



## WIRED UPDATE October 1, 2006

July 11-13 – WIRED Selected and Virtual regions participated in the Economic Transformation Station at Workforce Innovations 2006 in Anaheim, California. Representatives of WIRED regions also served as panelists for the town halls and breakout sessions. Other highlights included: U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao; Deborah Wince-Smith, President, Council on Competitiveness; Steve Uzzell, Photographer, Author, and Editor, *Open Roads Open Minds: An Exploration of Creative Problem Solving*; James Burke, Science Historian, Author, and PBS Host/Writer/Producer, *Innovation for the Day After Tomorrow*; and Michael Crow, President, Arizona State University.

Also in July, the Workforce & Innovation Technical Solutions (WITS) tool was made available to WIRED regions. This tool is a web-based software solution that combines core and enhanced datasets with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping and labor intelligence, and provides advanced technical capabilities in a powerful tool to aid in economic development and workforce-related decisions. Regions are assembling “data teams” and participating in webinars to learn how to utilize this tool.

From mid-July to September, the 13 selected WIRED regions were working to complete their implementation plans. Draft plans were turned in on September 18. Advanced technical assistance requests were made in these plans. Beginning October 1 and continuing through March 30, the three technical assistance providers will begin work on the advanced technical assistance requests. Each of the 13 regions will receive approximately 40 days of advanced technical assistance.

Beginning October 20 and continuing through the fall and winter, the Assistant Secretary and virtual region leads will begin site visits to the 13 Virtual Regions. The first site visit will be to Eastern Arkansas on October 20.

The second WIRED Academy is coming up on October 26-27 in Minneapolis, MN. The purpose of the WIRED academies is to provide a forum for all WIRED regions to engage and network, learn from each other and experts on various topics, partner with federal agencies, and share best practices. This academy will focus on the challenges and accomplishments of the first 6 months of our journey together and the tools for success in the next 6 months. The topics for

the first day are 1) Creating a Region; 2) Lessons Learned During the Implementation Planning Process; 3) Leveraging Funds; 4) Engaging Critical Regional Partners; and 5) Tech Transfer for MEP Pilots (a special session for the 5 regions participating in this pilot). The topics for the second day are 1) Asset Mapping; 2) Cluster Development; 3) Using WITS Information and Data; 4) Performance and Evaluation; and 5) Executive Forum with Senior ETA Leadership. At the first WIRED Academy, which was held in June at Georgia Tech, 200 regional leaders and partners from the 26 WIRED regions participated in interactive discussions on 5 key, cross-cutting issues: Defining Success/Performance Metrics, Collaborative Leadership & Social Networking, Regional Communications and Media Strategies, Entrepreneurship, and Trade as a Business Tool.

The next WIRED quarterly reports are due on October 30.