

Workforce Florida, Inc.
Curtis Austin
President

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 31, 2006

CONTACT:

Andra Cornelius, Vice President for Business Outreach, Workforce Florida, Inc.
850.922.6033

Adriane Glenn Grant, Communications Coordinator, Workforce Florida, Inc.
850.921.1122

Florida's Workforce Training Programs Rank Among Nation's Best

TALLAHASSEE—Florida ranks among the top 10 states with the best workforce training programs, according to a recently released poll by *Expansion Management* magazine.

“Florida’s programs have been business driven from the start,” says Katherine Wilson, Chairman of Workforce Florida, Inc. “That means our training incentives continually evolve to ensure they effectively address a business’s need for timely, customized training using different, and sometimes non-traditional, methods.”

In an article that appears in the July/August issue of the national business publication, Florida is ranked No. 10 for the overall quality of its workforce training incentive programs. More than 80 corporate site consultants were polled by the magazine. Alabama was ranked No. 1.

Florida’s Quick Response Training (QRT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grant programs were major contributors to the state’s high ranking. Both programs are directed by Workforce Florida, Inc., and aimed at improving workers’ skills and the competitiveness of Florida businesses.

The Quick Response Training program provides grants for customized skills training for new Florida businesses or existing companies that are expanding. Since its inception in 1993, the program has pumped more than \$60 million into new skills development targeting about 100,000 workers.

Started in 1999, the Incumbent Worker Training program reimburses existing Florida businesses for costs associated with upgrading the skills of their full-time employees. It has directed about \$14 million to improving the skills of more than 65,000 workers at 593 businesses.

"Workforce training incentives clearly have a direct impact on the competitiveness of a state," says Ken Krizner, Managing Editor of *Expansion Management*. "Florida's top 10 ranking is a testament to its ability to provide companies with a well-trained, highly skilled workforce."

According to the magazine, "Programs are judged not only in terms of their financial value, but also in terms of ease of usage and applicability. In other words, some programs may have a high value, in theory, but are of little practical use to most companies. Likewise, some programs may be both useful and valuable, but are so wrapped up in red tape requirements that they are extremely difficult to actually use."

This is the eighth year the magazine has published the workforce training programs ranking and the first time Florida has made it into the top 10. In 2000 and 2002, Florida was ranked No. 15. *Expansion Management* circulates to 45,000 executives, including CEOs and economic development leaders.

In addition to the state administered Quick Response Training and Incumbent Worker Training programs, businesses also can access local training programs and grants provided by Florida's 24 regional workforce boards. For more information on state and local workforce programs and services, go to www.EmployFlorida.com.

For more about the *Expansion Management* ranking, visit <http://www.expansionmanagement.com/smo/articleviewer/default.asp?cmd=articledetail&articleid=17714&st=5>.

###

Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI) is the state's chief workforce policy organization and principal architect in the efforts to meet the current and future workforce needs and challenges of Florida's businesses and citizens. **WFI** is a state partner, along with the **Agency for Workforce Innovation**, in the **Employ Florida** affiliate network of 24 business-led regional workforce boards and nearly 100 one-stop centers that provide employment solutions throughout Florida. Learn more about Florida's workforce resources and solutions at www.EmployFlorida.com.

Workforce Florida is an equal opportunity employer/program.

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

All voice telephone numbers on this document may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.