The Day

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Job centers yield employment of 10,000 throughout region

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Nearly 10,000 people found jobs either directly or indirectly as a result of visits last year to the four American Job Centers in eastern Connecticut, according to an impact study released this week.

The job centers in New London, Norwich, Willimantic and Danielson, run by the Franklin-based Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, helped 5,466 residents land jobs directly, the study said. Another 4,318 positions were created by multiplier effects that occur because of increased economic activity related to job growth, according to the investment board's study.

The study found people returning to work through the job centers generated more than $145 million in wages from employment last year. The overall impact of the job placements in eastern Connecticut was put at about $260 million.

"We traced every participant record to the town in which they live," Paul Sweet, Plainfield's first selectman and a member of the workforce board's Council of Chief Elected Officials, said in a statement. "It was an extensive process, but definitely worth it to illustrate the impact of our career centers to the individual towns."

Rich Matters, first selectman of Franklin, cited the "tremendous return on investment" that the workforce board can show in its various programs to help people get back on their feet and return to work.

One of those workers was Brandi Glover of Preston, who attended a "confidence makeover" workshop

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at one of the workforce board's job centers covering a 41-town area. The classroom instruction provides tips on resumes, interviewing and job search.

"When I lost my job, I really felt there wasn't anything out there that I was capable of doing," Glover said. "But after seeing others in the class, I realized that I wasn't alone and I started to feel better about myself."

Merrillee Buckley of Danielson agreed.

"The workshop was a turning point for me," she said. "It changed my perception and strengthened my resolve."

The local job centers also have been at the forefront of introducing new technology and online training to the unemployed. Last year, the state legislature's Program Review and Investigations Committee cited the local workforce board for its use of job-training best practices to help connect the unemployed to jobs.

"It is testimony to this region's commitment to the mission of these centers," said Montville Mayor Ron McDaniel, a member of the workforce board's CEO Council.

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