BRYAN ROGERS: So workforce investment boards are throughout the United States. They are funded through the employment and training administration of the U.S. Department of Labor. And those of you who are familiar with the WIB, I know we had one stellar person over at my table, she sits on six workforce investment boards in her state. She—I don't know how she does her own job.

But workforce investment boards, there are about 600, 625 of them across the country. And they are in—oftentimes they are county based, but they can be a consortium of multiple counties and in my particular case, because of the density of Los Angeles and southern L.A., I'm actually five cities that are combined together as a subset of L.A. County.

But many people often think, especially if you know some of the predecessor activities, you'll think of workforce boards as your local job training agency. And that certainly is a function within the world, but I think what's really important, and if you can walk away today in terms of where you're challenged and trying to figure out what the heck to do and where the economy's going to be in 7 or 8 years from now, understand that workforce investment boards by definition are just an amazing resource for industry sector trends.

In my introduction, Moses said that I have a 45-person board and he wasn't kidding. We really do have 45 people and I know L.A. city has a 52-person board. They're all majority private sector business people that represent the communities that we serve, so you have a very interesting perspective and voice on those boards of knowing exactly what sector is what, what occupational areas, where they're going, where they're not. And that gives a very unique flavor when you have a situation like mine where you've got a joint powers regional entity and it's not mostly public sector appointees and it's not mostly government entities or nonprofits. It's businesspeople telling me what I need to be doing and they're very clear with me about what they want me to be doing.

One of the things that is a mandate of workforce investment boards, and this is probably the most important for you all, is the element of the development of local and regional investment plans. Each WIB is responsible—like, for example, in my particular area, I get a baseline allocation of anywhere between $6 and $7 million in federal workforce investment act dollars. That's before we do any resource development or special programs or interesting partnerships with people. That baseline money from the Employment and Training Administration is up to the local workforce board to invest with unemployed workers, low-income workers, retraining dollars, supportive services including transportation assistance, so on, so forth. That's a really important decision in terms of a community and I think that there's a big voice to be had there and so I would definitely encourage, and we'll talk a little bit more about that.

One of the things that's—in terms of trying to decipher what the role of employment and transportation is over the new few years as we emerge from this awful economy is the trends in industry. What's going to change? And you know there's going to be a lot of changes. What was 5 years ago won't be 3 years from now and I think one woman alluded to it in a different context about the changing emphasis on transportation investments around sustainable technologies as opposed to the old guard of rideshare. And I think we see the similar types of thinking and approaches going on in our world too. And there's a huge focus an emphasis on where we're going to invest in jobs, which of course becomes part of the public policy agenda in a community. And I think you all have a big voice to share in that.

The—one of the things that is kind of the mark or the measure of a strong workforce board in a community, in a region, in a county, is its ability to broker and really bring together, to convene the different partners, the education entities, the community colleges, the nonprofits, the—and the transportation providers for the area. And I think that each of you as you go back, if you don't already have those relationships, you open those conversations, you'll see. It will be really clear to you the workforce boards that are already on it. They've got it. They're doing those convenings. And there are others that it's not that they won't do it, it's that they haven't thought of it yet. And I think that that's an area in which you all can actually kind of have an easy win is to insert yourself into that conversation and understand. I mean, there are definitely areas where it's not going to be an easy win, but I think that it's worthwhile. But I think that the brokering of solutions and understanding right up front where the trends are going is important to remember.

So let me talk a little bit about kind of the specifics and how workforce development entities are tracking and positioning themselves right now as we come out of the changing economy. So you understand that our workforce investment board has the larger picture of investment. We actually use our resources—we're about locally an $18 million agency for our 5 cities right now and we invest that in 5 One-Stop Career Centers across our area. We represent an area that's about one million people and Just so you know, in terms of the One-Stop Centers across the country, there are about a little over 1,800 of them that are full service, the full complement of resources that are funded by the Employment and Training Administration. And then you have an additional probably 1,300 or 1,400 that are known as affiliate One-Stops that are smaller portals, that sometimes they might be in a library or housed in a faith-based institution or some other venue. So you've got an excess of 3,000 One-Stops across the country.

One of the things that we're absolutely focused on and I think that, again, this is a constant throughout the One-Stop Centers throughout the country is especially right now the focus on how do we retool and re-skill our workers that many of them, especially that have been in the workforce for quite some time, don't have the freshest skills. They need to rethink and look at different ways or they just are absolutely paralyzed to get out there, especially when people are competing, you know, 1 person—or you know, 18 people for a job so it's just --it's a very unique situation. But in our urban area, and I suspect that this is the case for many of your communities, we're very challenged by the fact that we have a disproportionate number of low-skilled, low-educated people. And we—and our economy matches up to that in many ways in that we've had such a transition over the years that we have a disproportionate number of entry level and low-wage jobs. And I think that that really speaks to you all in terms of the conversations that need to be had because it is a very serious issue and I don't think that it's being really handled and taken seriously.

But one of the areas that struck me is the gentleman that talked back there about the JARC funds that they were going after. And because of so many people that we're working with and serving right now and that—I mean, we're spending upwards of a quarter of a million dollars on supportive services, most of which is going to transportation vouchers for our trainees and our unemployed workers just to keep them mobile at the moment, that for the first time in our history we actually asked the question of, you know, how—what kind of interesting partnerships could we form, JARC-esque, if you will, and actually submitted a grant application to the transit authority around that. And that would have never factored into our world before. But, so you know, whereas you're all thinking about how you can connect into the workforce world, I've had a wonderful relationship with my transit agencies in the past, but I never thought of them as a potential partner in that type of way before.

We know that, in terms of unemployment, you can that the predictions and projections nationally for the rate, it's going to come down between 2010, 2011, but it's still going to be quite high. So we've got a long, long time and a long road ahead in terms of where things will be going.

So where will the jobs be? Nationally, I think that—and I think maybe many of you have seen this in a different format. The Bureau of Labor Statistics put together its top 11 projected job pathways across the country. So four to them fall into the healthcare arena, RN, home health aides, and then two of the more entry level ones. And then you've got four more that lump into the what I guess you call the leisure hospitality retail sector, all of which of course are entry level in nature. And then you've got three more that kind of go into that professional business services, paraprofessional arena, which—and I think it's interesting to see post-secondary teachers show up on BLS's list because I would imagine each of you are hearing a similar story to what we're dealing with, that your school districts are hurting. I mean our—one of our school districts has issued 700 pink slips and expects probably a half to two-thirds of them to go out the door. So I mean, you know, it's a situational problem. But I think what's more interesting of those 11 jobs that BLS is throwing out there, 7 are entry level, and so those 7 entry level pathways that are going to be so much of the jobs potentially across the country are going to be people that are new entrants to the workforce, low-skilled, low-income. They're going to have huge transportation issues. And I think that this is an absolute run to your local WIB and your economic development agency situation and say, "We've got to think about this right now. This is in—do we have everything in place that we want?"

So if you look at more of a kind of a local perspective for us, the projections are about the same in terms of what the national was. I show you this because one of the things that we've done as a workforce board is we've partnered with our Cal State University Long Beach Department of Economics to actually get the predictions. And I say that and I throw that out to you now because your local communities are probably doing similar things and you need to go and ask for that data and you need to—and if they don't have the data, they need to find it. They need to start thinking and putting that directly on the radar, where the sectors are, what the time frame is. This is something that the university put together for us just as an opportunity for us to see loud and clear which sectors were we the strongest in, but where did we also have opportunities. And we know leisure and hospitality for us is an opportunity area.

One of the things that our workforce board, in terms of the planning agent element of where are we going, this is how we've approached what we think is going to be the answer, the opportunity, or the plan. And if you ask me in 18 months from now, it might be different, but this is what we think we know right now and how we're focusing. We're looking at sectors that are generally stable. Health care we know across the country is more stable than most just because of the fact that the needs don't change. And then we're really focused on areas where there's niche opportunities. And a great example, the customized patient care. One of our major hospital chains came to us and asked for a very specific customized training program for new entrants into the workforce. This was an opportunity for us to train and place 100 people, brand new jobs that never existed before, and these are people that have—that are very low income, have no existing transportation means. And so that's been an interesting opportunity for us. And one of the things, the premises that we based part of our JARC conversation on, was how do we connect those people and make sure that they are successful when this hospital is taking such a great chance on them?

The emerging needs. Of course, with so many sustainable technologies and pieces out there, you know, we've got with the transit agencies and the trucks and what not, you've got engine and technology and clean energy maintenance issues that are now coming up which is a great opportunity for training and partnering between workforce boards and transit agencies.

And then you've got just the sheer replacement growth. We know that, despite everything else, we're going to have baby boomers who will eventually, I know that they've been threatening for a long time, to retire and that was postponed because of the bad economy. But that big bubble will happen across many, many of the sectors. And so that's going to generate growth. And so you need to also ask your WIBs that. You know, well, never mind what's going to change in terms of sectors and new ones, but which ones will have just new growth opportunity because of the change?

So I think that, you know, kind of pulling it down to the end, I mentioned earlier the regional piece of working with our areas. I think that that is just going to be standard for all of us. I think it's just going to be an absolute necessary, and you're probably all already seeing it. I think that one of the areas that has been very clear for us is the clusters of opportunity. And we've used this down time to corral all of our partners and talents and we've got an all L.A. County, all Orange County, and all Ventura County project, where we're investing a quarter of a million dollars over a year and a half to definitively answer the question, what are the green jobs? And I know you all probably hear about it in your communities and probably we're all sick and tired of hearing about it because no one can ever really quantify.

So we're doing a green economy value study that is working with some economists to get down to exactly what will it be, where will they be, how much will they pay, what will be needed, and where will they exist? I would venture to guess that many, many, many of your communities are doing the same thing and it's absolutely critical information for you all to have to understand that. And so, that being said, it may sound like an obvious, but I suspect that it doesn't always happen. You need to absolutely connect and get that entrée with your local or regional economic development agencies. Those are an absolute clear insight into what's happening.

You need to pay attention to reuse efforts. There's a lot still of BRAC, base realignment closure, activities going on with the military. Those are good indicators of where new job centers will end up. You've got a number of, you know, changing things, whether it's the automotive industry, or in our case here in southern California, aerospace. Those are also great indicators.

And then absolutely connect to your WIB. And that's just—I think that you need to definitely connect with them. But I would submit go to the meetings, get on the agenda, be a part of the agenda. Sit on the WIB as the lady over there does on six WIBs. There's no better way to get your voice in there than to be actually on the WIB. But also, don't be afraid to ask your local workforce board for assistance in training, retraining. Look at the unique partnerships where you can connect in ways that may not have been thought of before. And then I'll leave that.

This last one, theservicelocator.org, more than anything is an outstanding resource to connect to you with not only the one-stops in your area, but the workforce boards and regional economic developments.