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Work Readiness Skills Modules to be Offered Spring 2015 on SkillsOnline.org

Business Advisory Group Convenes to Offer Guidance on Work Readiness Skills Modules Development

Creation of the first 5 of 21 workforce readiness skills modules that were announced by Governor Terry McAuliffe in early December is underway. Eleven members of the newly formed business advisory group meets in Norfolk Thursday to review the course outlines and development plans with WHRO Public Media subject matter experts who are producing the modules. When completed, the work readiness courses designed to use in a blended learning environment will be free to all K-12 schools and CTE programs, community colleges, workforce investment boards, social service agencies and employers in Virginia.

Advisory panel members include Juan Cunningham, Vice President for Human Resources, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Jack Ross, President and COO, Dominion Enterprises, Tom Walker, President of WebTeks, Sally Hartman, Sr. Vice President for Human Resources, Riverside Health System, Bryan Stevens, President and CEO, Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, Timothy Ciampaglio, Owner and CEO of Pharos Group, Inc, and Founder and President of the Virginia Small Business Partnership, Lynn Goodwin, J.D., Director of Career Development Services, Goodwill Industries, Bill Docalovich, Vice President Human Resources, Huntington Ingalls Industries and Newport News Shipbuilding, Michael Kuhns, President and CEO, Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, Paul van Leeuwen, President, Goldkey-Professional Hospitality Resources, Ray Mattes, President and CEO, Retail Alliance of Hampton Roads, and Bill Crow, President of the Virginia Ship Repair Association.

The modules are based on the 21 work readiness skills identified by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service as those required by employers for career entry and advancement. The first five modules now in development include: (1) Applied Mathematics, (2) Reading for Information, (3) Locating Information, (4) Internet Use and Safety-Digital Citizenship, and (5) Understanding Health, Wellness and Safety. These modules will be available in summer 2015. They are partially funded by grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting under the American Graduate program and the Hampton Roads' Community Foundation. Additional funding is being sought to produce the remaining sixteen modules and collateral materials

WHRO will make these career readiness modules freely available for use in an instructor-led blended learning environment. Additionally, course content will be distributed through eMediaVa(SM), which WHRO operates through a contract with the Virginia Department of Education serving more than 145,000 Virginia teachers in public, private and home schools across the state.

Governor McAuliffe announced WHRO's partnership with Virginia businesses and community college leaders in December at the launch of WHRO's new workforce development initiative – SkillsOnline. Partner colleges include Thomas Nelson Community College, Paul D. Camp Community College, Eastern Shore Community College and Rappahannock Community College. The free work readiness skills modules will also be distributed through SkillsOnline.org, WHRO's new online portal offering over 3,500 courses in 19 industry sectors, including industry certifications in fields with many job openings. SkillsOnline courses are offered at affordable rates, most between \$75 and \$125, so that students of all ages can use them to gain skills needed to enter or advance in a career.

President and CEO of WHRO, Bert Schmidt said, "WHRO has been in the business of creating and developing educational and professional development resources since it was founded over 50 years ago by school divisions in Hampton and Norfolk to use television as a teaching tool. WHRO is now owned by the 19 school divisions in southeastern Virginia and produces a wide range of digital resources to create engaging learning materials which capture and hold the attention of today's online savvy students."

WHRO Public Media – Founded for Education

Founded in 1961 as "Home Room One" the Hampton Roads Educational Telecommunications Association (HRETA), better known as WHRO, provides online courses, and digital content for pre-K to grade 12, teacher professional development courses, pre-school literacy and numeracy programs, among other services. eMediaVa(SM), an online repository of nearly 100,000 learning objects, correlated with the Virginia SOL's, is used by over 145,000 teachers across the entire state of Virginia.

In addition to SkillsOnline, WHRO offers continuing education for teachers through Virginia's PBS TeacherLine™ working with James Madison University. WHRO also operates Virtual Virginia, on behalf of the Virginia Department of Education, offering Advanced Placement and world language courses to students who do not have access to these programs through their home school division. Virtual Virginia courses are eligible for high school and college level credit in dual enrollment programs.

Based in Norfolk, Va., WHRO is probably best known as a non-profit regional media organization. Every day, hundreds of thousands of viewers and listeners tune in to broadcast programming on WHRO's four public television and six public radio stations or use one of WHRO's many web services.

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