.2%	Yes
6	Upper Savannah	112,436	108,807	3,629	3.2%	Yes
7	Worklink	189,996	184,348	5,648	3.0%	Yes
8	Catawba	212,302	205,912	6,390	3.0%	Yes
9	Midlands	365,923	355,220	10,703	2.9%	Yes
10	Lowcountry	117,153	113,843	3,310	2.8%	Yes
11	Greenville	267,964	260,636	7,328	2.7%	Yes
12	Trident	435,789	424,802	10,987	2.5%	Yes

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, SC Dept of Employment & Workforce

#### **Chart 3: Area Profile Employers by Number of Job Openings Table**

Chart 3 lists the top Employers by Number of Job Openings in our region for the month of November. He highlighted that Prisma Health has 99 job openings, Food Lion has 47 job openings, Kershaw County School District has 39 and McLeod Health has 35 job openings in our region. This chart helps when talking to clients about companies that are hiring.

**Area Profile for Santee-Lynches, SC**

**Employers by Number of Job Openings Table**

The table below shows the employers with the highest number of job openings advertised online in Santee-Lynches, SC on November 20, 2023 (Jobs De-duplication Level 2) Opens in a new browser window.

Rank	Employer Name	Job Openings
1	Prisma Health	99
2	Food Lion	47
3	Kershaw County School District	39
4	McLeod Health	35
5	Morris College	32
6	City of Sumter, SC	31
7	Lee County School District	28
8	McDonald's Corporation	28
9	BD	26
10	Clarendon County School District	25
11	UIC Alaska	24
12	UIC Technical Services	24
13	Amedisys	21
14	Central Carolina Technical College	21
15	Kershaw County, SC	20
16	Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores, Inc.	20
17	Sonic Corp.	20
18	Agile Defense, Inc.	19
19	gTANGIBLE Corporation	16
20	The University of South Carolina	16
21	VZX	16
22	Young's	16
23	CVS Health	15
24	Wendy's International, Inc.	15
25	Farmers Home Furniture	14

Source: Online advertised jobs data

**Chart 4: Job Opening by Industry**

Mr. Jackson reported that this chart lists the top 13 industries in our region with job openings for the month of November. He stated that these are printed twice weekly to help clients who may be looking for jobs in those specific areas.

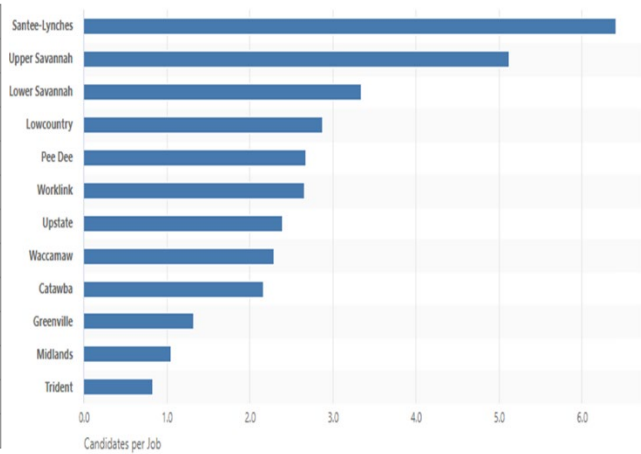
The table below shows the industries with the highest job openings advertised online in Santee-Lynches, SC on November 20, 2023 (Jobs De-duplication Level 2) Opens in a new browser window.

Rank	Industry	Job Openings
1	Retail Trade	309
2	Health Care and Social Assistance	296
3	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	196
4	Educational Services	172
5	Accommodation and Food Services	106
6	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	100
7	Manufacturing	85
8	Public Administration	61
9	Wholesale Trade	45
10	Transportation and Warehousing	41
11	Finance and Insurance	34
12	Construction	20
13	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	19

**Chart 5: Jobs and Candidates Area Distribution Table**

The Jobs and Candidates Area Distribution table shows that Santee-Lynches has 6.41 candidates that meet the minimal qualifications for the job openings in our region. This number is determined based on the 12,940 available candidates divided by the 2,018 available jobs in the region.

Rank	Area Name	Job Openings	Candidates	Candidates per Job
1	Santee-Lynches	2,018	12,940	6.41
2	Upper Savannah	2,550	13,053	5.12
3	Lower Savannah	3,855	12,888	3.34
4	Lowcountry	4,003	11,543	2.88
5	Pee Dee	4,860	13,027	2.68
6	Worklink	4,886	13,008	2.66
7	Upstate	5,587	13,351	2.39
8	Waccamaw	5,953	13,637	2.29
9	Catawba	5,583	12,068	2.16
10	Greenville	10,743	14,145	1.32
11	Midlands	13,657	14,377	1.05
12	Trident	15,909	13,209	0.83



Job Source: Online advertised jobs data

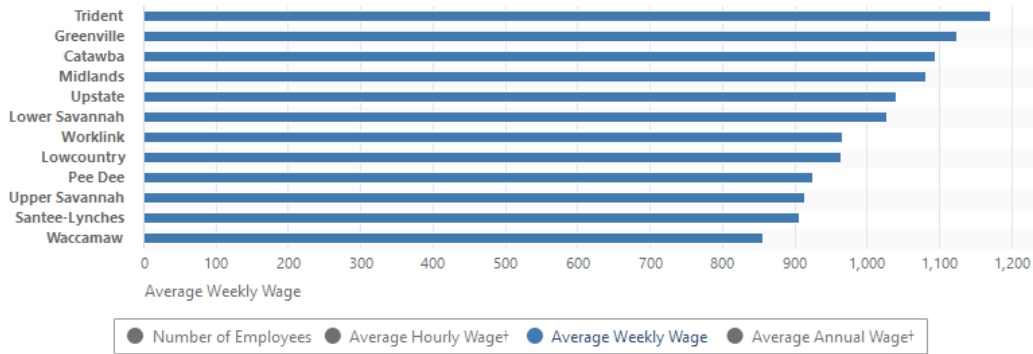
Vice-Chairman Calvin Hastie asked Mr. Jackson to clarify again how the candidates per job number is calculated. Mr. Jackson explained that this number is derived from dividing the total number of candidates by the total number of open jobs. Again, these candidates are individuals who meet the minimum qualifications to apply for these jobs.

**Chart 6: Employment Wage Statistic Distribution Table**

Mr. Jackson stated that this table shows that Santee-Lynches ranks number 11 with wages at \$907 per week. He briefed the Board that this table ranges in wages from \$850 to \$1170 per week with Trident ranking number one in the region.

**Employment Wage Statistics Distribution**

The graph below shows workforce development areas with the highest average weekly wage in South Carolina for Q2 2023.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, SC Dept of Employment & Workforce  
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**Veteran’s Day Event**

Mr. Jackson presented the Board with pictures from the Veteran’s Day events that took place. He explained that there was a total of three events that took place throughout the region. There was a parade held downtown, a job fair at the National Guard Armory, and another event that was held at the Clarendon County Library at the Veteran Resource Center there. Two mobile units, to include the VA Mobile Unit, were also onsite at the library. There was a total of approximately 50 Veterans who participated in the three-day events. Vice-Chairman Hastie asked Mr. Jackson has he met the new Vet Rep for the Dorn VA medical Center. Vice-Chairman Hastie stated that she came and met with several council members, because she wants to utilize the resource center on Manning Ave. as a model to help veterans with their claims and to receive assistance on the spot. This process will not become effective until January. Mr. Jackson assured Mr. Hastie that they would assist her in any way needed for her to make this implementation a success.

**WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Program Report**

Mr. Ray Jackson presented the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Program Report for July 1, 2023, through November 17, 2023.

### **Adult/Dislocated Worker**

#### **Chart 1: Total Active Adult/Dislocated Worker Enrollments**

New- 31      Actual- 107      Goal- 185      YTD- 58%.

#### **Chart 2: Performance Outcome Updates**

Adult/DW Credentials - 47      Measure Skill Gain- 126

Mr. Jackson explained that these numbers are constantly changing, and he will provide a detailed explanation of the changes when they occur.

#### **Chart 3: Received Training**

Received Training - 57

Training was primarily provided in the Healthcare and Transportation sectors: Clinical Medical Assistant, Patient Care and CDL Training.

### **Adult Program Highlight**

#### ***Mr. Jackie Pringle***

Mr. Pringle obtained his GED then entered the WIOA program. Jackie was interested in obtaining training in the truck driving field. He completed the weekend classes because he was also working at a part-time job making \$11.60 per hour. Jackie successfully completed truck driving training and obtained his Commercial Driver's License in December 2022. Jackie began working for CRST Trucking Company from April 2023 to August 2023, and is now working as a truck driver for Burgess-Brogden Builders in September 2023. Jackie is making \$21.00 per hour.

### **Youth**

#### **Chart 4: Total Active Youth Enrollments**

New – 37      Actual- 71      Goal- 142      YTD-50%

Eckerd is at 50% of its enrollment goal for the year.

#### **Chart 5: Received Training**

Received Training - 18

Mr. Jackson stated that currently 18 individuals have received training and based on the chart, the medical industry has the largest training areas with CNA at 28% and Patient Care Technicians at 28%.

#### **Chart 6: Performance Outcome Updates**

Youth Credential - 33      Measurable Skills Gain - 86      WEX/OJT- 14      Resume  
created/updated- 45      Career Smart - 31      Adult Education - 11

### **Youth Program Highlight**

#### ***Ms. Lakin Salmond***

Ms. Salmond enrolled into the WIOA youth program in March 2023 unemployed. Her barriers were low income, parenting, and basis skill deficiency. After completing career smart, she entered training at Professional Development and Training Services for CMA training. She began working as a Front Desk Receptionist at Midlands Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Center in June. Lakin was able to complete her clinicals and passed her exam on November 13, 2023. Lakin is working as a CMA making \$17.30 per hour.

## **Financial Report**

Mr. Esmonde Levy, Workforce and Economic Development Manager, presented the Financial Report for the Program Year 2023 through 10/31/23:

### **Chart 1: Percent Expended**

Eckerd Adult – 22.08% (YTD: \$70,663.77; Balance: \$249,336.23)

Eckerd DW – 13.99% (YTD: \$13,986.15; Balance: \$86,013.85)

Eckerd Youth – 23.75% (YTD: \$94,991.40; Balance: \$305,008.60)

### **Chart 2: Engage, Build, and Serve Total Percent Expended**

#### **EBS Adult/DW**

Eckerd has expended \$199,374.54, with a balance of \$16,467.47 (92.3% expended)

#### **EBS Youth**

Eckerd has expended \$35,488.50, with a balance of \$3,240.10 (91.63% expended)

## **IX. Other Business**

### **Reappointment of Business Services Lead (M)**

Ms. Areatha Clark, SLRCOG Deputy Executive Director and Workforce Development Director stated that as part of the SC Works certification process the Board must appoint or re-appoint a Business Services Lead yearly. Once again, Mr. Berger has served in that capacity and has done a great job pulling together the integrated business team and other partners and making connections with employers in the region. It is recommended to re-appoint Mr. Berger for an additional year. Vice-Chairman Hastie called for a motion to reappoint Mr. Steve Berger as Business Service Lead. **The motion was made by Debra Young, and seconded by Dr. Vanessa Canty.** There being no discussion, Chairman Hastie called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

## **X. Chairman's Comments**

Vice-Chairman Hastie began his comments with a question to Mr. Dennis Cyphers, regarding if crime in the Sumter area impacts jobs coming to the region? Mr. Cyphers explained statistics on how the crime rate is determined, but he doesn't believe that it drives businesses away. He explained that he believes that it has created barriers for those trying to get back in the workforce. Vice-Chairman Hastie expressed his concern that families and businesses want to ensure their safety and is concerned if these areas are warranted for continual approval.

Vice-Chairman Hastie announced to the Board that this will be his last meeting serving as Vice-Chairman due to health reasons. He stated that he hopes to remain a board member but will be stepping out of the lead role. He thanked everyone for allowing him to serve, and they all thanked him for his service.

## **X1. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50PM.

Recorded by,

*Lennett Butler*

Lennett Butler, Administrative Assistant I-PR,  
Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments