

## **OCL Study Session, March 13, 2014**

ProLiteracy conference room, 104 Marcellus St., Syracuse

Attendees: Kim Armani, James Branche, Jeff Craig, Betsy Dunlap, Jessica Cohen, David Goodness, Heidi Holtz, Phil Jakes-Johnson, Ava Kerznowski, Robert Leslie, Jennifer Locke, Melissa Menon, Sarah Merrick, Laura Miller, Brian Moore, Frank Ridzi, Tim Riehlman, Michael Sattler

OCL: Co-chair Barbara Carranti; Sandra Barrett; Renée K. Gadoua

Speaker: Karen Knapik-Scalzo, associate economist with the New York State Department of Labor Division of Research and Statistics in Syracuse presented data on CNY employment and jobs trends.

Notes: PowerPoint **Jobs Trends: Central New York:** <http://labor.ny.gov/stats/cen/prescny.ppt>  
Another PPT from Karen that ties into her presentation and to our next meeting - **What Students Need to Know About the Job Market** - <http://labor.ny.gov/stats/cen/presyout.ppt>  
Also, her office puts out monthly Focus on Central New York.: <http://www.labor.ny.gov/stats/>

Heidi Holtz invited committee members on Twitter to Tweet about study sessions using #OCLstudy and #skillsgap

### A. Highlights from February 2014 Focus on Central New York

- Report lists what employers are looking for in five-county region.
- Data comes from Labor Insight data tool from Burning Glass International/job listings.
- Most needed job in this period: registered nurse. Other health care/health service providers also needed. Also high need for transportation and finance workers.

### B. Jobs gained or lost from January 2013 to January 2014

- Total jobs: increased 700. (Does not include unfilled positions.)
- Region is not back to pre-recession rate. (After 2001 recession, region improved, then dipped again in 2008.)
- Jobs in private education and health care are at record highs in the region.
- Government jobs in region increased by 100.

(Question for committee to consider: How do these statistics fit with potential jobs identified as emerging industries by CenterState and others?)

### C. Unemployment rates January 2013 to January 2014

- Syracuse MSA (Onondaga, Madison and Oswego counties) rate in 2014: 7.4%
- Rate in 2013: 9.1%
- Record low: 3.4%
- Oswego has hit 10%
- During recession, MSA hit record high unemployment rate.
- 2008 pre-recession unemployment rate: 5.5-5.7%

- Overall trend of unemployment rate is more important than month-to-month rate and seasonal fluctuations.
- Unemployment highest January-March; lowest in October.
- National unemployment rate January 2014: 7%; state level: 7.3%
- Job growth seen in medical offices, hospitals, retail trade (food and beverage), truck transportation, food service and drinking establishments, specialty trade contractors, heavy and civil engineering, construction, personal and laundry services.
- Region is still down 8,900 total non-farm jobs from January 2008.
- Unemployment rate based on where person lives, not where she works.

#### D. CNY's economy

- Job losses concentrated in manufacturing and computer and electronic; plant manufacturing; transportation in equipment manufacturing; professional and business services; professional scientific and technical services (temp agencies and R&D); financial activities (funds, trusts and other financial vehicles as well as credit intermediation and related activities); information/broadcasting.
- Local job market is improving, but competition remains as long-term unemployed workers, new entrants and re-entrants seek same jobs.
- January's CNY unemployment rate the lowest since January 2008.
- National and state economies are growing faster than the local economy. (Local unemployment rate of 7.4% is slightly above state and national levels.)
- CNY does not have wide swings in labor market, as does nation as a whole.

#### E. General observations from speaker

- More company good news than bad news.
- Unemployment claims are decreasing (could reflect some decline as a result of cuts in long-term unemployment benefits).
- Increased economic development requests and projects, especially in food products manufacturing and leisure and hospitality.
- Health care employment continues to increase, especially home care.
- During the recession, few calls about economic development.
- CNY wages in the middle of state range; Utica, North Country, Southern Tier lower.
- Some potential business developers express concern about unions (New York has highest rate of unions in U.S.)
- Some potential employers/developers worry there won't be a labor force here.
- Meanwhile, employers says there is excellent work ethic here.
- Improving economy, but some increase in discouraged workers.
- Based on population/demographics, more retirements.
- Fewer youth working.
- Average weekly earnings: \$847 before taxes (See chart in PPT)

#### Employment by industry in first half of 2013

- Trade/transportation/utilities: 21%

- Government (includes SUNY/CUNY): 19%
- Education/health: 18%
- Professional/business: 11%
- Leisure/hospitality: 9%
- Manufacturing: 8%
- Finance: 5%
- Other: 5%
- Construction: 4%

(In Oswego County, half the jobs are in trade/utilities and government; in Cortland County, 13% of jobs are in manufacturing.)

- North American Classification Codes supposed to reflect primary function at facility. But manufacturers at meeting note these classifications often arbitrary and inaccurate. (Points to another possible gap: Different constituencies using different language.)
- Most people in CNY work at companies with 10-99 employees. (Many larger companies have downsized or left the region.)
- Wages vary widely by type of industry and size of firm.

The schedule for upcoming meetings is as follows:

Tuesday, March 25, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., ProLiteracy. Topic: local economic development plans, anticipated areas of job growth and labor force needs of current business prospects. Rob Simpson of CenterState CEO and Nora Spillane of Onondaga County Office of Economic Development will join us.

- Thursday, April 10, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. OCM BOCES with optional 11 a.m. lunch, and tour after the meeting. Topic: CTE
- Tuesday, April 22, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. ProLiteracy Topic: Employer Perspective
- Thursday, May 8, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. ProLiteracy Topic:
- Tuesday, May 20, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. ProLiteracy Topic:

Study Committee members are welcome at the March 27 session of University College's Thursday Morning Roundtable. The program will address the minimum wage debate. TMR meets 8:15 to 9:15 a.m. at Drumlins.

Submitted by Renée K. Gadoua, study writer