

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE BUSINESS, COMMERCE AND LABOR COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Al Lane at 9:10 a.m. on January 10, 2001 in Room 521-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Rep. Broderick Henderson - excused
 Rep. Frank Miller - excused

Committee staff present: Bob Nugent, Revisor of Statutes
 Renae Jeffries, Revisor of Statutes
 Jerry Donaldson, Legislative Research Department
 Bev Adams, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Richard Beyer, Secretary of KDHR
 Roger Aeschliman, Deputy Secretary of KDHR
 William Sanders, KDHR
 Steve Jack, KDHR

Others attending: See attached list

For the first meeting of the 2001 Session Chairman Lane had all the members and staff introduce themselves and tell a little bit about themselves.

Presentation by the Department of Human Resources

Chairman Lane introduced Richard Beyer, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Human Resources (KDHR).

Secretary Beyer gave an overview of the department. The Kansas Department of Human Resources cultivates a job ready workforce and a workplace environment to fuel economic growth for Kansas. The agency functions as a thought leader, a facilitator, a catalyst and a services delivery organization, partnering with public and private organizations to serve the needs of Kansans and Kansas employers. In his written testimony, he outlines some of the department's strategic objectives for the future, the organizational chart, and information about the executive staff. (See Attachment 1)

Secretary Beyer introduced Roger Aeschliman, Deputy Secretary and Director of Staff Services, KDHR.

Mr. Aeschliman explained the organizational chart and gave the committee an idea of the size and scope of the department. Many of the matching departments in other states go by the name of Department of Labor or Workforce Development Department instead of the Department of Human Resources, but they do basically the same thing. He explained briefly each division and what are their different functions.

Through implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, KDHR has been a catalyst in developing the many splintered groups that provide services for Kansas businesses and job seekers into "One-Stop Career Service Centers" in the five regions in the State of Kansas. Many different agencies are engaged in workforce development initiatives partnering with KDHR; Commerce and Housing, the Board of Regents, the Department of Education, Social and Rehabilitation Services, and others. This is a more seamless system, a more helpful system that makes life easier for job seekers as well as employers. These centers can be accessed through your home computer, computers at your local library, or going to one of the centers. Their online address is www.kansasjoblink.com if you would like to see what the site offers.

William Sanders, Chief Information Officer and Director of Employment Security, KDHR, gave a brief overview of

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his division. He explained how the unemployment application process and other processes required by his division can now be done by calling a toll free number, where the claimants answer questions by punching numbers for their yes and no answers.

One of their main problems now is funding. They have had a huge increase in workload the last weeks of December into the new year and have been handling it with the same amount of employees. The increase in claimants was caused by the weather conditions, the after Christmas layoffs, the Con-Agra fire, and the Monday holidays. Another problem is that the toll free numbers are swamped with calls on Mondays. This is a problem because some claimants get a busy signal and can not get through to file their claim. They are encouraging claimants to call on another day. Mr. Sanders finished his presentation by answering questions from the committee. (See Attachment 2)

Steve Jack, Director of Employment and Training, KDHR, is head of the division that oversees or operates federal and state-funded labor programs. He talked more about the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) which was implemented in July of 2000. In his written testimony, he lists the many programs, their funding source and the amount. He explained several of the programs and how they operate. He finished his testimony by answering questions. (See Attachment 3)

Several people from KDHR will return Thursday, January 11, to continue their presentation.

Chairman Lane adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 11, 2000.