

EMPLOYMENT

Workforce Investment Board offers help

By **Sandy Harmsen**

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA), originally established in 1998, is a driving force for business expansion and job creation in San Bernardino County and other regions across the country. This national act provides federal funding which is administered by local Workforce Investment Boards. The WIA is a critical component of economic growth at the local level.

With more than 14 years and thousands of success stories, the WIA now faces significant budget cuts and possible program elimination. Support from the nation's business owners is imperative to its continuation and expansion.

WIA dollars directly support services that are helping businesses succeed—services and support that are critical to our area's economic recovery.

WIA funds are administered through a local volunteer board made up of the region's business leaders, the County of San Bernardino Workforce Investment Board

(WIB). These leaders are well versed in the challenges and opportunities of San Bernardino County businesses.

The Workforce Investment Act programs provide no-cost services to businesses of all sizes and in all industries. This includes programs for new-hire wage reimbursement, recruitment, applicant screening, human resources support and job fairs. Businesses can also benefit from workshops covering a wide range of topics from marketing to the Affordable Care Act.

An example of how San Bernardino County businesses are benefiting from Workforce Investment Board programs comes from Heavy Motions, a global hydraulic parts supplier. Business demands grew from annual revenue of \$500,000 to \$6 million, Dean Ding and his wife required a larger team to support the increasing orders. Ding sought out the Workforce Investment Board for its no-cost recruitment services. The WIB helped Heavy Motions recruit warehouse staff and an ad-

ministrative employee, who has since been promoted to office manager.

"We plan to increase business to \$30 million in the next 10 years," Ding said. "It is fantastic that the Workforce Investment Board is here help us expand again and grow to support the local economy."

Making a difference and ensuring the continuation of WIA requires business owners to increase their own awareness and spread the word. This can be done four simple ways — stay updated, write your local legislators, utilize WIB programs and spread the word.

San Bernardino County businesses interested in taking advantage of the no-cost services offered by the County of San Bernardino Workforce Investment Board should call (800) 451-JOBS or visit www.csb-win.org for more information.

Sandy Harmsen is the executive director of the Workforce Investment Board and director of the county of San Bernardino Workforce Development Department.

