

# Session eyes workforce development, education

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The Chronicle-Telegram

How Lorain County creates a skilled workforce for future industries was the focus on a strategic plan discussion Monday morning.

The overview meeting, ahead of more focused task force sessions, highlighted current workforce development efforts and partnerships between K-12 schools, Lorain County Community College and the county's business sector. It was the second "pillar"

discussion for the six subsections of the county's five-year Strategic Action Plan.

Alongside Monday's discussion of fostering a strong local workforce and education system, the other pillars are: promoting the availability of county resources; facilitating creative transportation solutions; housing and infrastructure needs; facilitating greater countywide collaboration; supporting innovative industry and economic development; and maintaining and enhancing the county's

natural resources.

The first pillar discussion, held on April 15, was on transportation. The next, slated for 10 a.m. May 13 at the LCCC Spitzer Conference Center, will be on housing, Dave Greenspan, Lorain County's special projects coordinator and the morning's program facilitator, said.

Lorain County Community College, celebrating its 60th anniversary, grew out of the county's desire to create its own destiny, said Tracy Green, vice president for strategic

and institutional development.

Now, decades later, the institution sees a similar opportunity ahead.

In 2019, it committed to "10,000 degrees of impact," promising 10,000 individuals would earn a degree or credential by 2025. With the 2024 graduating class getting ready to walk across the stage next month, it has exceeded its original goal a year early, she said.

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## SESSION

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The college's goal is to prepare people for where jobs are moving — finding those topics through industry partners.

She said the college's future sights are not only on burgeoning technologies but on those students who are not engaged. She said in 2023 about 47 percent of high school graduates had at least 20 college credits at graduation, but questioned how the community college could reach the other 53 percent of teens.

At the K-12 level, North Ridgeville Superintendent Roxann Caserio said the partnerships available in Lorain County, with the local college and other industries, was not something she saw in her previous districts.

North Ridgeville Schools operates the only publicly accredited STEM school in the county, she said, with all of its curriculum project-based.

Meanwhile, the Educational Service Center of Lorain County coordinates the county's business advisory council, Superintendent Franco Gallo said. The program connects

industries and higher education with local schools served by the ESC.

It also provides experiences for teachers and students in those burgeoning industries and helps districts implement new technology into their classrooms.

Years ago that was Google Classroom, Gallo said. Now, it's artificial intelligence.

Lorain County Joint Vocational School Superintendent Glenn Faircloth noted his school, which has grown to more than 2,000 ninth-through 12th-graders plus its adult learners, graduates students with industry credentials or state certifications.

TeamNEO, Lorain County Workforce Development, and JobsOhio all touched on programming or offerings to connect potential employees with the certifications and training employers need.

Mike Longo, director of Lorain County Workforce Development, offers career services for adults, as well as case management for youth ages 14-24, with more specialized programs for veterans, individuals 55 and older, those with disabilities and unemployed individuals.

TeamNEO, and its statewide counterpart, JobsOhio, are private economic development corporations; with TeamNEO serving the state's 14-county northeastern region.

Both look to incentivize job creation and increase the state or region's qualified workforce.

For more information on upcoming strategic plan meetings, including task force sessions where smaller groups will delve into issues in more detail, contact Greenspan at [dgreenspan@loraincounty.us](mailto:dgreenspan@loraincounty.us).

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