



For Immediate Release: July 28, 2008

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WORKFORCE AND LABOR MARKET SURVEY 2,000 West Valley businesses to be contacted

PEORIA, AZ – More than 2,000 West Valley employers will soon be invited to answer a short survey that will be used to attract quality businesses and higher paying jobs to the area.

Employers with 20 or more employees can expect a call beginning in August from ERISS Corporation, the research firm hired to conduct the West Valley Workforce and Labor Market Survey.

The concise survey takes only 7 to 10 minutes to answer, and includes questions about current and future workforce demands and barriers that might prevent a company's growth. The results will yield an invaluable tool for businesses and communities interested in recruiting, developing and retaining strong economic partners in the West Valley.

"The results from this survey will provide tremendous benefit to our West Valley communities," explained Jack Lunsford, President & CEO of WESTMARC. "We haven't had an up-to-date resource like this in our economic development toolkit for many years."

Amid concerns of a contracting economy elsewhere in the nation, the West Valley is attracting the attention of companies looking to expand, relocate or open in an area with a vibrant, available workforce and a receptive business climate. Labor cost, availability and quality are the most-cited decision factors for companies seeking to expand or relocate and yet current information has not been readily available.

To meet this growing demand, WESTMARC, Maricopa Workforce Connections, Maricopa Community Colleges, Greater Phoenix Economic Council, West-MEC and employers like Cancer Treatment Centers of America, APS, SRP, SCF Arizona and Southwest Gas have teamed up with Avondale, Buckeye, El Mirage, Glendale, Goodyear, Peoria, Surprise and DMB Verrado, contributing more than \$150,000 to fund this unprecedented workforce and labor market survey.

"Economic Development Committee champions Landis Elliott, Jeff Fairman, Hal DeKeyser, Harry Paxton and Megan Griego have provided the leadership for this effort," Lunsford said in appreciation. "Their foresight, leadership and fundraising were critical to moving this project forward. Theirs is truly an example of how our members help drive our organization and help us continually demonstrate the value of WESTMARC."

The results of the survey will be available to employers and the public online in late fall, and will offer a wide variety of information in an interactive, web-based format. Scenario analyses detailing specifics of the West Valley labor market will be included, such as how far and in what direction employees travel for their jobs, length of time commuting and mode/method of transportation. There will also be information regarding employee skills, specialization, professional/certification qualifications, and wages/salaries. An Economic Development Symposium roll-out event will be held on November 6, 2008 to discuss the results.

The success and reliability of the survey depends on the strength of the response of West Valley employers, who can prepare in advance by logging on to <http://www.usworks.com/WESTMARC/questions.cfm> and reviewing the

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survey questions before a representative of ERISS calls.

Only aggregate data which specifically excludes employer identification is used in this survey, and employer responses are kept confidential. Survey results are published in a manner that protects the identity of employer.

Employers can wait to be contacted by ERISS, set up telephone appointments in advance, or receive the survey by FAX. Call the toll-free number, 866-491-3747, ext. 212. Or, log on to www.usworks.com\WESTMARC and click "Contact US/Appointment."

The availability of a strong workforce is pivotal for communities that are courting, keeping and growing local business opportunities. Don't miss this opportunity to help build a strong West Valley and a vibrant economy.

About WESTMARC

WESTMARC, an acronym for Western Maricopa Coalition, was founded in 1990 to promote a positive image for Western Maricopa County and to advocate on its behalf. WESTMARC promotes public policies leading to responsible growth, a positive quality of life, a healthy environment, strong community development and a favorable public image. WESTMARC is dedicated to the principle that we accomplish more by working together.

WESTMARC is a broad-based coalition of the 15 communities in western Maricopa County representing 35 percent of the population of the county. WESTMARC's region includes the cities of Avondale, Buckeye, El Mirage, Gila Bend, Glendale, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Peoria, West Phoenix, Sun City, Sun City West, Surprise, Tolleson, Wickenburg and Youngtown.

About ERISS

ERISS® is a global leader in Job Market and Economic Development surveys. ERISS researchers will use their Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing system to complete the surveys. This system provides an efficient means of collecting quality data over the telephone in a relatively short period of time. As a member of the American Association of Public Opinion Research, ERISS follows the best practices as recommended by this association. Providing interested parties with information on our survey methodology is one of these best practices. Our methodology can be found at www.eriss.com.

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For more information, employers may contact any of these project liaisons:

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