MissouriConnections.org
Connect to Your Future

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Education Goals Can Brighten 2009

The start of a new year is a good time to set goals, and a focus for many people right now is their career situation of tomorrow.

Setting goals allows people to direct their futures, says Gilbert Hake, manager of Missouri's career center services.

"People who are serious about finding better jobs — or just being more secure in the ones they have — need to take a good look at where they are, decide where they want to be and create some strategic goals to take them from Point A to Point B," Hake said.

Most people, he added, will need to include education goals in their plan for career advancement. That might mean getting a GED, obtaining more training or going back to school for higher education.

The following three tips will help people get started:

1) **Make the commitment.** Continuing one's education requires time and money — The first step is deciding the hardships involved with getting an education cannot compare with the hardships of not having one, said Kathryn Love, a spokesperson for the Missouri Department of Higher Education. "The rewards are worth the sacrifices," she said.
2) **Learn where the jobs are.** While some industries are laying off workers by the droves, others are clamoring for skilled workers. "With a tough economy and rising unemployment, it is especially important to base your career decisions on what jobs are in demand by employers," said Mike Waltman, a spokesman for the Division of Workforce Development.
3) **Get help.** Missourians have numerous free resources to help them advance their educations and their careers. Three key resources are 1) the 46 Missouri Career Centers where job-seekers and job-changers can find trained workforce specialists to help them plan for career success; 2) the 44 adult learning centers that offer GED preparation and individualized instruction in basic reading, writing and math skills, plus help with interview and résumé-writing skills; and 3) a Web site, www.MissouriConnections.org, where students — and potential students — can explore high-demand careers and their educational requirements, search for colleges and technical schools, and find information about paying for college. MissouriConnections.org also has links to Missouri's job search Web site, as well as the Web site for Missouri Career Centers.

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More information is available at *www.dese.mo.gov/divcareered/missouri_connections_news_room.htm*

The Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership workgroup represents a collaboration of state agencies concerned with education and workforce development who are helping inform and build awareness among the public, particularly students and potential students, of targeted careers, educational and industry trends, and workforce development priorities. Workgroup members represent the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Department of Higher Education; Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development and Missouri Economic Research & Information Center; Missouri Center for Career Education; and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Freelance writer is Anita Harrison.