



**WESTMARC
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**West Valley businesses can expect growth in construction,
education and transportation, survey says**

PEORIA, AZ (Nov. 6, 2008) – The results of the new West Valley Work Force and Labor Market Study were unveiled at the annual WESTMARC Economic Development Symposium on Thursday, Nov. 6 at Avondale City Hall, 11465 West Civic Center Drive.

The survey of more than 1,000 West Valley businesses found that the demand for jobs in the areas of health services, construction and transportation are expected to grow during the next 12 months.

The survey, which targeted businesses in western Maricopa County with 20 employees or more, was conducted by ERISS Corporation and completed in October.

Despite negative economic indicators in the overall economy, survey results showed that the demand for jobs in the education fields is also expected to grow at a steady rate. Driving this growth are young families, who are still moving to the West Valley where schools are expanding to handle increased enrollment at the K-12 level. Online educational opportunities are expanding with the best known name in online education - the University of Phoenix and the primary "online campus" for the Maricopa Community Colleges - Rio Salado Online College.

The 27-question survey included questions about current and future workforce demands and barriers that might prevent a company's growth. The results yielded information that will serve as an invaluable tool for businesses and communities interested in recruiting, developing and retaining strong economic partners in the West Valley. An overview of the demographic information was presented at the Economic Development Symposium and participants learned how to access the information and use this new tool as they prepare for new economic development growth and opportunities.

Amid concerns of a contracting economy elsewhere in the nation, the West Valley continues to attract the attention of companies looking to expand, relocate or open in an area with a vibrant, available workforce and a receptive business climate. The survey was commissioned to identify the key areas of industry growth, demand and turnover in order to help businesses meet the workforce demands.

"This labor market project sponsored by WESTMARC, Maricopa Workforce Connections, and Maricopa Community Colleges, is the most in-depth and comprehensive the West Valley region has ever undertaken and one of the most comprehensive ever undertaken in any community across the U.S.," said ERISS Corporation CEO Barbara Nyegaard. "In today's fast-paced, global economic market, winning communities must be proactive and armed with current information at their fingertips about their region's labor market. To that extent, WESTMARC, Maricopa Workforce Connections, and Maricopa Community Colleges are ahead of the curve."

WESTMARC joined with other businesses and organizations, including Maricopa Workforce Connections, Maricopa Community Colleges, Greater Phoenix Economic Council, West-MEC, employers such as Cancer Treatment Centers of America, APS, SRP, SCF Arizona and Southwest Gas, and the communities of Avondale, Buckeye, El Mirage, Glendale, Goodyear, Peoria, Surprise and DMB Verrado who contributed more than \$150,000 to fund this unprecedented workforce and labor market survey.

"The West Valley will benefit immensely from this labor market project," said Jack Lunsford, WESTMARC president and CEO. "It will be extremely valuable to economic development professionals, site selectors, human resource professionals, and educators as an outstanding tool for the assessment, planning, educating, and building of the West Valley's future workforce. We are deeply indebted to the leadership of Landis Elliott of Bade Companies, Jeff Fairman with Sundt, Russ Ullinger with SRP, Megan Griego from the City of Surprise, and Harry Paxton with the City of Goodyear, in bringing this project to fruition."

The symposium program concluded with presentations from West Valley communities who identified priority projects and successes, tangible current demographics, plans to become sustainable and what sets their community apart.

The results of the survey will be available to employers and the public online later this month, 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.

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 survey questions before a representative of ERISS calls.

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

The availability of a strong workforce is pivotal for communities that are courting, keeping and growing local business opportunities.

About WESTMARC

WESTMARC is the regional coalition of businesses, government, and education that promotes the West Valley and advocates 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 principal that we accomplish more by working together.

WESTMARC's region represents more than 35 percent of the population of the county and includes the cities of Avondale, Buckeye, El Mirage, Gila Bend, Glendale, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Peoria, West Phoenix, Surprise, Tolleson, Wickenburg and Youngtown, and the communities of Sun City and Sun City West.

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.