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*Stimulus Program to Provide Summer Jobs*

## **Next-Gen Jobs Link Youths, Employers to Better Future**

It's the end of the school year, time for youths to find their summer jobs and for businesses to find their summer help. This year, a special program will help the two groups connect. The Next-Generation Jobs Team, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, will place 16- to 24-year-olds in high-tech, high-growth industries — and pay their wages. It's a win-win-win situation, said John Fougere, a spokesperson for the Missouri Department of Economic Development. Youths will gain work experience, businesses will have the chance to develop the next generation of workers, and Missouri will benefit from a more educated and skilled workforce.

"The program was established by Governor Nixon to create new jobs and turn Missouri's economy around," Fougere said. "To do that, we have to ensure that Missouri has highly-trained, highly skilled workers who are ready to compete for the careers of tomorrow."

Approximately 6,000 youths are expected to participate in the program, which will run from May 1 to Sept. 30, 2009.

For those youths, the benefits will include the chance to build their résumés, to develop their hard and soft skills, to explore careers that interest them and to network with professionals — all while earning some extra cash.

Businesses, meanwhile, will benefit not just from free help for the summer but also from the opportunity to invest in their futures.

"It gives businesses the chance to connect with motivated, talented young people with an interest in their business," Fougere said. "That's exciting for employers."

Both youths and businesses can register for the Next-Generation Jobs Team program online at [www.summerjobs.mo.gov](http://www.summerjobs.mo.gov) or by calling 1-800-592-6020. Applications will be forwarded to local Workforce Investment Boards, which will contact applicants to determine eligibility and to complete the registration process.

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Full-length news release, quotes and fact sheet are available at [www.dese.mo.gov/divcareered/missouri\\_connections\\_news\\_room.htm](http://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.*