



Managing and Understanding the Hispanic Workforce: A Workshop for Employers in the Forest Industries



May 11th, 2009
Princeton, WV

About the Workshop

The USDA Forest Service's *Wood Education and Resource Center* and Virginia Tech's *Sloan Foundation Forest Industries Center* are pleased to co-sponsor a diversity management workshop designed to improve your management skills in working with the growing Hispanic workforce. The interactive workshop will focus on meeting the cultural, communication, and legal challenges associated with hiring and managing this multicultural workforce.

Who Should Attend

Employers and managers in the forest industries, from primary producers to secondary manufacturers, who employ or who are considering employing members of the Hispanic workforce.

Workshop Objectives

- To assist employers in managing the legal aspects of employing Hispanic workers. *Discussion will include the I-9 verification process, the H2B Program, employer compliance issues and end with a question and answer session with a lawyer specializing in immigration.*
- To overcome the language barrier. *Activities will include the opportunity to learn new Spanish language skills or enhance existing Spanish language skills that are needed to communicate with a diverse Hispanic workforce. Emphasis will be placed on industry specific vocabulary and phrases.*
- To guide employers in creating a business culture that values diversity and that provides a supportive environment for Hispanic employees. *Discussion will focus on employee advocacy at work and in the community.*
- To provide the latest resources and the most up to date information related to managing the Hispanic workforce. *Information will include employee resources, job and safety training resources, language training resources, and best practices from other industries.*
- To create a forum for employers in the forest industry to share their solutions to common management problems in the areas of hiring, training, retaining, and managing this multicultural workforce with the goal of identifying best practices for the forest industries.

Guest Speakers

Alfredo Martinez, PhD – Georgia Hispanic Specialists Group, University of Georgia

Recognizing the need for improved communication between business administrators and the growing Hispanic labor force, Dr. Martinez created the nationally recognized Georgia Hispanic Specialists Group at the University of Georgia. This multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional group has implemented a series of training programs throughout the Southeast to promote awareness of cultural differences and the impact they have on productivity, work place safety and human relations. A native of Mexico, Dr. Martinez earned his PhD in Plant Pathology from Montana State University.

Barbara Kraft – Instructor, Spanish for the Green Industry, Virginia Tech

Ms. Barbara Kraft has been an Instructor at Virginia Tech for the past seven years. She developed the Spanish for the Green Industry class four years ago to further prepare Horticulture and Agriculture students for their careers in the Green and Agriculture Industries. Barbara collaborated with the Sloan Foundation Forest Industries Center at Virginia Tech to develop Spanish training for employers in the forest industries. Barbara is a native speaker of Spanish having grown up in Mexico, Venezuela and Spain. She is a graduate of Virginia Tech with a Bachelors in Spanish and a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction.

William J. Benos, ESQ - Williams Mullen, Richmond, Virginia

Mr. Benos is a partner in the International Practice Section at Williams Mullen. He practices business immigration law and represents clients in international and domestic corporate and commercial transactions. He also chairs the firm's Immigration Practice Group, where he combines his business and immigration expertise to advise international clients with matters involving inbound and outbound investments and the movement of personnel. He serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Richmond School of Law, teaching an externship in international business law and a course in immigration law.

Jim Hamilton, PhD – Forestry Instructor, Haywood Community College, Clyde, NC

Dr. Hamilton earned his PhD in Forestry from North Carolina University where his research focused on the dynamics of hiring and training a Hispanic labor force within the Christmas tree industry. Fluent in Spanish, Dr. Hamilton worked extensively in South America and has developed and implemented pesticide and field safety practices and training as a consultant for Cooperative Extension and the Christmas tree industry. He currently teaches Forestry at Haywood Community College near Asheville, North Carolina.

Workshop Agenda

Monday, May 11, 2009

- 8:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 8:50 Welcome and Introduction of Speakers
Steve Milauskas, Director, USDA Forest Service and the Wood Education Resource Center
Dr. David Brinberg, Director, Sloan Foundation Forest Industries Center at Virginia Tech, Robert O. Goodykoontz, Professor of Marketing
- 9:00 a.m. *Exploring Cultural Differences and Overcoming Communication Barriers.* Discussion will focus on creating a business culture that values diversity and that provides a supportive environment for Hispanic employees.
Alfredo Martinez, PhD, Georgia Hispanic Specialists Group, University of Georgia
- 10:30 Mid-Morning Break
- 10:45 *Survival Spanish for the Forest Industries: Overcoming the Language Barrie.* Activities will include the opportunity to learn new Spanish language skills or enhance existing Spanish language skills needed to communicate in the multicultural workplace. Emphasis will be placed on industry specific vocabulary and phrases through interactive role play. Discussion will also include alternative communication and training tools such as visual training aids and mentoring as a compliment to language education.
Barbara Kraft, Virginia Tech
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch (Provided)
- 1:30 *Employing a Legal Workforce.* Topics of discussion will include avoiding common immigration pitfalls, assessing immigration status and complying with the I-9 process, and obtaining employment authorization. A presentation of new legislative developments will also be covered followed by a question and answer session.
Bill Benos, Williams Mullen, Richmond, Virginia
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 *Employee Training & Job Safety in a Multicultural Workplace.* Discussion will focus on decreasing job related injuries and improving employee relations by developing a comprehensive safety program to address the unique safety training needs of a multicultural workforce.
Jim Hamilton, PhD, Forestry Instructor, Haywood Community College
- 4:45 *Roundtable Discussion.* The speaker panel will facilitate an interactive session where participants will have the opportunity to discuss the leading safety and training issues facing their organizations and ask questions and share experiences with the group.
- Workshop Evaluations Adjourn

Location & Lodging

The workshop will be held at the Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) in Princeton, West Virginia. WERC is easily accessed from I-77. Take Exit 14 (Concord University Exit). Go west on Athens Road for ¼ mile. Take a right onto Cornbread Ridge Road. When Cornbread Ridge Road turns to the left, continue straight onto Hardwood Lane. WERC parking is 200 feet on the left. For additional information about WERC, please call 304-487-1510 or visit <http://na.fs.fed.us/ea/werc/werc.shtm>. Princeton, WV is located 91 miles from Roanoke Regional Airport (ROA) and 95 miles from Charleston WV Airport (CRW).

Lodging is available at the Holiday Inn Express in Princeton, West Virginia. The Holiday Inn Express is easily accessed from I-77. Off I-77, take exit 9 to Rt. 460 West. Off 460, take a right onto Ambrose Lane. The Holiday Inn is located just ahead at 805 Oakvale Road. Participants are responsible for making their own reservations. To reserve a room, please call 304-425-8156. Other area hotels include the Hampton Inn (for reservations call 304-431-2580) and the Comfort Inn (for reservations call 304-431-2580).

Fees & Registration

The workshop fee is \$300 which covers registration, instructional materials, continental breakfasts, coffee breaks, and lunch. To register, complete a pre-registration form and return to the address below. Registration forms are available online at www.forestindustries.vt.edu. You may also pre-register by calling 540-231-2161. Your registration should be received no later than **Friday, April 24th, 2009**. Registrations are limited to the first 45 applicants.

For additional information, contact Marina Cogo at 540-231-2161 or email cogom@vt.edu.

Send completed pre-registration forms to:

Marina Cogo
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