**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**LEADERs Kickoff Webinar**

**A Campaign to Expand Registered Apprenticeship Across the USA**

**Friday, June 26, 2015**

*Transcript by*

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ERIC BELLINO: Where you're from. And if you're with anyone, tell me how many. So to kick things off, I'm turning it over to John Ladd who is the administrator, Office of Apprenticeship, Employment and Training Administration. John, take it away.

JOHN LADD: Hi, everybody. Actually, we've got to wait here to see if our camera will load up. There we go. My name is John Ladd. I am the administrator for the Office of Apprenticeship and thank you so much for being here today. This is a great moment for apprenticeship and a great opportunity for us to say thank you to you for all of your commitment to apprenticeship and your willingness to be an ApprenticeshipUSA LEADER. So thank you very much.

We're thrilled to have you today and we're thrilled to have four of your colleagues for your fellow leaders who you'll be hearing from later today to talk about why they had chosen to become a LEADER and what some of this effort will be about. So we're going to turn to them in just a few minutes. But we're so thrilled that Joerg Klisch, Al Crook, Andrew Larson and Clay Goodman can join us today to talk about being an ApprenticeshipUSA LEADER. So thank you, again very much. Thank you for your commitments.

And we're going to get started here in a few minutes. This is our kick-off. This is our opportunity to tell you a little bit about our thinking and plans for ApprenticeshipUSA and being an ApprenticeshipUSA LEADER. And we really wanted to spend just a little bit of your time this afternoon talking about our plans for the next few months, some of the exciting things we have coming up in the next weeks and months ahead. This is a very exciting time for Apprenticeship and we're so glad that you're going to be helping us to lead the way and to be part of these exciting times.

So we're going to kick-off this event with a little bit of a poll. So we would love if you all could spend a few minutes here telling us which industry you all are from and we can get a sense of who we have in the crowd today. And we see some of the results coming in. It looks like we've got healthcare, construction, manufacturing very strong, quite a few in the other category as well. So that's great. Keep those votes coming. We'll leave this open here for another couple minutes.

Well, why don't we leave that poll open. But this is really incredible here when you look at some of the industries that are showing up here in significant numbers, when you look at healthcare, manufacturing and other categories being very strong, along with our traditional strength in construction. You know, this is not often the distribution you see when you're talking apprenticeships. So it's great to see all these different industries being represented on today's webinar.

So thank you all very much and we'll leave that poll open for those who still need time to vote. So just a quick overview of our agenda today. You're going to be hearing from some of our leadership today about their commitment to the LEADER program. And again, this is something that we have tremendous support from, leadership from the White House all the way through the department of labor and beyond. But we're going to spend most of this afternoon walking you through some of our goals and activities that we're planning for the next three to six months that we hope you can be part of.

We'll do a quick overview and discussion about ApprenticeshipUSA and the LEADERs effort. We'll talk about what we're calling the Sectors of Excellence in Apprenticeship, which we're going to be wrapping up this summer and then we'll leave some time at the end here to hear from four of your colleagues, talk some next-steps and do some wrap-up. So we have a full agenda for the next hour and of course, most importantly, we want to hear from you.

We want to leave time for questions, get your thoughts, reactions and make sure we have time to take some questions here at the end. So that's our agenda and we'll move forward here. Our secretary of labor really wished he could be here today. He was planning on being here. He wanted to be part of this important kick-off, but he was called away for other business. But the secretary is incredibly committed to our broad expansion efforts, but particularly to this particular program, the LEADERs program.

This is something he saw when he visited England when he went to the U.K. He saw what they have done with their Trailblazer program and the role that business, industries, labor and other organizations can play in helping to build this movement, to spread the word about Apprenticeship and ultimately, it's about having industry in the driver's seat, not government. And he believes in this so much and believes it's incredibly important.

So he wants to thank you for your willingness to be part of this effort. Thank you for your commitment, thank you for your leadership and we're just thrilled that you can be here today. And again, the secretary sends his regrets, that he absolutely wishes that he could be here today with you all.

But we do have our Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric Seleznow with us and has joined us. And he would also like to spend a few minutes to talk with you all on behalf of the secretary and on behalf of the department of labor.

ERIC SELEZNOW: Good afternoon or good morning, wherever you are, Eric Seleznow here. Thanks for joining us. First, let me thank you for your time into this. I know, having worked in this field for many, many years we always try to engage employers and I wonder how you do your day jobs when you're engaged with school systems or the department of labor or grant programs in your own community. So we know that takes a fair amount of effort to do it, but we think it's certainly worth it in developing the workforce in the future.

But as far as the LEADERs program goes, I can't thank you enough for your time and your leadership. You know, we're trying to borrow ideas from around the world with some of the best practices in apprenticeship and certainly, trailblazers, ambassadors, leaders, whatever you want to call it is really critically important. There's examples across the country in the workforce where one business, one employer made a huge difference in bringing other employers around the table for workforce strategies to address an industry sector need.

And employers have done a great job and I've seen personally, in the state I worked in and other regions across the countries, where employers have really been the convening factor, the important factor to work with education or job training or apprenticeship. You know, this apprenticeship challenge that the president laid down is a good challenge. Again, Secretary Perez, as John told you, embraced this.

He has been all over the world. He has been all over the country talking about it. Next Tuesday, he's going to be down in North Carolina with Congresswoman Foxx to look at a couple of apprenticeship programs down there. So you should know that we're working hard to transform our office here at the department of labor to improve our IT and information systems to improve our outreach and support and trying to make it easier for businesses and job seekers to access apprenticeship.

So there's a number of different fronts we're already working on here. Your role in this cannot be overvalued. It really is important to get things going. So I don't want to spend too much time, either pontificating about how important it is. I think the fact that you're participating in this makes that so. So anything we can do, any ideas you have, any suggestions that you have on how we can move forward and expand this, we'd like to listen.

We're particularly interested in industry sector needs and opportunities or challenges. We know we have challenges with other employers. We know we have challenges with parents. We know we have some challenges with school systems in understanding how to connect with you all, but these are all things we'd like to address over time. But to do that outreach and connection is important.

We're trying to align across government so it's not only Secretary Perez, but also Secretary Pritzker of commerce, Secretary Duncan at education are all working together on this apprenticeship focus and effort. And so we really would hope we can elevate some of the activities that you get involved in, promote and elevate so it can help us propel apprenticeship into the future. So I just want to thank you for that.

We have a lot of work to do in a short period of time and I know that the White House is engaged and briefed on our LEADERs and is anxious and interested to learn more as we get off the ground. So once again, thanks for your support and we'll keep you connected to and informed of all of our activities. John, anything else?

MR. LADD: No. Thank you so much. We're going to continue here. I know we want to try to get to your questions here at the end. So we'll move through here, and get started, and then we'll have some time to hear from four of your colleagues, and again, some time at the end for questions.

So just briefly, obviously, this is something that you all know, being in the apprenticeship world, that this is just an incredibly unique opportunity for apprenticeship, the alignment of such high level support, the financial resources and commitments that are being made, often historic investments in the apprenticeship system as well as the employer demand, the employer voice that's been part of this and been asking for this.

It really creates a unique opportunity in time to lift up apprenticeship and do new and innovative things. As Eric mentioned, we do have this historic goal and challenge ahead of us. We do know that we have seen levels of close to a half a million apprentices in the past when economic times have been better, but we never have been at the kind of levels that the president is asking us to reach. So we do have a tremendous gap and a tremendous stretch goal here that we are trying to meet.

And we can only do that with your help and we could only do this if we think about things a little bit differently and do things differently than we've done them in the past. So as we've been thinking about, how do we meet this challenge and how do we meet this gap, it became very clear to us at the beginning that a big part of this challenge will be related to marketing and outreach and educating both the public and other industries about the benefits of apprenticeship.

And very early, we decided that it would make sense to think about rebranding our messaging around apprenticeship. And so now, you'll see us talking about ApprenticeshipUSA as our new brand and part of that is not just a new logo, but thinking about this as a campaign and a complimentary set of strategies and approaches to reach new industries in new ways. So ApprenticeshipUSA is the new brand.

It has four broad goals. One, is to lift the image of apprenticeship. The second is to help recruit leaders, such as yourself to help promote apprenticeship in new industries, but it's also about helping to create infrastructure to support these industry-based expansion efforts and create mechanisms to accelerate apprenticeship adoption and innovation in these new industries. Two key pillars of ApprenticeshipUSA are the LEADERs campaign of which you've committed to, but the second is what we're calling Sectors of Excellence in Apprenticeship.

And we'll talk a little bit more about that in a minute. But the LEADERs are obviously a key element of this, that they are organizations and leaders who are advocating and supporting expansion of apprenticeship across the U.S. And the sectors of excellence are sector-based strategies where we start to get down into the unique needs of each industry, whether it's transportation, construction, healthcare or transportation. And so we'll talk about that in just a few minutes.

So again, the goals of the LEADERs initiative are straightforward. We are looking for support and help in advancing the presence goal of doubling the number of apprentices. We are looking to transform and lift up the image of apprenticeship by very specifically and by very intentionally aligning apprenticeship with your great brands and the value and esteem that companies and organizations – that you all represent that the public has.

So getting people to understand that apprenticeship is in these other industries, is part of these great companies, is a very intentional part of the LEADERs' effort. We're hoping that you can help us promote apprenticeship throughout your industry and supply chain. We hope you'll be able to participate with us in these sectors of excellence and we're hoping that you can help us build public/private partnerships that will accelerate apprenticeship adoption throughout the industry.

But we do want to make it very clear that the commitments you make are the commitments that are appropriate for your organization, that are the commitments that you are comfortable making. So these are scalable commitments, these are options and menus of commitments that each leader, each organization is willing to make. But they do fall on some broad categories. Some have committed to expanding apprenticeship within their organization. Some have had longstanding work-based learning programs that they are elevating to meet national standards for registration.

So they're registering their previous programs. They are promoting apprenticeships to their colleagues in their industry or their communities. We're hoping you will participate in a national kick-off meeting later this year and participate in some of these sector convenings over the next year. And as importantly, we hope you'll allow us to recognize and share your best practices so that we don't all have to reinvent the wheel and we can learn from each other.

But again, these are an options of commitments. And again, it is your choice, your determination as to what is the right level of commitment for you. So you'll see some of the kinds of commitments that some of you have made, ranging from Zurich North America that's looking to expand apprenticeship broadly throughout their industry and willing to be a leader for that. Oberg is looking to expand their existing apprenticeship programs by 20 percent.

UAW that continues to promote apprenticeship and deepen apprenticeship with its partner companies. And new players, such as Rutgers that are building apprenticeship programs in the healthcare industry with a significant new commitment for health research associates and the healthcare IT professionals over the next four years.

So again, these are the commitments that those organizations are comfortable with. It is a range of commitments that industries are making and again, it's driven by each individual employer. But we're thrilled that over the last few months we've been able to get over 100 commitments from various organizations. You see just a small sampling of some of your logos. You know we've asked if we can use your logos.

And again, that is very intentional that we want the public and others to see the range of companies that are involved in apprenticeship and ApprenticeshipUSA and get people thinking more broadly and differently about where apprenticeship can thrive and take root. So thank you, again, for those companies that have allowed us to use their logos. So the next part – so again, the LEADERs are the ambassadors, the champions.

A key piece of what we hope to do over the next few months is start to build more capacity in infrastructure throughout the system. As we talk to more and more companies, we increasingly hear that they don't know how to get started, that they don't know how to move forward, they want to connect with others in their industry, they want to know what resources are available, they want to know what curriculum has already been developed.

And we need to do a better job of making that process easier for these new companies that are coming into the system and to be able to make it easier for them to connect to their colleagues and others in their industry.

So we've envisioned what we're calling SEAs, which are Sectors of Excellence in Apprenticeship, which are a form of a sector council, where we are going to ask that you take the inaugural group of 100 or so LEADERs and start to bring you together by sector to start talking about what are the key issues in your industry, where's the opportunities for growth, where are the best practices in this industry and then how do we accelerate other companies, other organizations' adoption of apprenticeship?

So you'll be hearing more from us over the coming weeks and we would like to have an initial convening this summer of each of the six targeted sectors to have that initial meeting this summer to begin to have these conversations with each of you. So you see a little bit more detail up there and we'll provide more of this information over the next coming weeks.

Again, the six or seven sectors that we are targeting include a healthcare focus that we'll be basing out of Boston, construction in Philadelphia, public service here in Washington, D.C., transportation and logistics in Atlanta, energy in Dallas, advanced manufacturing in Chicago and information and communication technologies out in San Francisco.

Those will be our physical hubs, but we know that those industries and needs exist all across the country. I'm going to try to speed up here a little bit to make sure we have time to get to our conversation, but we are hoping to have our initial convenings of the SEAs this summer in August.

We hope that each of these meetings will cover a number of important topics related to both promotion of apprenticeship in that particular industry, talking to you about how the SEAs will continue to operate moving forward, most importantly, helping us to think through and identify some key occupations where we can scale up and adopt apprenticeship quickly throughout that industry and then looking to you all to identify other key issues, challenges and opportunities for our apprenticeship expansion that are unique to that particular industry.

So we do see these SEAs as a leadership group, an important place where we get your feedback, your validation and your director about where can apprenticeship grow, where can apprenticeship expand and what are the opportunities and challenges for that. So that is in August. Later this year towards the end of the calendar year, we are also planning overcalling an accelerator session, where the initial meeting will be just of the LEADER community.

In the follow-up meeting, we envision bringing new employers that are not yet doing apprenticeship, but want to learn about apprenticeship, that want to move through the process, that want to get some technical assistance, to be connected to a peer, to be able to talk to others in their industry about how they set up an apprenticeship program, where they got the resources, where they found partners.

And so rather than individual companies going out and having to do this on their own or reinvent the wheel and do it over and over again, we want to bring people together and move them through an accelerated process where they can get technical assistance onsite, where they can be connected to a consultant onsite, where they can talk to someone else in their industry onsite and ultimately, to move them through that process and get them as far down that road as we can so it doesn't take six months or a year to develop an apprenticeship program.

It can take weeks to a month or two to stand up an apprenticeship program. So we believe that this will give us a lot more capacity, a lot more infrastructure and create more efficiency in the system, but we will need you all to help us guide that process and validate some of the things that we want to do. So that will be later this year. And then finally, we're really excited about another idea that we've stolen, which is National Apprenticeship Week. This is something that we saw in the U.K. It was very successful.

You know, we know many similar events, whether it's CTE Week, whether it's Manufacturing Day. All of these efforts do have a galvanizing impact of bringing people together, hosting events, raising the profile and image of apprenticeship in each of these efforts. And so we're hoping that you all can help us with this, whether it's new open houses, industry events, press events and as we come together in these SEAs, you all can help us think about what other activities would be appropriate for National Apprenticeship Week.

So stay tuned for that. We're looking to nail down the date of that very soon, but we think that's going to be an important next-step. So again, if you step back and look at the 10,000-foot level, the process here is helping to kicking us off here today to this webinar, giving you that preview of events to come, getting ourselves organized this summer through our summer convenings, to elevate this work through National Apprenticeship Week and then helping to expand apprenticeship broadly to others and bring new people into the fold through the accelerator sessions later in the year.

So that's our broad process and flow over the next couple weeks and months. And we'll return in a few minutes to see if folks have questions, but I want to bring in some other voices here as well, four of your colleagues, four of your LEADERs have agreed to spend some time talking today. So we're thrilled to have – we'll kick off with Joerg Klisch, vice president for operations at MTU America. So Joerg, I'll turn it over to you.

JOERG KLISCH: Yeah. This is Joerg Klisch. Thank you very much for organizing this meeting. Let me talk a little bit about the program. So at MTU America, we produce lots of highway diesel engines for many industry applications. In an effort to strengthen our community as well as our company, we have implemented a high school apprenticeship program based on the German Vocational Education System.

That means in cooperation with our local school district and the community college. The students join the program while they are in high school during their junior and senior year. They spend about 1,000 hours in our plant and about 600 hours at the school where they get trained on the basics. During the summer break, they work actually 40 hours a week for 2 months in a row and they do this side by side with the regular work or so.

They are not separate from them. With a final exam, which is already written in the practical exam, they receive a certificate from the state, which is also recognized by the DOL. And on top of that, we issue a certificate from the German body, which is called – (inaudible). And this program is actually one of only two programs in the United States that offers an international degree.

So because we believe so strongly in apprenticeship, our company has made the commitment to become an ApprenticeshipUSA LEADER, continue in our objective of promoting the benefits of vocational education and technical training. Our program combines classroom instruction with hands-on training and is designed to help high school students who may not have the means or the interest in attending college to pursue a career in industrial manufacturing.

We are convinced that the vocational training is an early start into an unlimited career possibility. The future plans, having implemented this apprenticeship program at our manufacturing sites in South Carolina and Minnesota, MTU America will continue to encourage the expansion of similar programs in the communities and the states in which we operate working with the companies of all types to adapt, implement and register their own apprenticeship programs, thereby increasing employment skill level in the region that would attract additional industrial investment.

MTU America looks forward to work with ApprenticeshipUSA and its leadership program. Maybe just a couple benefits of the programs that we already see, one, being the students also get trained on their social skills as part of the program. The employer is exposed to the students for two years. So we don't depend on a 30-minute interview to find out if the person would fit the company culture. Third point is, we don't have to untrain and retrain culture from so-called experienced employee.

It improves your own workforce as well, because we have seen that our employees become better workers, because they have now somebody that they can teach. And we have seen a higher retention rate, because these young students become part of the family early on. So that's it from my side. Thank you very much.

MR. LADD: Great. Thanks, Joerg. Next up we have Al Crook from Zurich Insurance, Zurich North America. Al.

AL CROOK: Thanks, John. Zurich Insurance Group is a leading multiline insurer that serves its customers in global and local markets. In North America, Zurich is a leading commercial property casualty insurance provider with over 10,000 employees. And as part of the apprenticeship program, we are establishing, in North America, a first of its kind apprenticeship program for the insurance industry.

Zurich is working with William Rainey Harper College near our North American Headquarters in Schaumburg, Illinois for the administration support and curriculum design of the program. We have committed to having 100 apprentices complete the program by 2020 with our inaugural class of 20 beginning in 2016. 2015 is our development year and we're well on track to have the program rolling in the next six months.

Upon completion of the pilot program, we plan to invite other insurance industry employees to join the apprenticeship program as it evolves. And so why did I join the LEADERs program? Well, from the moment Zurich Insurance North America started our apprentice journey, I've embraced the challenge in creating, with my team here, a new staffing model within the insurance industry. And we, at Zurich, have a similar goal as the ApprenticeshipUSA program a challenge in that we want to rebrand insurance in the insurance industry as a preferred career choice.

But the apprentice program will help introduce us to a new set of candidates, a new set of employees to an insurance career. Thank you.

MR. LADD: Great. Thanks, Al. That was fantastic. Next up, we have Andrew Larson from Painter and Allied Trades. Andrew.

ANDREW LARSON: Good afternoon. And I'd like to express my appreciation in that of my General President Kenneth Rigmaiden who was previously occupied here. I want to touch on a few different things. We are one of the more traditional apprenticeship programs in that we've been in business for over 100 years and we are entirely supported by the finishing industries, which pays for everything.

We are a self-supporting model and we've experienced a lot of reduction in manpower lately, either through economic forces, which has depressed the construction industry or just by aging out of the workforce. So we are taking special initiatives to bring people into the workforce and into our apprenticeship programs and industry.

And one of the ways we're doing that is through a pre-apprenticeship, which our partnerships affiliate training programs have all around the country with school systems, with workforce investment boards, with community partner organizations to prepare people for apprenticeship, which is a commitment that somebody has to make.

And we rely on our other partners to assist with getting people driver's licenses, high school diplomas and maybe services that they need, childcare in order for them to meet that commitment, attend classes and show up on the job every day, which is the biggest demand our employers have for their workforce. We have programs around the country that right now are hitting 85 and 90 percent success rate in putting people into employment and apprenticeship programs.

And our employers in some places are even coming to get them before they're even completing the program. So the demand is great. We have a special program for veterans called PAT-VP, which is Painters and Allied Trades Veterans Program, where we are on certain bases, the U.S. Army Military bases and we start working with veterans before they actually separate from the service and run them through courses.

And when they muster out, they go directly to work for our employers and into the apprenticeship program. In fact, we just had a class graduate yesterday at Lewis-McChord with 16 graduates who are already placed. And one other aspect that we're doing with apprenticeship, which has not been done before is seeking the accreditation of our registered apprenticeship programs under higher education, under the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

And in fact, we reached a consortium of all the building trades apprenticeships, national building trades to pursue that through the Council on Occupational Education. So all of our programs will be under the Fitzgerald Act and also under higher ed, which has never been done before and brings apprenticeship in its rightful place into higher education, which is what it is for our industries. Very exciting stuff. And that should be developing within the next year. So that's about all I've got right now.

MR. LADD: Okay. Thank you, Andrew. That's great. And last, but not least, we have Clay Goodman, vice president of learning from Estrella Mountain College. Clay, I hope the storms have cleared and we can get you on here for a couple minutes.

CLAY GOODMAN: Yeah. I'll be brief. Hopefully everybody can hear me okay, but I'm sitting at an airport in Chicago waiting to fly home. So hopefully the background noise doesn't get to be too bad. But I've been part of the registered apprenticeship college completion program since the very beginning and it's been very exciting to see that it's gone this far and has this much energy behind it.

With Maricopa Community College district, located in Phoenix at Estrella Mountain Community College and at the district, we have about 20 years of experience working with apprenticeship programs and with several of our partner companies across multiple trades and industries. And on a personal note, I was an unsuccessful apprentice. I was in the iron worker's union while I was going to college, but I graduated from college before finishing out apprenticeship. But I have a great deal of appreciation for the model.

I'm extremely supportive of this concept and excited to be a part of the LEADER program. And many of you might know and it was a nice segue from the previous speaker, colleges today grew out of apprenticeship in areas like culinary, law and medicine, where people who learn those professions came through as apprentices and more formalized as we develop colleges and in addition to what we think of as traditional apprentices in construction and other trades.

At Estrella, right now we're exploring opportunities to create new apprenticeships in areas like IT and cyber security in creating even more opportunities for our students. This is an outstanding opportunity for individuals to work while they learn, earn money in the RACK (ph), using the benefits of the RACK to parlay that apprenticeship experience into a college degree. It's a perfect storm and, again, a very exciting one. So thank you for inviting me to be a part of this LEADERs program. I'm looking forward to getting to know you all very soon. Thank you.

MR. LADD: Thanks, Clay. And thanks, Andrew, Al and Joerg for your leadership, for your commitment to apprenticeship and to thank all of you on the call. Again, we can't do this without you and you're at the heart of everything we do. You know, we do think that this is going to be an exciting effort for apprenticeship and for the work that we're doing over the next few years.

This is just a quick overview of some of the immediate things that are coming it, whether it's our convenings this summer, what we hope to be a national LEADER convening here in D.C. in September as well as the National Apprenticeship Week and other sessions coming on later in the fall.

So we wanted to give that lay of the land, but think about this as the leadership group for apprenticeship expansion across the country. So I hope today has been helpful in giving you a sense of what is coming up, but I'm going to turn it back over to Eric here in a minute to talk a little bit more about some of our plans and thinking around this effort.

MR. SELEZNOW: Yeah. Thanks, John. I'm not going to talk too much longer, but if there's any other questions while you're thinking about your questions, I'll just fill in a gap here. And we'll try to answer as many questions as we can from folks. But just a couple of things, Secretary Perez has been to Germany and the U.K. researching these sort of things and learning. Our Deputy Secretary Chris Lu has been to Switzerland.

We were just in Switzerland two weeks ago, again, trying to borrow or steal or learn as much as we can. We're trying to develop a unique American apprenticeship system borrowing what we can from other models across the country, but there are certain things that are going to be uniquely American, if you will on how we develop and further drive apprenticeship. So it's a lot of learning and interest.

The secretary, next week, is going to North Carolina with Congresswoman Foxx. He's going to look at a couple of apprenticeship programs in North Carolina. He loves going out and doing that and figures that's also part of our marketing and outreach as he goes out and does that. So there's a lot of interest from our secretary on that.

One of the questions that – oh, and the other thing. This September event, again, that initial idea came from the secretary where he thought this group was very valuable to the efforts of the administration and in driving apprenticeship.

And so it was his thinking about how do we get you together in Washington at a high level event to promote that. So as we think through the fall, we're hoping to do a major event here in D.C. and we'll have to see how that – we're talking to other people about who we can get at that, but stay tuned there. One of the questions that came forward was, how are the different cabinet departments working together?

And I was just on a call this morning with our friends over at the department of commerce. It's somewhat of a national and an international effort, frankly. We're working very closely with department of commerce. Again, they focus on the economic development side, the business traction side, the direct investment in states and countries from across the globe and also in the U.S. and workforce and apprenticeship compliments all of those direct investment efforts.

So mostly the troika is Secretary Perez, Secretary Pritzker from commerce and Secretary Duncan's office. Secretary Duncan's office has helped publicize projects on using financial aid to fund apprenticeships using federal work study to fund apprenticeships. The department of labor is focused on using WIOA, Workforce Investment dollars to fund and support apprenticeships. And again, Secretary Pritzker is also one of our chief marketers. Our websites are connected.

We've been working together in developing materials on these. Across the administration – or across the government, I should say, we're developing apprenticeship programs here at the department of labor. Commerce is developing a rather robust and large apprenticeship program for their employees who are talking to our federal office of personnel management to develop an apprenticeship pathway.

So we continue to work on that. We have an inter-cabinet workgroup with nine different cabinet agencies. The secretaries meet about quarterly, but we have four or five workgroups on workforce development. One of those is apprenticeship and we lead that. And we're with department of energy, department of ed, department of defense. Every department is coming up with their own strategies about how they can drive apprenticeship.

So again, this is historic across government that we're working together on this, but there's a lot of different activities and we can drill down on these in the future so you all will know that the government – it's not just the department of labor, not just commerce, but there's a robust effort led by the administration and Secretary Perez is leading that effort. So John, do you want to take a couple of questions here that have popped up on the screen?

MR. LADD: Sure. Keep those questions coming in. And one of the ones that popped up here is, what are the expectations for organizations that work in multiple sectors? Will meetings have virtual access? So in response to that, I think we understand that often these industry distinctions are sometimes somewhat arbitrary in that you can be in healthcare and IT or manufacturing and construction. So we'll let you all self-select as to where you think you want to participate, where you think you can add value.

So we'll leave that determination to you all as to which sector you'd like to participate in. We will make sure that we try to find opportunities to make those meetings accessible for people who can't make the sessions in person.

MR. SELEZNOW: And John, I'll have you take the next question on LEADERs program linking up with apprenticeship grants. So when we announce those grants in September, we'll brief you on them. We'll make sure you know who's gotten the grants, particularly in your communities in your regions. I would ask you to whatever announcements we're in, maybe we can call upon you for either local or national quotes or support of those efforts, but we'll give you an immediate briefing when those grants come out so you can add that to your repertoire of conversations.

You know, another question, we're looking at September for the announcements of these grants. We haven't made firm decisions yet, but we're thinking about doing one big event that lifts up our grant making and announcing the grants, at the same time announcing National Apprenticeship Week.

You know, we're thinking of rolling those things together and doing some learning events here in D.C. So we're still planning on that and trying to get some go-aheads from other offices here for dates and times.

So we're shooting for the earlier part of September, but I would do a very light pencil at this point and as soon as we nail it down, we'll give you some dates for the grant announcements and whatever LEADERs event we can hold here in D.C.

MR. LADD: Right. We actually have a question for Al, if Al is still with us. Folks are interested what types of positions Zurich will be preparing apprentices for.

MR. CROOK: Yeah. It's a great question. Still here. We have – the program is two years long and they'll be – the titles during the program will be insurance apprentice until they receive their completion. Once they complete, they will be entry level, either in our claims area or our underwriting area. And that area is typically where we have the most opportunities for the more junior entry level staff and it propels them into a real chance for success within our company, having been exposed to and educated in the entire commercial insurance industry during the first two years.

So claims and underwriting are the targets as the program matures. We would fully be open to other areas where we might specialize something like an apprentice insurance major where you might find someone in finance, legal or some of our actuarial sciences. But because we're developing the program, we're starting in our sweet spot and we hope once it matures we have more opportunities in other areas, but claims and underwriting for now.

MR. BELLINO: So we are going to be taking some questions over the phone, if you want to jump in over the phone, press \*6 to unmute your line, introduce yourself, ask your question and then when you're done, use your phone's built-in mute button or press \*6 again. So if you want to jump in over the phone, press \*6, introduce yourself and then ask your question.

I think we're going to take one more question that has been typed in and then we'll turn to the phone line. John, over to you.

MR. LADD: Sure. So we have a great question around the LEADERs of opportunities to exchange ideas with European counterparts. Absolutely. You know, that's one of the benefits that we hope to get out of some of the memorandums of understanding that we've been developing with both Germany and Switzerland as well as some of the broader international work. We've been talking to a group called the Global Apprenticeship Network, which does a lot of work that is similar to the LEADERs campaign on an international level.

But we do want to look at opportunities to benchmark ourselves internationally, to look at what's happening across the globe and to have that exchange of information. So we very much hope to have those opportunities to exchange ideas, best practices with not only European, but our Canadian, Australian, our other counterparts around apprenticeship.

MR. SELEZNOW: And John, let me address another question that's up there before we go to the phones. And some great suggestions coming in. So I appreciate it. Somebody asked us who reached out to the National Network of Business and Industry Associations and they're a group that's organized with the Business Roundtable and a variety of other groups here in D.C. They've been connecting briefly.

We've had conversations with them, not apprenticeship, but that's a great question to circle back with them, to drill down a little bit more. They represent some great communities. So I appreciate that and we'll definitely follow up on that one.

MR. BELLINO: And so now I think we're going to allow people to jump in over the phone. If you have a question, press \*6, introduce yourself, then ask your question. So if you'd like to ask a question, hit \*6 now.

NED MCCULLOCH: Hi. This is Ned McCulloch from IBM. As you know, we're global. In fact, we're one of the leaders of the Global Apprenticeship Network as well as having significant apprenticeship programs in the U.K., plus the other countries you – (inaudible) – off. It actually would be helpful to us, if you're going to some of those countries, to have opportunities to collaborate with you on some of those visits so that we can both deliver our messages to some of the officials over there and make sure that we are pushing ahead as much there as we are here.

So I wanted to see if there might be some process by which we might be able to improve that collaboration outside of the United States in addition to the one that we already have going here inside the United States.

MR. LADD: Absolutely. And we'd love to work with you on that. You know, we want these exchanges to go both ways and for the benefits and opportunities to go both ways. So we'll definitely follow up with you, Ned on that. You know, one area of interest that we keep hearing around the international piece is, can we accelerate or facilitate the exchange of both trainers and apprentices internationally.

And we do see this as a great opportunity to create a little bit more prestige around apprenticeship as well by having apprentices have the opportunity to study abroad as part of their apprenticeship. We know this has come up quite a bit in some of our conversations with our colleagues. That's an area we're looking at. So we're looking at a range of issues on the international front.

MR. BELLINO: And if we have anyone else that would like to jump in over the phone line, press \*6 now, introduce yourself and ask your question. So we'll open it up to anybody that has a question over the phone.

DAVE THOMAS: Hello, John.

MR. LADD: Yes. Go ahead.

MR. THOMAS: Yeah. This is Dave Thomas. I'm the vice president/general manager here at Norfolk Ship Repair and we had a problem logging on here, but I've got myself and my apprentice managers on the line. But we've got an active apprentice program down here in the ship repair industry in Norfolk. And I didn't know how many other ship repair industry apprentice programs or companies were represented on the call.

MR. LADD: I don't know off-hand, but we can get that information.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. But we've had an apprentice program here for a number of years and just signed up here within the last week to support the LEADER and to be a recruited LEADER and to promote the apprentice program in any type of new industry. So we're here to support you in assistance required.

MR. LADD: Well, you all have been LEADERs in more ways than one. So I've been following your program for as long as you started it a few years ago. So thanks for joining in.

MR. LADD: Well folks, we're at the top of the hour here. We're starting to get a number of questions that we probably can't get to today, but we'll make sure we go through each of those questions and get back with folks. There was a great suggestion, I think here about sharing people's contact information. We'll check with you all first to make sure everybody's comfortable with doing that, but that's very much what we hope this group would be, that you'll be a resource to each other and you'd be able to build those relationships and opportunities to connect with each other.

So we'll poll you all first to make sure you're comfortable providing that contact information and make sure that we're building this LEADER community as we move forward in this effort. So Eric, I'll turn it over to you for last words.

MR. SELEZNOW: Yeah. I mean, I guess I'll give you a preview of something that's happening in July where Secretary Pritzker, Duncan and Secretary Perez will be signing joint declaration of intent to work with a Swiss Government on information and sharing on apprenticeship programs. You know, there's a lot of Swiss companies that do business in the U.S. So we're adding that. There will be a select group of leaders from Swiss companies who will participate in that.

But again, it's yet another activity. Again, we haven't gone all international on you all. We do appreciate the international connection, but we're also supporting U.S. companies, of course. But these things are all part of that effort. We have many tools in our toolbox and as the secretary is fond of saying this, there's a lot of gold to be mined here.

But in reference to a couple of the questions that I've seen come across, I think the value this group is sharing, we need to help lead and get the word out and change minds in this country about how apprenticeship can work to support the economy in the nation.

You know, there's a lot of sharing you can do amongst each other about your programs. I'm sure we can all learn. So we'll try to facilitate as much as that as possible. But without overdoing the thank-yous, we couldn't do this without your support.

It's critical of what we're doing and we look forward to your ongoing support work and working with you in some of our events in the future. You know, most of all, we know most of you folks have regular jobs where you have to pay attention to that a great deal.

And your taking time out to support this effort says a lot about you and your companies and your organizations. So thank you very much for that.

MR. LADD: Great. Thank you, Eric. But again, to echo Eric's comments, thank you for your commitment, thank you for your support. It looks like our quick impromptu poll shows 100 percent approval for sharing contact information. So we appreciate that. We'll do that as a next-step coming out of this webinar. So please stay tuned for more information about the Sectors of Excellence convenings coming to a region near you this summer.

And we look forward to working with everyone. Please don't hesitate to contact me. We've started a new email address, ApprenticeshipUSA@DOL.gov, another place where you can reach the team here.

But thank you all. I really appreciate you getting on a webinar on a Friday afternoon. Have a great summer and we'll talk to you all soon. Thanks so much.

(END)