



# Spokane Area WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd ♦ Room 606 ♦ City Hall ♦ Spokane, WA 99201-3302  
(509) 625-6210 ♦ Fax (509) 625-6929 ♦ E-mail: admin@wdcspokane.com

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Contact: Mark Mattke, Executive Director  
Spokane Area Workforce Development Council (SAWDC)  
Phone: (509) 625-6214  
Cell Phone: (509) 209-7492  
Email: mmattke@wdcspokane.com

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## **Spokane Receives Governor's Best Practice in Workforce and Economic Development Award**

Program that builds stronger ties to employers and job seekers

Spokane, Wash. – Governor Gregoire announced Tuesday her selection of the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council's *Work Ready Spokane* initiative as a Best Practice in Workforce and Economic Development. The award recognizes programs and projects that create additional jobs and economic activity while at the same time helping Washington workers get the training they need to land a job and earn a living wage. "By introducing our unemployed to our companies seeking additional talent, we're helping our economic recovery two-fold," Gregoire said. "We're putting our unemployed back to work, while ensuring our companies have the workforce needed to succeed and expand."

The *Work Ready Spokane* project was launched seven months ago using ACT WorkKeys, a national work readiness assessment, to demonstrate a potential employee's workplace skills. It has proven to have application in secondary and postsecondary education as well as workforce and economic development. The Spokane Area Workforce Development Council is actively seeking to expand this initiative as, according to three major Spokane employers using the assessment, it can help a business save time and money, and reduce employee turnover.

Individuals who complete the core three job assessments - Reading for Information, Locating Information, and Applied Mathematics, can earn the National Career Readiness Certificate which is endorsed by many state governors and workforce development organizations as a way to certify one's level of career readiness. So far in Spokane, more than 300 students from area high schools completed the National Career Readiness Certificate assessments last spring and another 200 students are scheduled to test this year. Several hundred job seekers have completed the skills assessments and have received their National Career Readiness Certificate on their pathway to employment.

This project initially started as partnership between Spokane Area Workforce Development Council, WorkSource Spokane, Greater Spokane Incorporated, Community Colleges of Spokane, Medical Lake High School, Spokane Public Schools, Career Path Services, Employment Security Department, Triumph Composite Systems, and Goodrich Corporation, and more. It is quickly spreading across the state and is being looked at by other counties as testimonials from several Spokane businesses that have begun using WorkKeys in their hiring practices and job postings are being shared with peer companies in their industries.

For information on the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council's Work Ready initiative, contact Dawn Karber, assistant director of workforce operations, 625-6213.

The Spokane Area Workforce Development Council is an equal opportunity employer and provider of employment and training services. Auxiliary aids are available upon request to persons with disabilities. TDD/TTY (509) 532-3084