MARCH 2016

BLU EMPLOYERS IN THE NEWS

BLU employers meet with White House on work-based learning

In early February, several BLU employers met at the White House with members of the administration's National Economic Council (NEC) including Deputy Director Jacob Leibenluft; Senior Policy Advisor JJ Raynor; and Senior Policy Advisor Ryan Burke. The NEC looked to BLU to discuss strategies for developing the White House's work-based learning efforts – in particular, they were eager to hear ideas on how to make funding for work-based learning flexible enough for small and medium employers and different types of employers. BLU employers shared suggestions related to intermediary incentives, subsidies and tax credits, and long term training costs. Ultimately, the BLU employers were confident their meeting would have an impact on any action the administration takes regarding work-based learning.

Erick Ajax wins 2016 Skills Champion Award

BLU executive committee member Erick Ajax, Vice President and Co-Owner of E.J. Ajax and Sons, was awarded the 2016 Skills Champion Award at National Skills Coalition's annual Skills Summit. Erick was honored for his outstanding work to ensure our country's policymakers invest aggressively and effectively in the skills of America's workers. Erick is the first employer to receive the Skills Champion Award.

Thank you, Scott! New staff contacts

This month, BLU extends a heartfelt thank you to the organization's first full-time director, Scott Ellsworth. After nearly two years staffing BLU, Scott is returning to the manufacturing sector where he was originally an employer-leader before taking time out to help grow BLU. He is currently available to consult with local manufacturers and other employers on a range of workforce development issues. Click here to contact Scott.

During this transition, a team of National Skills Coalition staff will continue to support BLU's work in a variety of aspects. Please reach out to Jessie Hogg Leslie for general inquiries about BLU. Kermit Kaleba will staff a new BLU working group on Postsecondary Education issues like Pell Grants and Career and Technical Education policy. Katie Spiker will staff BLU's Work-Based Learning working group, which was just in DC (see below). Nicky Lauricella Coolberth will continue to work with BLU employers and the press. And Ashley Shaw will serve as point of contact for future BLU fly-ins, as well as assist you with contacting your member of Congress or other policymakers.

In addition, National Fund for Workforce Solutions staff will be available to connect BLU employers to resources that will help you build local industry partnerships around shared workforce needs. (More on this in future newsletters.)

We all look forward to continuing to work with you to further extend BLU's impact!