



Artee Williams
DWS Director

Governor announces workforce initiative

Gov. Mike Huckabee formally announced the Arkansas Mature Worker Initiative at a press conference April 12 at the Capitol.

The initiative is a new workforce development program designed to increase awareness and bring attention to the value of workers 50+.

The AARP Featured Employer Program highlights employers who have made a commitment to hire mature workers. Many of these companies have offices in Arkansas. A list can be found at www.aarp.org/featuredemployers.

"It's encouraging to see these companies recognize the value of the countless mature workers we have in Arkansas," said Gov. Mike Huckabee. "I hope more employers see these workers are known to have essential qualities

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Photo by Kirk Jordan/Office of the Governor

MATURE WORKER ANNOUNCEMENT – Gov. Mike Huckabee (front) formally announced the Arkansas Mature Worker Initiative at a press conference April 12 at the Capitol. Agency representatives included (back, l to r) Maria Reynolds-Diaz, the state director for AARP Arkansas; Sandra Winston, the executive director of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board; Steve Lux, the AWIB chairman; and Artee Williams, the director of the Department of Workforce Services.

Clayton sworn in as director of VETS

David Clayton was sworn in recently as the state director of the Veterans Employment and Training Service.



David Clayton

Lester Williams, the regional VETS director, performed the swearing in at a ceremony held at the Department of Workforce Services' Central Office. DWS, Arkansas Workforce Investment Board and veterans staff attended the ceremony.

Prior to coming to the Department of Labor, Clayton worked for the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education,

Veterans' Approving Agency. As a veteran program advisor, Clayton assisted veterans and other eligible people in pursuit of their educational, training and career goals through the use of their G.I. Bill benefits.

Clayton was previously employed as a job development/placement specialist for Lions World Services for the Blind, a residential rehabilitation and training facility for blind and visually impaired individuals in Little Rock.

He began working as a Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialist in 1993. Clayton held that position for more

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Clean Indoor Air Act takes effect July 21

The Clean Indoor Air Act of 2006 takes effect July 21.

Act 8, passed by the state legislature during the recent special session, restricts smoking at all public worksites in order to protect employees and the public from the harms of secondhand smoke.

Employers who have questions about the act should contact the Department of Health and Human Services at 1-800-235-0002 or visit www.arcleanair.com.

Mature Worker

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needed for today's jobs, including loyalty, dedication and responsibility."

Department of Workforce Services Director Artee Williams, Arkansas Workforce Investment Board Executive Director Sandra Winston, AWIB Chairman Steve Lux and AARP Arkansas State Director Maria Reynolds-Diaz spoke about the initiative and the importance of hiring mature workers.

The labor force in Arkansas and across the country will experience a shortage of qualified workers as the baby boomers begin to retire. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 2004 and 2012 up to 43 percent of the current workforce will be eligible to retire in the next 10 years. Two following generations are 15 percent smaller. Also, 61 percent of entrants (age 16 to 25) to the workforce are not fully qualified.

The initiative will help employers meet this new challenge by increasing the awareness and appreciation of mature workers by developing relationships with the public workforce system, states, chambers of commerce, national and local training providers, trade associations, labor unions, community organizations, policy makers and business leaders.

After rolling out the program on the national level, AARP selected Arkansas as one of four pilot states. Huckabee selected the initiative as one of his top priorities for the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. A subcommittee of the board meets monthly with other state and local agencies to plan outreach activities.

Several regional meetings have been held around the state to inform employers about the initiative. The first regional meeting was held April 18 in Little Rock. Representatives from Manpower, Bank of the Ozarks and Walgreens served on the panel to discuss their use of mature workers.

A second meeting was held May 17 in Hot Springs, followed by a third in Fort Smith on June 13. Additional meetings are planned, with the next meeting scheduled for 11:30 a.m. July 26 at the Holiday Inn & Convention Center of Northwest Arkansas in Springdale.

Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work Tax Credits

For information, go to
www.arkansas.gov/esd/ForEmployer/A_wotc.htm.

Or call your local Arkansas Workforce Center
 or
 1-866-330-9459.



RIBBON CUTTING – JONESBORO – Craighead County Judge Dale Haas (center) cuts the ribbon at the Arkansas Workforce Center at Jonesboro open house recently. Several DWS, AWIB and Workforce Center staff attended the ceremony. The center moved to its new location at 2311 E. Nettleton Ave., Plumm Tree Center in Jonesboro.

Clayton

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than 10 years.

In 2001 he accepted a temporary assignment to work in the VETS national office in support of the Division of Employment and Training Programs. He assisted with the monitoring and management of the DVOP and Local Veterans' Employment Representative staffing grant programs, providing technical assistance and support to state workforce agencies in 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Clayton served in the U.S. Navy as an aviation electrician mate from 1971 to 1975,

obtaining the rank of petty officer second class. He returned home to Jonesboro upon discharge, entered college and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from Arkansas State University at Jonesboro.

Clayton also served six years in the U.S. Naval Reserve as an intelligence specialist. He is a member of the American Legion and Disabled American Veterans and has held various positions on the local and state level.

Clayton and his wife, Diane, live in North Little Rock.



RIBBON CUTTING – MOUNTAIN HOME – Roger Fisher, with Sen. Blanche Lincoln's office (center), and DWS Director Artee Williams (center right) cut the ribbon at the Arkansas Workforce Center at Mountain Home open house recently. Several DWS, AWIB and Workforce Center staff attended the ceremony. The center moved to its new location at 1058 Highland Circle #20 in Mountain Home.