

October 18, 2010

EDITORS: The following information is for immediate release. **Also, you are invited to cover the Hire One kickoff event at Penn State Great Valley.** If you have any questions, please contact Stan Schuck, Project Manager of Hire One, at 215 478-5772, or, Karen Costello, program and marketing coordinator of the Chester County Economic Development Council, at 610 458-5700.

Chester County's Hire One program designed to put county's unemployed back to work with local companies

*Kickoff event of Private Public Partnership endeavor
will take place at Penn State Great Valley on October 21*

EXTON _ In an effort to combat the growing unemployment rate in Chester County, Hire One, a private-public partnership endeavor, is being launched to encourage local companies to hire qualified out-of-work residents and to cut down on planned workforce reductions.

“The number of unemployed is growing at an alarming rate,” said Gary Smith, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Chester County Economic Development Council. “I know of qualified managers and executives who have been looking for work for more than a year. The number of unemployed in the Southeastern Pennsylvania has been estimated at 177,000 and increasing each month. Hire One is a program that is needed, immediately.”

The Economic Development Council, the Chester County Workforce Investment Board, PA CareerLink and other committed organizations have joined to create a task force to develop key strategies for successfully connecting job seekers to hiring employers by effectively leveraging available resources.

“The Hire One Initiative is a great example of effective community collaboration,” said Patrick Bokovitz, Director of the Chester County Department of Community Development. “Imagine the collective force of business leaders, non-profits, and government agencies joining forces to create jobs and address unemployment issues.” Bokovitz also heads the Chester County Workforce Investment Board.

“Many good workers are unemployed and under-employed,” said Stan Schuck, Hire One’s project director. “The traditional unemployment counseling and job matching programs are being overwhelmed. Hire One is a private public partnership that should be the new model for job creation across the Commonwealth.”

Hire One’s kickoff event will be Thursday, October 21, 2010, at 3:00 p.m. at Penn State Great Valley. A majority of Chester County’s elected representatives in West Chester, Harrisburg and Washington have indicated they will be represented at the Penn State Great Valley event. For more information, contact Laura Heikkila at 610 458-5700, ext. 401 or E-mail HireOne@cceconomicdevelopment.com.

“The program is designed to put Pennsylvanians back to work one job at a time,” Schuck said. “Many of those unemployed are looking for work for the first times in their lives. It’s critical that the public sector join with the private sector to find solutions. Unemployment hurts our economy, our businesses, individuals and families. Chester County workers need jobs.”

The goal of Hire One is to persuade every employer in the county and region to hire at least one new, local, full-time, unemployed person in the next year or for employers planning workforce reductions, to commit to reducing those plans by 2.5%.

The task force will assess services currently being provided to the unemployed and design innovative ways of servicing job seekers, including compiling a comprehensive resource guide. The task force is also committed to aiding those companies wanting to hire workers by linking the companies with job seekers.

“Hire One will complement current services, such as PA CareerLink, and not duplicate efforts,” Smith said. “We need to effectively use our resources to overcome the threat unemployment poses to the county’s economy.”

Companies will benefit from taking part in Hire One, according to Schuck. “By hiring, qualified and skilled workers will remain in the county. Those companies will be acknowledged as a **Champion** contributor to our growing economy.”