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ISSUES

What after High School?

*by Clarke M. Thomas
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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: WHAT'S AT STAKE?

With their high school diplomas now in hand, what's next for cousins Jim Baker and Jack Gardner? Their parents are sitting around the Baker's kitchen table discussing the matter.

In the old days, Jim's father Fred sighs, the decision was easy for milltown families like theirs. A graduating boy went down the street from school to the big steel mill and signed on—and at a wage higher than what his teacher was making. That's what Fred Baker himself did, although the joyride ended in the early 1980s when the mill closed forever and he had to fashion a new career.

Fred Baker thinks that Jim and Jack should go on to Pitt or some other four-year college. His sister, Peggy Gardner, agrees. She recalls that her oldest son, Jerry, was the first in the entire clan to go to college and get a degree.

But her husband, Les Gardner, demurs. "I don't think Jack is inclined that way. Not like Jerry. He's more into doing things with his hands. He ought to go to some technical school, to my way of thinking."

Peggy Gardner shakes her head. "A college degree means everything

these days. We've made a breakthrough with Jerry. Why should we slide back to where we came from?"

She looks around for backing from the Bakers.

"And, besides, even for technical jobs these days, you have to know more math, more science than you used to."

Her sister-in-law Alma Baker purses her lips in doubt. "That's why we have Jim looking into community college, over there in West Mifflin or at the Boyce Campus in Monroeville. He can sign up for a two-year degree."

Her husband Fred snorts a laugh.

"Funny thing. All these years they've pushed you to get a college degree. Now some people are saying that the jobs that are going to be needed don't require one."

"I don't believe it," Peg Gardner rejoins. "It's just a way to keep us down; let the rich kids get the college degrees and go on getting richer."

"Now, Peg," Les reaches across to pat her arm. "You've heard too much of that put-down talk. I think our region has to think of getting people ready for the jobs the employers are furnishing. If we don't, this Pittsburgh region is going to die."

"Pfoo!," Fred Baker snorts. "You don't really believe that, do you?"

His wife interjects, "What really matters is for a kid to go do whichever is best for him, what will make him happier. It was right for Jerry to go to college—look at the way he's sailed right on to graduate school."

"But, Alma, Jack—and Jim—still are going to have to make a living. That's what it's all about."

The Bakers and the Gardners unwittingly have touched upon many of the issues facing southwestern Pennsylvania as it contemplates developing a workforce designed to meet the needs not only of today but for tomorrow—in order to match the trends coming to the fore in the 21st century. The Aspen Institute, a private think tank, commissioned a Domestic Strategy Group that found what it calls three gaps nationally—the worker gap, the skills gap, and the wage gap. Here are the ramifications for this region:

- The worker gap is a result of demographic trends, including an aging population and a flattening out of the working-age population. For the past 20 years, businesses nationally have relied on the dramatic growth of the native-born workforce to find an ever-expanding supply of new workers. That growth is now over. Note: There are some differences of opinion locally as to how much

this region tracks the national picture. But the implications suggest the need to attract and hold talented young people, as well as for efforts to encourage and welcome immigrants from abroad to fill the gap. Some demur on this point, urging the need instead to encourage in-migration, that is, attracting to southwestern Pennsylvania skilled immigrants already living in the United States, including new citizens.

- The skills gap comes because in the new technological age, the skills of yesterday no longer suffice. For this region, that poses questions of how best to provide skills training for the jobs of today and of tomorrow, including assessing the role of education from preschool all the way to community colleges, technical training institutions, and universities. Clearly entwined is the need to meet the needs of employers, both present and prospective. The elements of the skills gap range widely. On the one hand, an expanding economy of any kind, "old" or "new," will require skilled technicians to keep the infrastructure of a plant or office running. At the same time, modern enterprises to be successful increasingly need what Richard Florida of Carnegie Mellon University

has termed the "Creative Class," innovative persons who resist traditional top-down organizational structures.

- The wage gap cited by the Aspen Institute study concerns the ongoing widening of the gap in earnings between workers at the bottom and those at the top. For women, wages at the bottom have been essentially stagnant over the past 20 years, while pay for those at the top has risen sharply. Meanwhile, men at the lower end are actually paid significantly less than two decades ago, although they still earn more than lower-end women, while men at the top earn much more than before. Sizable racial gaps persist as well. For southwestern Pennsylvania, this gap has been exacerbated with the closing of mills with their high-wage jobs even for entry workers—and just at a time when minorities were entering that workforce in greater numbers and women joining for the first time. The "glass ceiling" in the Pittsburgh region is often cited in studies by women and minority groups.

For starters, Brian Kelley, the Heinz Endowments' economic opportunities director, lays out these propositions:

1. Schools now are the acknowledged engines for economic growth. "But nowadays, 30 percent of their graduates don't fit with

what the economy needs," Kelley contends.

2. No one can have a family wage without a specific craft or a post-secondary degree. Even a two-year college degree can make a difference. Yet Pennsylvania has only stand-alone community colleges, with no statewide connectional system, so that many counties and even regions have no community college.
3. Career literacy, that is, understanding the labor market—its opportunities and requirements—is vital. In the past, one could get on a career track and follow the crowd. Now people must figure out more things for themselves. Example: Employers or schools used to help students figure out 401Ks. No longer; there's no money in it! Workplace skills now include much higher levels of math and reading than before, as well as computer abilities.
4. In Pennsylvania, institutions of higher education had never been considered as "economic engines." They need to refashion their thinking on that subject, lest the public question what it is getting for its investments in such major research institutions as Pennsylvania State University and the University of Pittsburgh.
5. The development of human capital is a government product, linking the public and private

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sectors. In Pennsylvania, we have suffered from a weak public sector in this regard.

6. A provision of free land for business prospects is no longer an incentive. A skilled workforce definitely is.
7. We need to pursue immigrants. This will require neighborhoods to change what they think of outsiders.

Some other thought-provoking assertions:

Tim McMahon, president of Triangle Tech in Pittsburgh, declares: "Pie in the sky policies won't build a workforce in Pennsylvania—whether it is robotics, tissue engineering, the Software Institute, the Digital Greenhouse. The fact is that the dire, critical shortage is of workers in fields that have been around for a hundred years. I'm talking about infrastructure maintenance. Without it, none of these [futurist] endeavors will work. A first-class hospital can't be first class without a first-class infrastructure."

McMahon adds, "We need to send a message to people that with skills training you can move from \$7 an hour to \$12 to \$15 an hour, have a truck of your own in two years." The pressure in the schools to "go on to college" may be exactly wrong for many young people, he contends.

U.S. Representative John Peterson of Titusville notes that neighboring

Ohio spends five times as much as Pennsylvania on community colleges and other postsecondary training institutions.

Mike Krajovic of the Fay-Penn Economic Development Council declares that, contrary to the old days, a higher level of skill competency is now required of a blue-collar worker than of a white-collar employee.

With these "teasers," let us now turn to some of the specific areas of complexity and contradiction in the workforce development field.

THE WORKER GAP: WORKER SHORTAGE AHEAD?

Is demography destiny? Specifically, what do the demographic trends of the past quarter-century in southwestern Pennsylvania tell us about the future and what we must do about it?

Population—The population of southwestern Pennsylvania has remained relatively stagnant compared to other parts of the United States. During the early 1980s, as steel mills closed, more than 100,000 industrial jobs were lost in the region. This contributed to a vast out-migration of families forced to move elsewhere to obtain jobs at wages comparable to what they had lost.

A recent study of census data showed that nationally half of the new workers in the 1990s came from abroad. At the same time, the Pittsburgh region has not had the significant inflow of immigrants, particularly from abroad, that other regions have had. Is this especially true in terms of gifted migrants from such nations as India and China? Should there be a concentration of effort in this regard? New Americans seem to be moving inland—to places like Detroit and Fort Wayne. But why are they bypassing Pittsburgh?

One result has been a labor shortage here even in the midst of a national recession. The Center for Competitive Workforce Development at Duquesne University in a recent survey found nearly 1,300 local manufacturing job openings in this region, mostly in production occupations. At the same time, evidence mounts that many people can't find jobs. Why is there a mismatch?

Perhaps this is a legacy of the time when, with the steel mills operating full blast, nobody had to worry about job training or the shortages of skilled personnel. At any rate, by now it is clear that Pennsylvania and this region did not benefit from the economic prosperity of the 1990s to the degree that other states and regions did.

Much attention nowadays is given to the gifted young. Are we attracting and holding them as we should—particularly those in what is termed the "Creative Class?" Worried attention is focused on the graduates of our fine institutions of higher learning and whether we are doing enough to make staying in southwestern Pennsylvania appealing to them.

At the same time, it is important to note a contrarian view of demographic trends. As outlined by Christopher Briem of the University Center for Social and Urban Research at Pitt, we must be careful not to translate national figures and trends into local parallels.

For instance, considerable national concern is raised about the imminent arrival at retirement age of the postwar "baby boomer" generation, with all the tax and other burdens that will be placed on the younger, still-working generation. But Briem points out that the very exodus of so many baby-boomer families when the local mills closed means a considerable lessening here of that burden in the years just ahead. Part of the population decline here is natural, because there are more deaths than births. And, surprising to some, the elderly population in the Pittsburgh region actually is declining, having peaked in 1995. It will hold steady until 2015, when it will start up again,

peaking in 2020. That trend, in turn, can ease the labor shortage here that will be experienced in many other parts of the nation.

Briem's thesis was undergirded in April 2003 in a new estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau that the Pittsburgh metropolitan area's under-65 population actually grew a bit—a plus 95—from 2001 to 2002. From Bahrain in the Middle East where Naval Reservist Briem is on active duty, he told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*: "It's hard to tell you how many decision-makers I talk to who think the elderly population is going up and young people are leaving, when that characterization has not been true for [five to seven] years." The reactions of others quoted in the April 30 *Post-Gazette* article ranged from "too early to tell" to some who considered the new census data a boost to the region's self-esteem and a selling point that belies the "all the young people are leaving" perception.

In fact, Briem worries that the less-than-expected impact of retiring baby boomers here may affect the healthcare industry—a growth factor that helped cushion the labor market downturn here following the closing of the mills. He is concerned that there may have been an overbuilding of nursing homes. If his projections prove valid, the effect on job opportunities as well

as on paying off health-industry bond issues could be unsettling factors in the economic future here.

In arguing that there is no impending worker shortage in southwestern Pennsylvania, Briem points out that the region has been under the national unemployment rate for two years, right through the recession. "We missed the dot-com boom, but also the bust," he explains.

We have benefited from counter-cyclical trends. People go to school longer. Healthcare and financial services have helped fill the gap. Conditions are different from the export-driven steel industry days of the past. "We haven't needed a massive influx of labor; hence the low immigration" compared to other regions, Briem says. Our school dropout rate is low; "usually it is immigrants who drop out."

We tend to overlook the fact that the manufacturing decline here began in the 1950s, not the 1980s. Briem relates, "The nation's curve has continued to go down while our share of manufacturing growth has gone up, such as with the location of Sony here. We have more nuclear engineers than anywhere in the country."

But the standard opinion here concerning workforce development is that Pittsburgh dare not take solace in such conjectures if it is to do more than settle

for a stagnant status quo. Representative of that viewpoint is a warning from Silvio Baretta, research director for Duquesne University's Center for Competitive Workforce Development. "A silent crisis threatens the prosperity of Pittsburgh and southwestern Pennsylvania," Baretta contends, citing U.S. census data to estimate that 11 percent of a labor force numbering 1.25 million people in this nine-county region will reach the retirement age of 65 in 10 years. With fewer younger workers available to replace retirees, the region's economy may face a shortage of as many as 125,000 workers by 2010, Baretta estimates.

Barry Maciak of the same center worries that because of the recession, the pressure has been taken off the demand for workers, lulling the public and employers into becoming complacent on the subject.

Brian Kelley of the Heinz Endowments points out that in 1970, the Pittsburgh region was the nation's 10th largest economy; in 2000, it was the 20th. As to the future, Kelley has this outline:

The aging of the baby boomers is the driving demographic in any analysis of the labor market. While there are a number of ways to present the data, the fundamental message does not change: without in-migration, given current trends, there simply will not be enough

people to fill the projected job openings, particularly given the "brain drain" from the state.

We are confronted with two choices, Kelley holds. To maintain our current position—simply to retain existing business, jobs, and talent—we must adopt an aggressive defensive strategy. That calls for filling critical vacancies in key industries, providing rapid-response training to dislocated workers, and targeting business-attraction efforts at companies whose human capital needs can be most easily met by the existing workforce.

Yet, Kelley continues, the volatility of the national and world economy suggests that that alone won't do. "The world is not going to retreat from globalization." In fact, the situation makes imperative the second choice—an offensive strategy designed to grow new firms and even whole new industries as an important part of the region's economic development arsenal. While traditional business attraction models will be a part of an offensive strategy, the heart will be technology-based economic development in which investments in innovation and emerging technologies seed the growth of new companies and industries.

In any event, human capital investments are critical to the success of both the defensive and the offensive strategies. The defensive

strategy requires skill upgrading to enable employees to perform with new technologies and in new work structures. Business attraction, whether part of an offensive or a defensive strategy, depends upon the availability of a skilled workforce, Kelley holds.

Discussions of workforce development inevitably barge into the touchy question of immigration. It is one thing to talk of persuading bright young people to settle in the region. It is another, in the minds of some, to launch efforts to attract immigrants to help meet worker shortages here. A recent report by the Center for Competitive Workforce Development at Duquesne University goes directly to the issue. Titled "New Americans and the Future of Pittsburgh: International Communities and Regional Economic Development," it declares that in recent years, "Pittsburgh has faltered in its ability to attract newcomers from abroad, even as the foreign-born population of the United States increased significantly throughout the 1990s. ... In contrast to the national trend, the Pittsburgh metropolitan area received just 25,000 of the more than 13 million people who arrived in the U.S. during the 1990s."

Parenthetically, Pitt's University Center for Social and Urban Research notes a trend in the 1990s for foreign-born arrivals to settle in suburban communities. Its summer

2002 issue of *Pittsburgh Economic Quarterly* reported that in 2000, 58 percent of international immigrants settled in suburban communities, compared to 1990 when the figure was closer to 50 percent. (The latter figure reflected the high numbers of international students enrolled in higher education institutions in the city itself.)

Still, the Pittsburgh region, in particular, is missing out on what is being called "secondary migration" or "in-migration." That phrase refers to the spread of new immigrants beyond port cities such as New York and Philadelphia and into the hinterlands—with Fort Wayne, Ind., and Detroit, Mich., cited as communities that have particularly gained thereby. The Duquesne University report explained that a variety of cost-of-living and quality-of-life factors have led newcomers to move away from their initial places of arrival in the United States to these more affordable and less stressful locations.

Nearly 170,000 immigrants, including 8,000 Bengalis from Bangladesh, settled in the greater Detroit area in the 1990s, bringing vitality to once-neglected neighborhoods. Fort Wayne, a city of 200,000, gained more than 6,000 international newcomers during the decade, including 2,000 Burmese immigrants fleeing a repressive military government (in one large automotive parts plant, Burmese

immigrants make up nearly half the workforce).

The record number of new arrivals accounted for 76 percent of the labor force growth in Maryland and 44 percent in Virginia. In the District of Columbia, where the workforce declined, immigrants prevented further shrinkage.

Even places closer to Pittsburgh are outrecruiting us, according to Duquesne University's Maciak. He cites Erie, Lancaster, Midland, and Ohio's Youngstown and Ashtabula as sites that have attracted immigrants, particularly Latinos who formerly were migrant farm workers.

At this point, it is worth pausing to get everyone on the same page. Eugene Matta explains that it is helpful to make a distinction between immigration and in-migration. (Matta is executive director of the Hispanic Center, founded in 2002 to pursue workforce development involving the Hispanic community.) Immigration refers to immigrants coming from abroad, whether it is workers from Mexico, technicians from India, or nurses from the Philippines. In-migration refers to the movement from one part of the country to another of immigrants who have settled in the United States, whether as legal aliens or those who have become citizens.

Matta says negative attitudes toward the former are more pronounced than toward in-migrants.

Even that response to immigrants depends, sometimes negatively based on class or race, or more positively on shortages—such as with technicians or nurses. There is less hostility toward in-migrants, he says.

According to Matta, the focus of the Hispanic Center is, first, on Hispanics already living in Pittsburgh and, second, upon areas in the United States where there is high unemployment in the Hispanic community. In each case, the idea is to work with workers and employers to overcome training, skills, and cultural and language barriers. At present, the outreach efforts extend to Erie, Youngstown, Allentown, and the Philadelphia area "to bring qualified people here."

A particular target, Matta says, is Hispanic families—"it is easier to hold them." But that hasn't been easy, despite the fact that Fannie Mae, the federal housing mortgage agency, "has good programs with incredible terms for Hispanic families."

Matta brings up an interesting factor in promoting in-migration. "People's perception of Pittsburgh is so inaccurate. Pittsburgh has some kind of reputation, even though the reasons given don't add up. I was told in Columbus, where there is high unemployment for Hispanics, that there are no telephones in Pittsburgh!

You would think that people on welfare, on food stamps, hearing the offerings from employers, the good schools here, would jump. We have developed a video about welcome to Pittsburgh, but it has not had the feedback we had hoped."

Yet the fact is, Matta contends, that there isn't discrimination against Hispanics here. "People welcome them; they are not scared. Employers have welcomed them; they are very generous."

Even higher on the cultural scale, doubts about Pittsburgh are raised. For one, it's easy for newcomers to get lost in Pittsburgh, Matta says, speaking from his experience upon moving to Pittsburgh. "It doesn't feel like a city. You become a neighborhood guy, a Bethel Park guy, a Squirrel Hill guy. Downtown doesn't have the ethnic food, the coffee shops that major cities have." And, interestingly, a "melting pot" factor of which Pittsburgh is proud has its drawbacks. That is, Pittsburgh doesn't have the immigrant neighborhoods that many cities have—no Chinatown, no specifically Latin or Asian neighborhoods.

A recent report by Northeastern University underscores the importance of immigrants for the American workforce. It found that, "Recent immigrants accounted for half of the new wage earners who joined the national labor

force since 1990." Indeed, even though 86 percent of the workforce is still American-born, eight of 10 new male workers in the 1990s were immigrants. While more than a third of the new immigrants were employed in blue-collar occupations, nearly one in four held a technical, managerial, or professional job.

A December 2, 2002, article in *The Washington Post* by D'Vera Cohn concludes: "We would not have had economic growth without the workforce that was supplied by immigrants."

The article quotes Anirban Basu, chief economist of the Regional Economic Studies Institute at Towson University, as saying that the arrival of immigrants "helped fill in some gaps that would have otherwise persisted in the labor force," especially in the high-tech sector and among younger workers.

Basu holds that the effect was particularly noticeable among male workers, in part because of a puzzling decades-long decline in the share of U.S.-born men in the workforce. One factor is early retirements; another is that male high school dropouts are less likely to work than in the past.

All this explains why Pittsburgh workforce experts such as Brian Kelley believe that involving immigrants and in-migrants is necessary for Pittsburgh's future. But how?

The Duquesne University "New Americans" report has a set of recommendations for attracting New Americans:

1. Promote the region's favorable cost of living, employment opportunities, and outstanding quality of life to New Americans currently dwelling in immigration hubs throughout the United States.
2. Establish an advantage over other areas by providing superior customer service for those seeking to relocate to southwestern Pennsylvania.
3. Work with the region's businesses to promote international workforce diversity, including recruiting and training New American workers.
4. Encourage foreign students currently studying at local colleges and universities to stay in the region by providing assistance in employment placement and in gaining permanent legal residency in the United States.
5. Support the creation of new businesses by immigrant entrepreneurs.

However, these good intentions face barriers here. One, peculiarly enough, is the coolness toward the new-immigrant concept of the descendants of the great waves of migration a century ago from Eastern and South Europe. Pittsburgh's tightly knit neighborhoods,

often originally developed along ethnic lines, in some cases are not receptive to outsiders of any kinds—as Asian, Latin American, and Caribbean immigrants say they have found.

Second, African Americans wonder why the talk about needing immigrants to fill out the workforce when unemployment among African Americans remains so high. Shouldn't there be more concentration, they ask, upon training and drawing young African Americans into the local workforce?

Third, there is the skepticism of organized labor. Its spokespersons can point to another part of the Northeastern University report. It cited evidence that the entry of many poorly educated immigrants into the workforce has held back wages of the lowest-paid American-born workers. U.S.-born workers can be shunted aside when the economy slackens because employers often prefer to hire immigrants, believing that they work harder and are more willing to accept low wages.

Whatever the analyses of immigration and other demographic factors, students of the issue such as Kelley emphasize that technology start-ups need university talent to begin and a technologically skilled workforce in order to grow. Until we can say that the region has a competitive advantage in human capital, we will

not have a growing economy. Achieving that is the challenge, Kelley contends.

At this point, the next logical topic of conversation is how to overcome the skills gap.

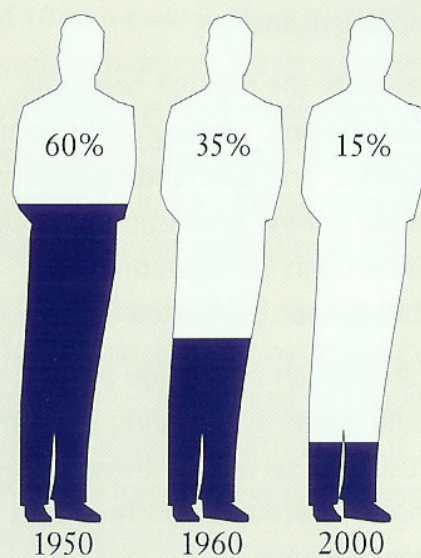
THE SKILLS GAP: NOT JUST ANY OLD WORKER

The Aspen Institute report hits the workforce nail on the head: "We don't just need more workers. We also need smarter, better trained, and more skilled workers to boost productivity."

Before 1980, the question of skills training was easily answered locally. Given our manufacturing base, a high school degree with no further skills training was sufficient. A high school graduate could go to work immediately in a mill.

In parallel, the days are gone when a locality could say, "We'll provide the site and they'll come." Mike Krajovic, executive vice president of the Fay-Penn Economic Development Council, says prospective employers now want to know if there are sufficient skilled workers available for them now and in the future. In America, after World War II, there was no competition from abroad, so site selection depended upon tax breaks, transportation connections, and the like. "But now, in this technological age, firms can

Unskilled Work is Disappearing Percent of Unskilled Jobs



Source: National Institute of Standards and Technology (2000)

locate anywhere they want. So they are concerned about the quality of worker supply," Krajovic explains.

Nationally, the Aspen Institute study described a major demographic reason for the skills gap ahead.

Productivity for the past 20 years was boosted not only by technology, but also by an increase in the share of workers with some post-high school education—a 19 percent gain. But during the next 20 years that share will go up only 4 percent.

Furthermore, nowadays the skills required to perform in almost every position have increased significantly. Not only have the standards for reading, math, and writing that define literacy been raised, but the very definition of literacy has expanded to include information

technology and communication skills. A member of the Aspen Institute study group, Hedrick Smith of Hedrick Smith Productions, says, "Sixty percent of our corporations are prevented from upgrading technologically by the low educational and technical skill levels of our workers."

The concept of foundation or employability skills has grown to include problem solving, customer service, teamwork, and locating information, often called the "soft skills." The rate of change in technology makes the depreciation of technology skills at the individual level a concern, reinforcing the need for lifelong learning.

Has this region's history of preparing people for industrial jobs hampered us in preparing people for the jobs of the knowledge economy?

The problem is succinctly stated in a report by Workforce Connections, an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Economy League. "[T]he structures and processes in place in the human capital market were designed to address the needs of the industrial era. They are poorly suited to the demands of the knowledge era: accelerating change, globalization, labor market churn, and talent shortages. We need to develop new structures and processes, and to ensure organizations and individuals have the capacity to perform their required role in a world-class human capital market."

To that end, Workforce Connections through 2002 made 63 grants totaling \$2,090,878 for programs, scholarships, and surveys to carry forward innovative human-capital efforts in southwestern Pennsylvania.

COUNTER-INTUITIVE OBSTACLES

Paradoxically, the issue is confounded by our very success in persuading people of the desirability, the necessity even, of a college degree. Southwestern Pennsylvania's industrial valleys increasingly include families proud that for the first time in a clan's history, a son or daughter has gone to college or, an even greater honor, received a four-year degree.

John Pierce Watkins, when president of California University of Pennsylvania, recalls seeing more than once on opening day in the fall a car looking like the caricature of a household from the hills, goods piled on top, with an entire family showing up for the unprecedented thrill of witnessing a son or daughter entering college. Try telling such a family that a college degree isn't important!

Other drawbacks in Western Pennsylvania are pointed out by Winston Erevelles, associate dean of the School of Engineering, Mathematics, and Science at Robert Morris University. First, there

is the perception that manufacturing's day is gone in the region. Second, many parents who worked in mills before their collapse here recall work as messy and dirty and something from which they want to steer away their children. "I don't want you to go through what I had to."

These attitudes present a challenge to the leadership in the Pittsburgh region. So anxious have we been to laud the new technologies in hopes of establishing another Silicon Valley here that the result has been seemingly to turn our backs on "old-fashioned" manufacturing. But Erevelles notes that in the long run it is products "coming out the door" that sell. He adds dryly that this concept is easier to promote now "than when the dot-coms were all the rage."

The argument that manufacturing still is a key element of the region was pointed out by Steven G. Zylstra and Wyman Lee in an October 29, 2002, article in the *Post-Gazette*. "Even with the retrenchment of big steel, manufacturing still employs approximately 167,000 people in 13 counties, with a total annual payroll of \$7.5 billion. That equates to 18 percent of the region's total wages." Zylstra is president and chief executive officer of the Pittsburgh Technology Council/Catalyst Connection, an information technology (IT) membership organization/

consulting firm. Lee is vice president of human resources for Sony Technology Center-Pittsburgh in Westmoreland County.

Zylstra and Lee cite not only Sony's arrival in the region, but "a renaissance in the region's small- and medium-sized manufacturers" fueled by "today's technological innovations, such as software, hardware, microchip design, medical and surgical instruments and devices, robotics, electro-optics, nanotechnology, tissue engineering, drug discovery and more."

As a second dimension concerning attitudes, parents and young people need to be sold on the fact that technology has changed plants from the "dark Satanic mills" many once were. That fact, of course, underlines the importance of having the new skills needed at every level to prepare for a career in the changed economy.

Even the language is changing! Vocational education increasingly is called "career and technical education"—often nicknamed "tech prep." Barry Maciak is concerned that this aspect of secondary education increasingly is separated away from regular high schools. As head of the Center for Competitive Workforce Development at Duquesne University, he notes that the vocational education programs that used to be integrated into each school now have been moved out

to a separate campus (McKeesport High School is a major remaining exception). Maciak continues, "So even motivated kids in a voc-ed school feel isolated and second class. They are not encouraged to continue their education, even though they need another year or two of postsecondary training."

The president of a leading postsecondary institution here, Tim McMahon of Triangle Tech in Pittsburgh, underlines the opportunities in noting that there are two and sometimes three job openings awaiting his graduates, with the exception of a particular occupation or two. "We can't bring in enough qualified apprentices to take the place of retiring journeymen. The fact is that if we don't develop a workforce for the economy that's here now, we can't hope to attract new business."

A NEW POSTSECONDARY EMPHASIS

In any event, new thinking is emerging that for the good of the economy and for that of the individual, not everyone needs to have a college degree. Many of the jobs necessary in a technological society require a different kind of skills training—available in postsecondary institutions such as community colleges and technical institutes.

A *New York Times* article (December 15, 2002) by Greg Winter reports: "Long derided as repositories for underachievers, as trade schools devoid of academic rigor, community colleges are recasting themselves as wise first choices for the serious student looking to sidestep crushing debt. ... [They] are busily reshaping [themselves] to entice the best and brightest with promises of huge savings and easy transfer into a premier university after two short years."

In that respect, a most interesting survey recently came out from Penn State University, of all places, considering its message. Kenneth C. Gray, professor of workforce education and development in Penn State's College of Education, has this to say:

Most new high-wage jobs in the coming decades will be in technical fields. Contrary to conventional wisdom, those jobs that require a two-year associate degree will outnumber those that require a bachelor's degree.

However, Gray went on to point out, the bulk of the \$1.6 billion-plus that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania spends yearly on higher education continues to benefit only colleges and universities offering four-year and graduate degrees. He contends that this spending is not consistent with

what Pennsylvania needs in order to compete economically with other states in the years ahead.

Experts in the field make two other points about persons with college degrees. One is that many firms are reluctant to hire “fresh-outs,” that is, new college graduates. As with many welfare-to-work people struggling to get a foot on another ladder, “fresh-outs” face the Catch 22 situation of having to have had a job to get a job.

Or, as Anne McCafferty of Pitt’s Human Capital Policy Initiative puts it succinctly, “For too many, a college degree only gets you a place in line—a really long line—and with a huge debt to boot.” The initiative has launched a program for eighth-graders in 25 school districts, informing them about changes in the region’s economy and job market. In a news story in the March 6, 2003, *Post-Gazette*, McCafferty explained: “Many opportunities here require only one or two years of training after high school. This opens up possibilities of other career options to explore.” High school junior and senior students make the initiative’s presentations on the theory that peer presentations will make the most impression on youngsters and their families in planning ahead.

OVERLOOKED ASSET

In that respect, Pennsylvania’s community college system may be an underused asset in workforce development. That is the contention of Diane Bosak, who points to “states you wouldn’t think of who’ve used their community colleges as an integral part of attracting corporations.” Bosak is executive director of the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges.

Bosak lists North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Michigan in particular, and even Mississippi and Alabama. By offering customized training through their community colleges, those states have been able to approach firms with the promise: “Bring your company here; we will identify your workforce for you and have it trained and ready when you come. And we will do it for free.” Michigan requires all federal and state workforce development funds to be funneled through the community colleges—“cost effective, efficient,” Bosak contends.

Pennsylvania, in contrast, never really has made that connection nor directed federal and state workforce development funds through its community colleges, Bosak says. “Our policymakers have allowed our higher education

system and workforce development system to be sporadic and not coordinated. That's why we can't compete."

Community colleges in Pennsylvania are funded one-third by the state, one-third by the local county or a school district, and one-third by tuition. Bosak would add a fourth "leg," that of workforce development funds along the lines of the Michigan system.

When the commonwealth launched the community college system in the 1960s, 28 campuses were planned. Only 14 were completed, with none in the northern part of the state "above Interstate 80." One reason: Penn State located a string of satellite two-year campuses around the state. However, one institution, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, has established a satellite two-year campus, Venango, in Oil City.

Bosak says the difference from these alternatives is that community colleges are open admission, providing many people their only chance for a decent wage in the future by improving their literacy and other skills, including the technical. In contrast to this open-access policy, the satellite programs of the universities are "basically pick and choose," with their two-year degree programs used as feeders into the universities themselves.

Echoing what numerous others are saying, Bosak contends, "Eighty percent of all jobs in the future will require some level of postsecondary education, but less than a baccalaureate degree. We will be big economic losers if we don't rethink our focus."

OTHER POSTSECONDARY APPROACHES

To Triangle Tech's McMahon, postsecondary schools, public and private, present the right opportunities for young people to prepare themselves to move into the workforce with the right skills to make a good living.

In a direct appeal to employers, Triangle Tech has a brochure titled *Hiring Without Headaches*, a guide to finding trained technicians for high-skill positions. The institution recently issued a "Career News" listing of 175 recently hired graduates from its Pittsburgh, Erie, Greensburg, Dubois, and Sunbury campuses. It was headed by the story of Gerald Lee, who worked as an electrician-mechanic for 26 years in a Marion Center mine before it closed in 2000. "Facing a job loss is never easy, but I did the right thing by going back to school for training and a degree. ... I consider my degree a huge accomplishment for my career." Lee is now employed as an electrician

at the USX Edgar Thomson Works.

A consortium spearheaded by Robert Morris University to further education in the engineering realm is developing a novel approach to postsecondary education. By aligning the university with three community colleges—Beaver, Butler, and Westmoreland, it combines both the two-year degree and the four-year degree approaches. As explained by Winston Erevelles, through the Partnership for Regional Innovation in Manufacturing Education (PRIME), a prospective student interested in a job can go to one of the community colleges and prepare for a job at the operator or technical level. If events work out, the student has the further option of going on to Robert Morris or some other four-year school to obtain an engineering degree. The bachelor's degree option, of course, is open to any student seeking to be an engineer.

The consortium has been able to enlist companies large—USX, US Airways—and small in forming steering committees to help with web conferencing, laboratories, internships, and other aids, such as with Robert Morris's Learning Laboratory. The consortium has an outreach program to school systems, talking with teachers, working through the Mon Valley Education Consortium—all in efforts to reach pupils as young as middle

school age to persuade them, in Erevelles' words, that "math and science are fun."

A pertinent example of PRIME's work is a set of Manufacturing Immersion Camps for the summer of 2003—one for 25 middle school youngsters, the other for 25 high school students, both tuition-free because of a U.S. Labor Department grant. The curriculum includes robot construction using Lego Mindstorm kits and the use of Mastercam software, robotics, and basic stamps. In the afternoon, tours of plants are scheduled so student can learn firsthand what a manufacturing environment is like.

Lists of "demand occupations" compiled by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry help support arguments that a four-year degree is not necessary for many of the jobs employers most want to fill. The following chart lists the Workforce Investment Area and the percentage of jobs that require less than a college degree:

- Three Rivers Work (Allegheny County): 66%
- Westmoreland and Fayette Counties: 77%
- Tri-County (Armstrong, Butler, and Indiana): 83%
- Southwestern Corner (Beaver, Greene, and Washington): 87%

Given the different ways these figures can be interpreted, making

the counter-sell concerning four-year degrees will not be easy with many Pennsylvania families. And the controversy dare not mask the need for university-trained people in order to make possible an offensive strategy designed to grow new firms and even whole new industries—as outlined by Brian Kelley of the Heinz Endowments in the previous section.

EDUCATION SYSTEMS QUESTIONED

Kelley holds that human capital is a government product, starting with school systems. But the effort must link public and private “in a three-legged race.” In Pennsylvania, a problem is the weakness of the public sector. For instance, Pennsylvania is one of only nine states without a public prekindergarten system—at a time when a preschool start has proved to be essential, especially for low-income families.

The Pennsylvania educational system from bottom to top will be overtaken by the tidal wave of change, Kelley contends, stretching from the new federal “No Child Left Behind” mandate to the ever-increasing demand for skills.

A major evidence of the changed environment pointed out by Stephen Mitchell is that today, 75 percent of college students are

nontraditional. That is, either they are older, live off campus, or attend colleges classes at night. Mitchell heads Workforce Connections, an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Economy League, which facilitates the development of a demand-driven regional workforce development market in southwestern Pennsylvania.

But Mitchell says there is a lack of consensus on just what the public role should be in assisting employers. One problem is that many employers do not like the idea of a government role. This is particularly true of small family-owned firms. Many executives have enough trouble keeping their firms afloat; they feel they don’t have time to attend meetings for informing public agencies of their worker needs. Yet they will complain that the schools, etc., are delivering poor “products” to them.

Also, this region has difficulties with succession problems in family-owned firms where the aging founder won’t let go or won’t designate a successor. That problem is even tougher when the next generation doesn’t want to be in the business.

Finally, Mitchell says, too many organizations, both private and public, still operate with a top-down hierarchical mentality, something that doesn’t work as well with an increasingly skilled workforce.

NURTURING THE NEW CLASS

Certainly, this Mitchell observation bears upon the nurturing of what is being described as the Creative Class, the subject of a book by that name written by Richard Florida of Carnegie Mellon University. The name applies to people with ideas and skills that increasingly propel societal progress, especially that of e-commerce. They are variously described as bourgeois bohemians or cosmopolites with stronger allegiances to cities than to the nations in which they are located. Florida's book contends:

"Because creativity is the driving force of economic growth, in terms of influence the Creative Class has become the dominant class in our society. Only by understanding the rise of this new class and its values can we begin to understand the sweeping and seemingly disjointed changes in our society and begin to shape our future more intelligently."

Because the younger cohorts of the Creative Class thrive on diversity in race and sexual orientation and such lifestyle matters as dress and involvement in participatory sports, Florida has some worries about Pittsburgh and, by extension, southwestern Pennsylvania. He writes: "Despite having many of the assets required to compete and prosper in the Creative age,

Pittsburgh has found it difficult to make the necessary cultural and attitudinal changes. Trapped between a large Working Class and a traditional corporate leadership that retains a strong commitment to organization-man values, it has struggled to generate an environment and culture which appeals to the Creative Class. The members of that class, sandwiched between these two value systems, find it difficult to validate their identities in the city and so frequently move away."

As a case in point, Florida cites Lycos, an e-commerce spin-off from CMU that first developed in Pittsburgh. "But the company eventually moved its operations to Boston to gain access to a deep pool of skilled managers, technologists, and business people. These departures were happening repeatedly in Pittsburgh and elsewhere. All too often the technologist, the companies and even the venture capital dollars flowed out of town to places that had a bigger and better stock of talented and creative people. In a curious reversal, instead of people moving to jobs, I was finding that companies were moving to or forming in places that had the skilled people."

In terms of job development, therefore, Pittsburgh may be exporting not only the Creative Class members, but also the companies themselves emerging from its research universities. In fact, Florida contends that

Pitt and CMU, rather than taking a "fortress university" approach by providing on campus all the amenities needed for faculty and students, need to work with private enterprise in the Oakland community to provide the environment that will attract and retain the Creative Class and its spin-off entities.

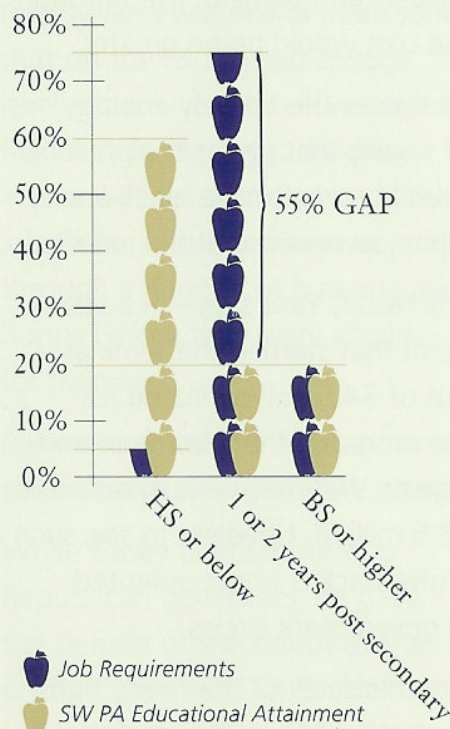
MATCHMAKING OBSTACLES

Meanwhile, matching the right job seekers to the right employers is a problem frequently cited in any workforce development discussion. Fay-Penn's Mike Krajovic at the March 14, 2003, Institute of Politics seminar on State of the Workforce made the intriguing statement that someone should be training the trainers. Elaborating on that, Krajovic says that employees in governmental offices established for "matchmaking," such as CareerLinks, often don't have the right skill level themselves to make the match. They may be behind the times on what local corporations need or don't seem to know about alternatives and training for people who at this point don't match.

Krajovic says he fears that too many of these counselors are transfers from Unemployment Compensation offices where the required skills are quite different. Bureaucratic ways learned there don't work in

counseling new workers, displaced workers, and others on the job market. He says that that is what he meant by saying the trainers need more training.

Only 20% of people have the education that 75% of employers want!



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Bill Yant, then chair of the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) for Westmoreland and Fayette Counties, described for the March 14 seminar another difficulty. That is, overly restrictive regulations, state and federal, that make it hard to provide training. Many of the rules, he says, were established to further the welfare-to-work program. In some respects, they have succeeded all too well, in terms of greatly thinning

the prospects for training. So a class that must have 20 persons to fit the requirements can't be scheduled because applicants who aren't welfare mothers are not allowed. If the training organization is not allowed to add five people outside the welfare-to-work category to make a viable 20-person class, a class can't be held, even though the cost would be no greater.

Yant uses the homely analogy of saying that under the present rules you can't have black and white cows eating at the red silo.

The result, Yant says—in a statement that startled the seminar—out of \$4.5 million slated for the program, the Westmoreland-Fayette WIB may have to return \$3.5 million. Needless to say, such a give back is unprecedented in government circles.

Another facet of the overly tight regulations, Yant says, is that they do not allow for training people to move up the ladder. "We are clogging up the entry-level positions. Say, somebody gets a job at Burger King and an opportunity opens up to be an assistant manager. We don't have a way of helping that person make the jump. Definitely, we need to help train people to move out to make room for those newly coming into the workforce," Yant explained.

Others complain about time constraints on job seekers, including

welfare-to-work people, such as requiring them to have a job in a certain period of time. If they don't make it, they are transferred to another job search program to try again—a frustrating squirrel-cage situation for many.

Yant says transportation for trainees is a growing problem in Westmoreland and Fayette Counties. That is, there is a lack of public transportation for people to reach CareerLinks offices in Uniontown, at the Youngwood Community College, in Monessen, and in Arnold.

Note: Both the up-the-ladder and transportation problems were spotlighted by the GAPS study promulgated by The Pittsburgh Foundation (1997–2000) to study and remedy the gaps in the welfare-to-work programs in Allegheny County. Yant's testimony makes it clear that these problems exist just as much in rural as in congested counties.

Yant says the state says his agency should hire more caseworkers. "They would like to make the money disappear. But that is not the way to get the job done."

A blistering new viewpoint was injected into the workforce controversy with a report from State Auditor General Robert P. Casey Jr. In a performance audit covering the period from July 1, 1998 to June 30, 2001, Casey declared that Pennsylvania has a shortage of workers with the education, training

and skills that today's employers are demanding, despite the commonwealth spending hundreds of millions of dollars on workforce development programs.

The audit centered on the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board, led by the Departments of Aging; Labor & Industry; Education; Community and Economic Development; and Public Welfare, contending it did not:

- effectively target job-training funds;
- streamline funding sources or coordinate the provision of services among themselves;
- help local workforce investment boards to create regional networks;
- develop specific performance standards for workforce development programs; or
- adequately document customers served, programs offered, and dollars spent at the state's 71 CareerLink Centers.

Casey's audit declared that the CareerLink Centers, established during the administrations of Governor Tom Ridge and his successor, Governor Mark Schweiker, emphasized any job placement—regardless of how low the pay or how high the worker dissatisfaction—rather than helping workers to acquire new skills. It said that this "work first" approach was actually

a euphemism for work for a lot less, focusing on quick attachments to the workforce that eliminated the need for job training, but did absolutely nothing to help create more family-sustaining jobs.

The auditor general cited a 2001 report from the U.S. General Accounting Office stating that Pennsylvania was one of three states that set their sustainable wage level at a low rate to allow greater flexibility in placing individuals in jobs without training. In addition, job seekers were required to jump through a number of bureaucratic hoops before they were eligible for training.

For more detailed information, see: www.auditorgen.state.pa.us.

While Casey blamed the two Republican governors, he gave the benefit of the doubt to the present governor, Ed Rendell (who defeated him in the 2002 Democratic primary). "To his credit, Governor Rendell has shown a real commitment to developing a coordinated system of workforce development and to investing in the one feature of our economy that will endure even if a specific venture does not—our people." (For a sample of Governor Rendell's thinking, see chapter 6.)

Fay-Penn's Krajovic, in talking about the hoped-for technological future in southwestern Pennsylvania, has two pertinent suggestions for

a regional approach to workforce development.

First, he says the universities and the region must think ahead for the future of the research projects they are incubating. A biotech firm that comes up with a successful product is going to need land for a production plant. Allegheny County may not have the answer with its increasingly crowded situation for land sites.

Therefore, to be certain that the products developed out of CMU and Pitt stay in the region, Krajovic calls for collaboration with surrounding counties to have sites ready for the manufacturing of developed products—rather than seeing such opportunities escape to other regions.

Second, Krajovic holds that if such collaborations were structured right, they could attract new high-tech industries because of prospective ties with CMU and Pitt. Thus everyone could benefit all around—southwestern counties because of their proximity to Pittsburgh and ties to its research universities, and Pittsburgh in terms of retaining the profits of its research and, equally important, the bright minds connected thereto.

Beyond just sitting the factory here, along with obtaining its share of the Creative Class, such arrangements could spawn a host of supplier companies, everything

from machine shops to material manufacturers. Sony Corp.'s location in Westmoreland County has aptly demonstrated that aspect.

BRIDGING THE LABOR- MANAGEMENT DIVIDE

Another evocative approach to job training is coming from an unusual combination—management and labor unions. Historically antagonistic, in some industries they now are finding common ground in the need for skilled workers and, therefore, the necessity for joint training efforts.

One example in Pittsburgh is the Builders Guild of Western Pennsylvania, established in 2000, which has brought together 32 building and trades unions and 17 contractor associations. John Turyan, its executive director, explains:

"One of their missions is to promote the building trades as a viable career option. Construction work is not just a job; it's a career. We can focus on what labor unions provide in terms of skill development through apprentice programs."

This vision of upgrading people's skills in a "grow your own" approach also saves jobs for southwestern Pennsylvania, as illustrated by Turyan's personal experience.

Turyan himself comes out of the management side, including managing such projects as a \$100 million restructuring of the Heinz plant on the North Side in the early 1990s—something that likely saved jobs going elsewhere in the Heinz empire. But as the eldest of eight children, he experienced the pain of a worker's family. When his father's job was cut at Crucible Steel in Lawrenceville, "At that point, I lost out on college." Later, after entering the workforce, Turyan managed to obtain a BA and an MBA from Pitt while on the job and rearing a family.

Innovations framed during his years at Heinz heavily influenced Turyan's outlook on management-labor cooperation and skills training. At stake in the Heinz project was keeping production uninterrupted while Heinz was converting a warehouse into a high-speed, automated soup and baby foods line. The makeover involved upgrading employee skills, such as in reading and math, needed to run the automated system. Temporary employees filled in on the old line as the upgrading workers attended classes, in many cases lifting fourth- and fifth-grade skills up to ninth- and 10th-grade levels.

"People appreciated the idea. Some voluntarily delayed their vacations to finish a class. I remember a grandmother explaining her eagerness to learn to read and write better

and to operate a computer as an example to her grandchildren," Turyan says.

Because of Turyan's proven ability to work successfully with both sides of the management-labor equation, Pittsburgh Mayor Sophie Masloff asked him to chair the City of Pittsburgh's Private Industry Council (PIC), which he did for seven years.

Out of that experience came a growing conviction on his part and that of others of the need for new emphases in skills training. As they studied the matter, Turyan says, "We took a look at the federal money allocated to the secondary school systems for job training. We found that 70 percent of it was devoted to moving young people into college, when 70 percent of the jobs were not in that direction. Moreover, we were missing the boat because so many high school graduates who went to college were dropping out. There is a disproportionate channeling of money to the colleges."

Despite what Turyan calls "a huge history of stereotypes about unions," he worked with the rapidly growing Builders Guild to encourage contractor associations and unions to come together on neutral ground to discuss the issue.

They found the barriers for filling the ranks of apprentice programs to be age, lack of a high school degree or its GED equivalent, a drug-free record, ability to pass

an entrance test, and transportation to classes. Some unions had a poor history with minorities and women. So the guild did a special study of the issue. "If minorities and others don't see a future here, we'll lose some of the best opportunities," Turyan holds.

Today's workers not only need technical and educational skills, but what are being called the "soft skills." That includes the ability to be personally responsible for one's actions as well as problem solving and working with others in groups. Good apprentice programs incorporate this kind of training.

Turyan makes the interesting point that an incentive for people who themselves don't want or need college to succeed is to think: "I'm a bricklayer. I can pave the way for my children to be successful."

The Builders Guild executive thinks it is important that the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance includes union representatives on its teams to recruit corporations to locate in this area. That could signal a needed change from the days when management and labor blamed each other for Pittsburgh's reputation for a harmful "labor climate."

Another example of labor-management cooperation to bridge the skills gap comes from the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and 11 steel corporations, starting with USX. The story is outlined

by Harmon Lisnow, executive director of the Institute for Career Development (ICD), headquartered in Merrillville, Ind., near Gary.

Steelworkers were devastated in the 1980s, losing out to technological changes as mills were closing and workers making \$10-\$20 an hour found themselves flipping hamburgers at \$5 an hour. The USWA's President Lynn Williams and general counsel, Bernard Kleiman, decided the key answer was to make steelworkers more competitive through broad-based learning and training opportunities—"learning to learn"—not just specific skills. Even computer knowledge had to be more than "punching buttons;" it had to include computer theory so that when a new application came along, the worker could handle it. The idea, too, was that the steelworker could be better at his mill job, or if he lost it, he would have a portable skill.

The idea was hard to sell, Lisnow recalls. Corporations didn't want to lay out more money for training. Steelworkers were hesitant; some preferred to take early retirement rather than tackle a new technological frontier. Others were reluctant to shell out the 10-15 cents an hour for their share of the program's costs. But, gradually, a plant at a time, workers were wooed into the program idea, and the companies then were persuaded to cooperate on grounds it was to

their advantage to have “smart” workers to compete in the global economy.

The Institute for Career Development now has 52 sites, “dedicated, state-of-the-art learning centers, located on company property or just outside, in walking distance so workers don’t have to get in their cars.” Pennsylvania sites include USX’s Clairton, Edgar Thomson, and Irvin plants; Wheeling-Pitt’s Monessen (and Steubenville in Ohio); Allegheny Ludlum’s Brackenridge plant; and the ISG plant (formerly Bethlehem Steel) in Harrisburg. (Note: The training site in East Chicago is named the Bernard Kleiman Center.)

Classes are built around workers’ schedules so that, for example, men coming off a night shift at 2 a.m. can immediately attend classes before going home. At least 60 percent of union members have taken at least one class, many multiple classes, with “thousands of success stories,” Lisnow says. Take one case of a group of 50 steelworkers, some of whom didn’t have a high school degree. After all 50 had achieved a bachelor’s degree while still working, they wanted to start a master’s program. Eight now have achieved that degree and another 30 are working on it.

Any notion that steelworkers are brawny and dumb is out of date, Lisnow maintains. “Our members are highly motivated and hungry for educational opportunities.”

People are taught to be comfortable with learning, to not be intimidated. Moreover, emphasis is placed on the “soft skills” described above.

In today’s competitive environment where jobs go overseas at the drop of a hat, workers have to be multi-skilled, enabled to make decisions for themselves. No longer is rote work sufficient—“doing what the bosses tell them,” Lisnow explains. “You don’t have one manager for every three workers; the ratio now is one to 15.”

Finally, a major problem concerning the skills gap is that nobody wants to pay the cost of worker training. (The Builders Guild and the Institute for Career Development appear to be interesting exceptions.) Governmental budget cutbacks have undercut institutional efforts. And in the new economy, the Aspen Institute report notes that employees stay for less time with their employers, so that employers “find they are training employees for their competitors.” One result is that “many employers choose to relocate work overseas, often to areas such as India, where even high-skill workers are plentiful. Any upward pressure on wages at the bottom generates a surge of immigration, both legal and illegal ... holding down the wages at the bottom.”

That introduces the third gap—worker wages.

THE INCOME GAP: STICKY FLOORS & GLASS CEILINGS

Discussions about workforce development have brought to the surface questions about income disparities in the southwestern Pennsylvania region.

A drawing card for many people to move to this region is its low cost of living. That appeals, too, to prospective employers making location decisions. But that advantage can backfire for many, especially minorities and women, as they come to realize the income disparities within the workforce here—and better income opportunities elsewhere. A perceived “glass ceiling” for both groups eventually can negate the cost-of-living advantage for many striving individuals, causing them to move somewhere else. The problems that have surfaced in the welfare-to-work efforts underline this fact, here and elsewhere. That is, women having to pay for child care and for transportation sometimes have found their standard of living is little better off from a paying job than from welfare.

Income disparities can foment workforce unrest even among native Pittsburghers, who see better paying jobs going to immigrants and other newcomers.

Furthermore, income disparities have been accentuated here by the loss

of thousands of well-paying mill jobs that had lifted families into the middle class.

Does this suggest that a wise workforce development policy must include ingredients that lift all boats? In other words, make work pay?

Experience suggests that remedies may require action at higher levels of government, such as moves to:

- reform the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system to make it more effective for lower paid and nontraditional workers. The Aspen Institute study found: “In recent years, a loose consensus has emerged among business, labor, and policy makers about how to strengthen the UI system. Proposed reforms include improved coverage for part-time workers, allowance of an alternative base period for determining eligibility, and changes in the triggering system for extended benefits that now disadvantage workers in low coverage states.”
- increase pension portability.
- increase health-benefit portability. These last two moves would increase worker mobility, whether the labor market tightens or weakens, adding to the flexibility needed in a technologically advanced economy.

Just where the impetus for such reforms will come is not clear. Historically, organized labor has

been a key player in pushing for higher pay levels. But union ranks have dwindled, and their political power therefore vitiated.

Two striking phrases on the subject were voiced at a June 7, 2002, seminar on the subject Workforce of the Future, sponsored by the Institute of Politics. Audrey J. Murrell of Pitt's Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business described the job outlook for many women as entailing "sticky floors and glass ceilings." The former refers to the way minorities and women are trapped in low-level, seasonal, and part-time work; the latter refers to barriers to advancement and income growth for individuals.

Second, Doris Carson Williams, president of the African American Chamber of Commerce of Western Pennsylvania, says any strategies for the future must take into account what she called the "Browning of America." She noted that minority-owned businesses are the fastest-growing segment of all new business startups in the region, around 13 percent and steadily growing. This region also hires the largest number of disabled persons in the country.

A cogent background for the wage-gap discussion comes from a 2001 survey by the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) at Pitt, titled, "Career and Location Decisions:

Recent Pittsburgh Area University Graduates." Political Science Professor Susan Hansen, principal investigator, and Leonard Huggins, research assistant, conducted the survey. Funded by the Heinz Endowments and the R.K. Mellon Foundation, the study was based on telephone and Internet interviews with more than 2,000 graduates from the classes of 1994 and 1999 of Pitt, CMU, and Duquesne.

The report notes: "With 11 colleges and three universities in Pittsburgh alone, southwestern Pennsylvania produces a rich lode of well-trained young workers every year. Yet many of them find jobs elsewhere."

Why?

In what the Hansen report called "the not-so-good news," the survey found: "Low salaries proved to be a key reason why many of our graduates leave the Pittsburgh region. Although the cost of living elsewhere may be higher, recent graduates are still attracted to positions with higher starting salaries. Those who left this region are making, on average, much higher salaries than those who stayed."

In its "good news" portion of the report, Hansen reported that, "one of our most striking findings is that Pittsburgh is doing better in retaining its college graduates, with significant improvements from 1994 to 1999 across all categories. Over half of the currently-employed

college graduates we interviewed work in the Pittsburgh area, compared with only 40 percent of earlier graduates. And many more recent graduates found their first jobs in the Pittsburgh region. The proportion of graduates in scientific and technical fields who stayed on to work in this region also increased 25 percent between 1994 and 1999."

As to perceived advantages of the Pittsburgh region, the survey found 42 percent listing "features of the city," 29 percent citing economic advantages, 21 percent "personal ties," and 8 percent "educational opportunities."

However, on the "not-so-good news" side, the GSPIA researchers found: "Although the Pittsburgh region is now retaining more of our university graduates, we are still losing a disproportionate number of those in scientific and technical fields. ... For area graduates working in high-tech fields, a desire for more challenging jobs and recreational opportunities, rather than salaries, attracted them to positions outside the region."

Hansen and Huggins also found that many graduates who found their first jobs here took subsequent jobs outside the region.

The salary-difference negatives were especially prominent for women, minorities, and international students. Concern with

finding good jobs for two-career couples also convinced people to move elsewhere.

A particularly interesting twist with a bearing on Pittsburgh's attractiveness was this finding: "While Sun Belt states like California, Arizona, and Florida were often mentioned as desirable places to live or work, more of the area graduates who left Pennsylvania settled in neighboring states in the Northeast than in Sunbelt states."

The Hansen study broke its respondents into various groups, some overlapping. In addition to the usual race and gender affiliations, Hansen and Huggins identified "stayers," (graduates working in Pittsburgh at the time) and "leavers," as well as "techies" and "nontechies."

Responding to the question of the role of salary in making a job choice, 62 percent of Blacks listed "very important." For Hispanics, the figure was 51 percent, while for Whites and Asians it was 44 percent.

Some of the reasons why emerged in the salary differences among those making more than \$50,000 a year. In every category, those who left Pittsburgh made more money than those who stayed. For Whites, 56 percent of the "leavers" were in the above-\$50,000 category, as against 39 percent for "stayers," graduates working in Pittsburgh at the time of the survey. For Blacks,

the corresponding figures were 67 and 41. For Hispanics, 37 and 25. For Asians, 78 and 50. For foreign nationals, 82 and 67.

Salary differences by gender particularly highlighted disparities against women. Among males, 73 percent of leavers were making more than \$50,000, versus 48 percent of the stayers—a 27 percent difference. Among females, the difference was even more startling, 41 percent to 27 percent—a 52 percent difference. Especially noteworthy was a 110 percent difference between what female “techies” made, 63 percent for the leavers against 30 percent for the stayers. (The comparable figures for male “techies”: 81 percent and 69 percent, an 18 percent difference.)

Given evidence of salary disparities, what marked the stayers as against the leavers? The Hansen findings:

Stayers are predominately:

- Female
- Married with children
- Duquesne graduates
- Older
- Blacks from Pittsburgh
- 1999 graduates
(as compared to 1994)

Leavers are mostly:

- Males
- CMU graduates

- Single
- Foreign nationals
- Graduates of high schools outside Pittsburgh
- 1994 graduates

Returners (the so-called boomerang generation)

- Females
- 1994 graduates
- Had children under 18
- Close family in area
- Duquesne graduates
- Very few minorities

Techies:

Percent working in Pittsburgh

	<u>1994</u>	<u>1999</u>
Techies	31%	39%
Nontechies	43%	55%

Among the numerous policy recommendations in the Hansen-Huggins report was a suggestion that the commonwealth consider “reducing or eliminating the out-of-state tuition differential, as states like Virginia have already done, to encourage more students to come to Pennsylvania.”

The report called for addressing the concerns of women and two-career couples. It contended: “Lack of jobs for a spouse/partner rank second only to job opportunities as a reason why people who had held a previous job here left Pittsburgh.

Public or private efforts to assist with spouse/partner recruitment or job placement might help retain more of our graduates."

Another observation: "Women graduates are more concerned with childcare. Area recruitment efforts should include information on local childcare options, perhaps with a Website listing facilities and openings. On-site childcare may also help retain young families with children."

Hansen and Huggins also called for paying more attention to minority concerns and cultural diversity issues. Echoing Richard Florida's observations (see chapter 3), the report held that, "Leavers are more concerned than stayers with issues of cultural diversity. The Pittsburgh region needs to highlight the contributions of many groups (including gays, immigrants, and African-Americans) to this area's economy and social life." Another recommendation added noncitizens and Hispanic graduates to the list, noting that a majority of them now leave this area.

Now, to the organizations, both public and private, engaged in workforce development in this region.

AT WORK ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

There is no lack of organizations coping with the challenge of workforce development. They come in many types and sizes on both the governmental and the private, nonprofit sides.

The following is a quick sampling of the field, with a Web site address or other access point for those wishing to know more about any one of the organizations listed.

Government

Governmental efforts stem out of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), passed by Congress in 1999. The WIA is a successor to numerous initiatives in the past, known by such initials as CETA, JPTA, and PIC.

Under WIA, a host of Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) has been created across the nation—22 in Pennsylvania alone. The boards are appointed by local elected officials and must include a majority of members from the business community.

There are four WIBs in southwestern Pennsylvania. They are:

- Three Rivers WIB serving Allegheny County. Their offices are in the Regional Enterprise Tower, 625 Sixth Avenue, Downtown Pittsburgh (www.trwib.org).

- Westmoreland-Fayette WIB serving those two counties, with its office in Youngwood (www.westfaywib.org).
- Tri- County WIB, serving Armstrong, Butler and Indiana Counties, with its office in Butler (www.tcwib.net).
- Southwestern Corner WIB, serving Beaver, Greene and Washington Counties, with its office in Washington, Pa. (www.washingtongreene.org/scwib).

A major task for each WIB has been establishing CareerLink centers where persons seeking employment or job changes or career training opportunities can receive help. For many, it is the first effort to get on the job ladder. Although wraparound case management is included, increasingly the emphasis is on self-help learning to negotiate the system—thus allowing more people to be aided than on a one-to-one basis. In many cases, these centers are located at the WIB headquarters itself.

An innovative exception has been created in Allegheny County as the Three Rivers WIB has established mini-CareerLinks centered throughout the county. They include:

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
4400 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3167
412-622-3133

CCAC Allegheny Campus
Student Service Center Room 110
808 Ridge Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
412-237-2545

CCAC Boyce Campus
Career Services
595 Beatty Road
Monroeville, PA 15146
724-325-6771

CCAC North Campus
Career Services
8701 Perry Highway
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
412-369-3631

CCAC South Campus
Career Services
1750 Clairton Road
Route 885
West Mifflin, PA 15122
412-469-6213

**Eastside Neighborhood
Employment Center**
5231 Penn Avenue
Suite 201
Pittsburgh, PA 15224
412-362-8580

**Forbes Road Career
& Technology Center**
607 Beatty Road
Monroeville, PA 15146
412-373-8100
TTY# 412-373-8100 x283

Goodwill Industries of Pittsburgh
2600 East Carson Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15203
412-390-2327
TTY# 1-800-654-5988

**Jewish Family & Children's Services
Career Development Center**

5743 Bartlett Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
412-422-5627

Northside Leadership Conference

415 East Ohio Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
412-231-4714

**West Pittsburgh Partnership
(WESTNET)**

37 Wabash Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15220
412-922-2740

Nongovernmental

Various educational and nonprofit institutions have established workforce development entities. Unlike the usual arrangement involving heavy governmental financing, nearly 100 percent of the funding has been from private sources, with the Heinz Philanthropies a major player and funder through its Systems Building Projects.

Examples on the nongovernmental side:

- Workforce Connections, conceptual architects of the Systems Building Project, to ensure that the quality of the region's workforce is a source of competitive advantage by developing a demand-driven workforce development market. Stephen Mitchell, director (www.workforceconnectionsonline.org)
- Keys2Work is a skills-based career development and matching system that matches persons having solid foundational skills with jobs likely to require those skills. The agency uses the Work Keys assessment from ACT™ to measure how students' and job seekers' academic abilities match the workplace. David Mosley, director (www.Keys2Work.org)
- Center for Competitive Workforce Development at Duquesne University conducts policy-oriented workforce development and economic development in Pittsburgh and southwestern Pennsylvania. Barry Maciak and Silvio Baretta, directors (www.ccwd.duq.edu)
- PRIME (Partnership for Regional Innovation in Manufacturing Education) at Robert Morris University, a consortium involving the university and three community colleges—Beaver, Butler, and Westmoreland—delivering manufacturing education in southwestern Pennsylvania. PRIME builds regional support for the engineering industry and increases awareness of employment opportunities in this region's manufacturing sector. It also develops innovative manufacturing programs that emphasize real-world experience and provide students with appropriate

equipment. Thanks to the cooperation of firms large and small, PRIME offers students the opportunity to attend a community college to prepare for a job at the operator or technical level or to move ahead at a four-year school to obtain an engineering degree. The consortium has an outreach program to school systems, such as through the Mon Valley Education Consortium, to reach pupils as young as middle school age. Winston Erevelles, director (www.primepa.org)

- New Century Careers, a successor agency to Manufacturing 2000, a pilot program to identify, target, recruit, screen, train, place, and develop individuals in skill-based manufacturing careers. It is a partnership among Duquesne University's Institute for Economic Transformation, the Steel Center Area Vocational-Technical School, and a group of 17 metal industry manufacturers in Western Pennsylvania. Barry Maciak, director (www.ncsquared.com)
- The Hispanic Center, founded in 2002 to pursue workforce development involving the Hispanic community. Eugene Matta, director (ematta@ccac.edu)
- Human Capital Policy Initiative, a public education/civic engagement arm of the Institute of Politics at the University of Pittsburgh that develops and implements

seminars and other information-disseminating activities on regional workforce development. Anne McCafferty, director (www.hcpi.org)

- Industry Clusters, four groups formed by Workforce Connections to advance, strategically, core sectors identified as economic development "engines" for the region. The clusters and their coordinators are:
 - Health Care, Dodie Roskies, Jewish Healthcare Foundation. (www.hcfutures.org)
 - Information Technology (IT), Susan Farrington, Pittsburgh Technology Council. (sfarrington@pghtech.org)
 - Financial, Sherry B. Monheim, Workforce Initiative, Duquesne University. (monheim@duq.edu)
 - Manufacturing, Cliff Shannon, SMC Business Council. (cliff@smc.org)

Note: Some analysts have suggested that because education and government are major employers, they might merit a cluster arrangement, too.

The pathways that all these organizations—governmental and nongovernmental—will be taking in the years immediately ahead will be in part determined by the actions of state government, specifically the map laid out by the incoming administration of Governor Ed Rendell. Now, to some insights into its thinking.

THE BIG PLAYER

At this point in mid-2003, the big player looks to be the new administration of Governor Ed Rendell. He is making workforce development a priority, along with education and economic development.

To that end, Rendell has appointed Sandi Vito to the post of deputy secretary for workforce development in the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry. Prior to her appointment, Vito served as chief of staff to the minority chair of the Senate Labor and Industry Committee (1999–2001); as political director of the Pennsylvania Democratic Party (1999–2001); and as a deputy campaign manager for Governor Rendell's recent successful race. An economics major at Stockton State University in Atlantic City, N.J., Vito's academic experience also includes Temple University's Graduate School of Urban Studies.

Vito explains the Rendell administration's three-part approach: "They go hand in hand in a global environment to attract businesses and provide opportunities for the workforce to continue to provide high-wage, high-demand jobs."

Her responsibilities include assisting the secretaries of labor & industry and community & economic development in coordinating workforce development initiatives that span five state agencies.

The Rendell administration has been studying more successful cutting-edge programs in states such as North Carolina, Illinois, Washington, and Wisconsin. Vito says the administration hopes to adapt the best from these models into a plan for Pennsylvania, scheduled to be announced in late 2003.

The strategy is to have workforce development more market driven by fitting workers to occupations in demand through training opportunities and skills upgrading. To that end, Vito's office is working on the following approaches:

Point 1. To eliminate the present "silo" approach in which various departments of state government have gone their separate ways on workforce development. Input from consumers, workers, and employers, as well as the agencies themselves, is being sought.

Point 2. To provide greater flexibility for agencies, but with accountability. "Each department has restrictions on what it can do, including restrictions on its funding streams. All of the funding streams have federal guidelines. Other states have done a better job of coordinating funding streams," Vito explains. Asked about the restrictions questions raised by Bill Yant of the Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board (see chapter 3), Vito replied that ways must be found to aid "locals" with

helping more people even with funding streams that are seemingly restricted, but obviously “without breaking the law.” Along with such easing, however, must come strict accountability.

Point 3. To streamline the system so that “anyone should be able to walk into a CareerLink office and get what they need.” By “anyone,” Vito says she means a dislocated worker, a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (welfare-to-work) recipient, or a displaced homemaker. And the services available should include helping to frame an employment or re-employment plan, a remedial or education plan where necessary, specific information on what jobs are available or are likely to be available, and funding streams for which the applicant might be eligible.

Point 4. To prepare a system of career ladders so that people don’t get stuck in entry-level jobs, clogging the system to the detriment of new hires. Vito says the system should be developing what she calls a workforce “pipeline” for moving workers upward through skills training—to the benefit of employees and employers alike.

Point 5. To increase the emphasis in job training on “soft skills”—problem solving, decision making, working with others, communications skills. Vito testifies, “I haven’t talked to a single employer who hasn’t mentioned this need.

And these are not skills that require a liberal arts degree.”

Point 6. To prepare for the jobs of the future, not just those of the present.

Out of all the analysis come two particular challenges, Vito says.

Point 7. Obtaining information from employers as to present and future needs (a problem noted by such experienced men as Bill Yant and Michael Krajovic in Chapter 3). Partly this is because they are busy running their own businesses; partly it is the worry about training employees who then move to a competitor company.

Vito elaborates: “When there is an industry-wide worker shortage, such as healthcare workers, employers are more willing to define what their industry needs are. And large companies that have human relations departments are better able to participate in employer consortiums. The challenge is to find ways to help mid-sized and smaller firms that don’t have human relations department to demonstrate that we can deliver. The answers will vary area by area and industry by industry.”

Point 8. Unlike some other states, Pennsylvania doesn’t have two-year technical college degrees. Its 14 community colleges lie mostly in the southern half of the state—“not much above Interstate 80.” (See chapter 3.)

Vito says the answer is not readily apparent. One possibility is to use the vocational education centers in many high school systems to partner with adjacent postsecondary institutions to form degree-granting career technical centers. She emphasizes the need for offering both the hard technical skills—sometimes called “bench skills”—as well as the “soft skills” described above.

Clearly, the plan Vito’s agency hopes to unveil in late 2003 will have significance beyond just workforce development and into the allied fields of education and economic development as designated by the Rendell administration. In some cases, this will require squaring some circles in proposing new ways of thinking and operating. But the points made by Vito suggest a good start is being made.

What steps must the southwestern Pennsylvania region itself take to provide the workforce needed for its future? That subject is next.

WHAT FUTURE FOR THE REGION? DO WE HAVE A CONSENSUS?

A recent study of census data showed that nationally half of the new workers in the 1990s came from abroad.

Pulling all the pieces together brings us to the ultimate questions:

- What is the region’s economic purpose in the 21st century?
- In a global marketplace, what are our competitive advantages?
- Who is responsible for what?

Brian Kelley of the Heinz Endowments points out that any region has two economies. One involves local customers, which can be described as recycling existing dollars and jobs. The other concerns external customers, making possible the creations of new jobs and dollars, not to mention competing in the global marketplace.

The harsh facts as pointed out by Kelley are that a listing of population growth in 280 metro areas between 1990 and 2000 shows Pittsburgh to be last. Furthermore, southwestern Pennsylvania has the same population today as it had in 1940, yet with both the burdens and advantages of an infrastructure build for 1940.

Yet in a seemingly stagnant situation, the region’s job growth (92,900 between 1994 and 2001) is outpacing both the population and workforce growth. The result is a workforce demand and supply gap.

It is this gap that impels Kelley and other workforce experts to call for reinforcement from immigrants or in-migrants. Kelley maintains, “Companies will not grow in or

relocate to a region with a shrinking workforce." That's why the new "human capital" factor is being added to the previously emphasized economic development emphases on (1) recruiting of industries in or into the region and (2) technology-based development, whether with traditional firms or new start-ups. A balanced portfolio with all three is necessary in this day and age, he holds.

Furthermore, human capital is the new economic development driver in the global economy.

Who is responsible? As in the past, a relative few are involved in industrial recruitment. More are responsible for tech-based economic development. But many or all are involved in the human capital component, when one includes university and colleges, community colleges and technical schools, research organizations, the 150 school districts in southwestern Pennsylvania, parents, students, and workers themselves.

Because so many are involved in the human capital component, success is not guaranteed in the necessary transition in ways of thinking and of implementation. But, Kelley asserts, "The region has no alternative."

Now, for some overview comments.

OBSERVATIONS

Any workforce development strategies for Pittsburgh and the region need to concentrate upon the three gaps outlined in this *Issues*—the worker gap, the skills gap, and the wage gap. Do we want a bunch of any old jobs or family-supporting middle-income jobs?

New thinking is needed, especially about such issues as postsecondary education, immigration, labor-management collaboration, and income parity.

The Rendell administration is wise in its decision to package workforce development, education, and economic development together, as it is obvious there will need to be adjustments in the thinking and the operation of governmental agencies in all three categories. And in nongovernmental organizations, too.

To reach its objectives, the Rendell administration may need to give greater emphasis to training its trainers—that is, the frontline people in its various agencies involved in workforce development who actually deal with the varied clientele, whether it be workers, would-be workers, or employers. Just because a government worker has been proficient within a particular departmental "silo" doesn't necessarily mean he/she is ready within the framework now needed.

In particular, the workforce development field must pay greater attention to postsecondary training for technicians. A college education obviously continues to be a desirable goal—but not necessarily for everyone. Can we create a cultural climate that would give a student the freedom NOT to go to college?

Overall, there needs to be a realization within every sector of the vital importance in the global economy of “human capital,” a factor now at least on a par with the earlier “engines” of economic development—prime sites and tax abatements.

Unfortunately—or, in the end, fortunately—this is not a problem that can be solved by a few people sitting around a conference table and issuing top-down edicts. As Brian Kelley of the Heinz Endowments points out, in the old days, the key to economic development was luring plant placement, depending upon specialists, with little for people in general to do.

Now that has changed. With decision-making dispersed, everyone has a role to play. The gamut runs from family and individual decisions about career choice; to employer and employee responses; to the need for skills training; to changes in thinking and operations by educational institutions from elementary through graduate school and other government and nongovernment agencies; to community responses to immigrants and to providing environments for the Creative Class; and to taxpayer support for initiatives involving governmental funding. The individual and collective willingness to accept roles in this drama will determine the outcome.

Let George—or Georgia—do it? That no longer will suffice.

ISSUES

EDITOR/MANAGING EDITOR

Terry Miller

CONTRIBUTOR

Clarke M. Thomas

INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

DIRECTOR

Dennis P. McManus

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Terry Miller

EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR

Marie Hamblett

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Susan Heiss

HCPI PROJECT DIRECTOR

Anne McCafferty

HCPI INTERN

Mary Stofko

DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Morton Coleman

UNIVERSITY MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Jeanie Goff

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Matthew M. Chverchko

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

Chuck Dinsmore

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Aviva Selekman

Clarke M. Thomas is a retired
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette senior editor.

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University of Pittsburgh

Institute of Politics

Alumni Hall, Seventh Floor

4227 Fifth Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15260

www.pitt.edu/~iop

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