

## WHO WE ARE:

The NSSB is building a voluntary national system of skill standards, assessment and certification that will enhance the ability of the United States workforce to compete effectively in a global economy. These skills are being identified by industry in full partnership with education, labor, civil rights and community-based organizations. The standards will be based on high performance work and will be portable across industry sectors.

## The NSSB Recognizes the Hospitality and Tourism Industry Coalition as a Voluntary Partnership

Bringing the organization one step closer to fulfilling its mission of creating a voluntary, national skill standards system, the Board Members of the National Skill Standards Board (NSSB - <http://www.nssb.org>) voted on May 16, 2000 to recognize the Hospitality and Tourism Industry Coalition as the fourth Voluntary Partnership (VP). With the addition

groups representing the restaurant, lodging, hospitality and tourism, and amusement and recreation industry sector. The group first met on March 13, 1998 to begin the process of coalition building and gather support for skill standards development. The VP, like the former HTSSC, is composed of employer, employee, and public interest and education representatives, such as Hyatt Hotels, American Express, American Hotel & Motel Association, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), V-TECS, National Council of La Raza, and the Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education. These groups have come together to provide their input and expertise in developing skill standards that will meet the needs of the industry sector and provide the tools necessary to create a high performance workforce. The VP plans to release core skill standards in 2001.

"Skill standards for all positions...are absolutely essential if the industry is going to continue to grow and thrive both domestically and internationally," said Mr. William (Bill) Fisher, President and CEO of the American Hotel and Motel Association, and head of the new Voluntary Partnership. "Skill standards will empower employees to provide world class service to guests, which enhances guest satisfaction and the quality of life [and] is a concept whose time has come. We're pleased the public and private sectors recognize the necessity for working together to get this job done."

As the U.S. economy continues to prosper and Americans' incomes continue to rise, hospitality and tourism has become the third largest industry in the country with sales topping \$508.4 billion (*AHMA- 1998 Economic Impact Report on the Travel and Tourism Industry*). In addition, the industry has become the nation's second largest employer, paying out \$127.8

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## News Scan

### Get the Latest on State Skill Standards Information

The National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) continues to work with states across the country to promote the use of industry skill standards and to align existing state systems with the proposed national system. Here are a few upcoming events and recent developments in this effort:

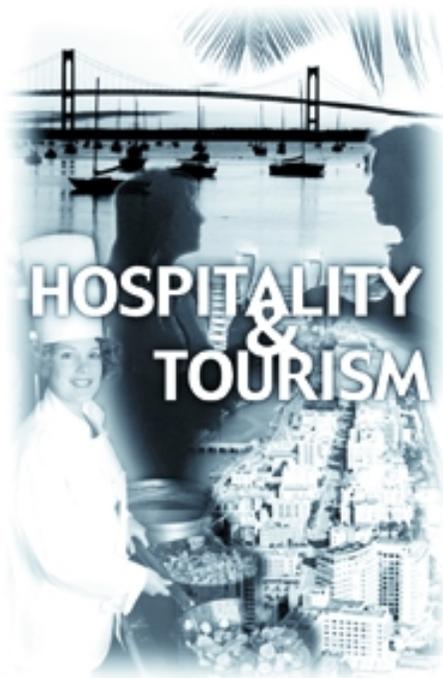
The State Skill Standards Working Group (SSSWG) will be holding its next meeting on August 23 and 24, 2000, in Des Moines, Iowa. The group will be taking the next steps in promoting translatability of skill standards and certifications amongst states. Eighteen states currently participate in this effort.

The NSSB and the National Association of Workforce Development Boards (NAWB) have agreed to partner and collaborate in (1) disseminating materials relating to the use of skill standards in local workforce development regions, (2) identifying sites for two local demonstration projects, and (3) identifying two additional sites to become joint local-state demonstration projects.

The NSSB and the National Governors' Association (NGA-<http://www.nga.org>) are developing an issue brief focused on the role and importance of skill standards in building state workforce investment systems for the New Economy.

Skill standards implementation work continues in several states, including Alaska, Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Virginia.

For additional information, please contact the NSSB at 877-843-6772; in the metropolitan Washington, DC, area at (202) 254-8628; or via E-mail at [information@nssb.org](mailto:information@nssb.org).



of this new VP, representing a sector of the economy with nearly 11 million workers that accounts for three percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), skill standards development is now underway in industry sectors covering approximately one half of all workers in the United States—a significant achievement for the NSSB given its creation only five years ago.

The new Voluntary Partnership was formerly known as the Hospitality and Tourism Skill Standards Council (HTSSC) and has a membership of nearly 100 organizations and

## Message from the Executive Director



**Edie West**  
Executive Director

The summer months are upon us and that means fun, sun, and relaxation! We hope that many of you are on vacation enjoying the sunshine with your families, despite the DC humidity (or perhaps because of it). We here at the NSSB remain hard at work doing what we were asked to do back in 1994—creating a voluntary, national system of skill standards, assessment, and certification. A lot has happened since our previous newsletter this past spring, and I want to share the good news with you.

At the NSSB Board Meeting in May, our Board Members unanimously voted to recognize as a Voluntary Partnership (VP) the Hospitality and Tourism Industry Coalition, which comprises the food service, lodging, tourism, and recreation industry subsectors. The coalition represents nearly one half of the entire workforce in their industry sector—an essential contribution to our economy's well being. There are now four VPs in operation; and, with the addition of the Utility Industry Group (UIG), this means that approximately one-half of all workers in the country are in industries that are developing voluntary skill standards systems—a

remarkable accomplishment. But it gets even better...

With years of hard work behind us, the first set of skill standards for the manufacturing and sales and service industry sectors are almost complete. Both the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) and the Sales & Service Voluntary Partnership, Inc. (S&SVP) are in the final stages of their validation studies. These studies, which require the voluntary participation of many front-line workers throughout the country, are the assurance that the draft skill standards are valid, as accurate as possible, and relevant to the different job functions. The draft skill standards were developed through previous interviews with different front-line workers. This is no small task. Both the VPs and their technical teams have invested many hours into this effort and are very close to presenting their skill standards to the NSSB for approval. Congratulations go out to them as well as to the many workers, businesses, and organizations throughout the country that have taken the time to talk to us and provide the valuable input that has made these skill standards possible.

At the Education and Training Voluntary Partnership (E&TVP), the initial research of the three concentrations within the sector—childcare providers, instructional paraprofessionals/paraeducators, and workforce trainers—is nearly three-fourths complete. Learning from the experiences of the MSSC and the S&SVP, Education and Training is on

a fast track in the skill standards development process. Look out for their skill standards in 2001.

In other news, the NSSB will hold its next Board Meeting on Tuesday, September 19, 2000, in Albany, New York, and invites the public to attend the proceedings. The Board will discuss a number of issues, including plans for future assessment and certification systems and continuing coalition building efforts in industry sectors such as communications and finance and insurance. In addition, the Board has invited over 75 distinguished members of the Business Council of New York State to attend and to discuss the impact of skill standards on the business community.

With regards to ongoing operations, the NSSB continues to provide a wealth of information and services to help you understand the importance of skill standards and offer you the opportunity to participate in our effort. One example of such an ongoing effort is the NSSB Clearinghouse, which continues to expand its holdings of skill standards-related materials and remains committed to providing you the best information available. Check it out at <http://www.nssb.org>.

Thank you very much for your continued interest in our work and that of our Voluntary Partnerships. We've come a long way in five short years and we are ready to deliver on our promise.

## Hospitality and Tourism

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billion in wages and salaries in 1998. As the industry grows, a single set of voluntary, national skill standards becomes imperative in order to make the industry competitive and accessible to all current and future workers.

This vibrant industry, which touches the everyday activities of nearly every American, stands to gain immensely by the creation of a nationally recognized skill standards system. It will help in developing a high-performance workforce that will easily and readily provide skilled workers who meet high-level industry standards, reducing recruitment costs for businesses and allowing workers to update their skills to move up in their careers. The creation

of a skill standards system will also raise the quality of services and products offered by the industry and its workers, thereby increasing customer retention and sales. In addition, the system will allow the industry to increase diversity at all levels of the workforce by offering workers excellent access to training and certification, and greater opportunity to advance through career paths to high levels of responsibility.

To make the most of its opportunities, the Voluntary Partnership must address a number of challenges that present themselves to the industry at this time. With non-seasonal turnover becoming a major factor in employment trends, the industry must develop and promote career paths within the industry to

retain qualified individuals for long-term commitment. The design of the system must be easily linked with training and certification that will be used by small and large businesses and the education community to ensure proper training of individuals. In addition, concerns about the cost of assessment and certification must be addressed, as many smaller businesses view this as a potential impediment to their participation in the system.

The Hospitality and Tourism Voluntary Partnership stands ready to meet these challenges. The VP looks forward to the participation of a diverse group of organizations that will help it create world-class skill standards that are up-to-date and forward-looking to meet the industry's changing needs.



## Education and Training Makes Remarkable Progress

The Education and Training Voluntary Partnership (E&TVP) is making progress! The technical team has completed 70 percent of the research and has reported that skill standards for the work of childcare providers and instructional paraprofessionals/paraeducators will have a major impact on and add value to the education and training field. The team is presently researching the workforce trainer concentration—identifying exactly who the trainers are and the multiple places they work—to determine how to develop skill standards.

With the initial research nearly complete, the technical team will begin to concentrate its efforts on completing the research for the Work Analysis Plan, which describes how the E&TVP will develop skill standards for the three, targeted concentrations. This work is scheduled to conclude in August 2000. Also, the plan will identify the demographic parameters needed for the focus groups of workers



from which the skill standards will be developed. These workers will describe their critical work functions, key activities, performance indicators, and requisite knowledge and skills, as has been done already in the manufacturing and sales and service sectors.

E&TVP received a large number of responses to the questionnaire that was sent out in May soliciting criteria for best-practice/high-performance organizations in the education and training field and for personal assessments of existing skill standards systems. The childcare, paraprofessional/paraeducator, and workforce trainer concentration subcommittees will establish criteria for and identify best-practice/high-performance organizations within their respective concentrations based on the information contained in the responses. In addition, the subcommittees will use information from the Work Analysis Plan to recruit people from organizations that promote the best work of childcare

providers, paraprofessionals/paraeducators, and workforce trainers for participation in the focus groups previously mentioned. These groups will convene in October 2000. The subcommittee work will include reviewing documents, developing criteria, participating in conference calls, and recruiting more people for additional focus groups. To participate in this effort, contact the E&TVP at 1-800-238-1133 extension 6326; in the metropolitan Washington, DC area at 202-393-6326; or via E-mail at [info@etvp.org](mailto:info@etvp.org).

In addition, E&TVP will continue with efforts to build out its organizational infrastructure and gather support for the main objective of developing a skill standards system for its industry sector. In the near future, additional subcommittees will become active. Among the issues to be addressed will be the development of a business and marketing plan that will chart the course of the organization's future and eventually make it a financially self-sustaining organization. E&TVP will notify its members as any additional activities get underway to secure as broad a level of participation as possible.

## MSSC Members Gain the Edge on Improving Workforce Development Activities

Hundreds of manufacturing companies are striving to improve their workforce development activities and you can too! Over 400 companies have signed up to take the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) validation survey and hundreds more are participating in focus groups to be part of an effective system that will enable them to significantly cut both workforce recruiting and training costs.

What exactly is this system? The complete MSSC skill standards system will include core and concentration skill standards for this sector, as well as assessments that will enable individuals who meet the skill standards to become certified. The MSSC, on behalf of the NSSB, will also endorse specialty skill standards that have already been developed by other organizations. This system will provide manufacturers, workers, educators and training providers, students, and community-based organizations with a clear picture of jobs in high performance workplaces and the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in those jobs. It will also

provide the tools to assess and certify those jobs' skill standards.



Earlier this summer, the MSSC reached an important milestone in the system's development when members reviewed the draft skill standards at the Semi-Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington. Members provided valuable and substantive comments on the critical work functions, key activities, and performance indicators as well as the academic, employability, and occupational/technical knowledge and skills for each of the six concentrations. The concentrations, which were defined through a rigorous process, are:

- Production
- Quality Assurance
- Logistics and Inventory Control
- Health, Safety, and Environmental Assurance
- Maintenance, Installation, and Repair
- Manufacturing Production Process Development

The next steps in the development process include completing the research and validation of the skill standards by late summer or early fall and then developing an assessment and certification plan.

Other important activities underway include:

- Development of a strategic plan for the release and dissemination of MSSC skill standards;
- Statewide system building activities to identify existing systems within which the MSSC skill standards system can apply in the following targeted states: Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin; and
- A public awareness campaign to educate the industry about the MSSC and the benefits of the proposed system.

For complete information about the MSSC's activities and about joining this effort, please visit the MSSC website at <http://www.msscusa.org>.

## NSSB Online: Working for You

As we've advanced in our mission to create a national skill standards system, NSSB Online (<http://www.nssb.org>) has been there every step of the way to provide the best skill standards information available. Over the past few months, we have added a number of features to our Web site and made some exciting improvements. At the click of your mouse, you can access information on who we are and what we do. In addition, the NSSB Clearinghouse continues to expand its extensive collection of materials and provide excellent services and useful skill standards information to the public on demand. Finally, we bring you a series of success stories that show the positive impact of skill standards on the lives of everyday individuals. We hope that these new additions and improvements will help you become better informed about our work.

Log on to our site and you will see a button for the NSSB Info Pack on the lower left column of our homepage. With the click of a mouse, you can download a wealth of information about us and what we do. Included in the Info Pack are the:

- One-page fact sheet on the NSSB
- *Skills Today*- the NSSB newsletter
- NSSB Brochure
- NSSB Clearinghouse Brochure
- 1998-1999 Annual Report
- Text of the National Skill Standards Act of 1994

Additional information will be added as needed to ensure that you stay informed on our mission and our work.

The NSSB Clearinghouse continues to grow. The directory of apprenticeships



and certifications has grown to over 250 individual descriptions. That is a dramatic increase from this spring and more are on the way. In addition, the number of states represented in the State Skill Standards Information Database has grown from four in March to 32 today. Inside, you can find information on a particular state's skill standards efforts and complete contact information for that program(s). The NSSB hopes to have information for all 50 states very soon.

We all know that skill standards have the potential to affect the lives of everyday individuals for the better. Now, check out the "What's New?" section on NSSB Online and find out how skill standards are helping a recently separated Marine sergeant obtain the training he needs to move into a demanding and rewarding career in the tool and die making trade. Find out also how a former welfare recipient with two children received computer training and met Information Technology skill standards in her field to begin a new career and join the ranks of America's middle class. The NSSB introduces this close-up series of "Profiles in Success" to highlight how skill standards can make a difference in the lives of everyday individuals across America. Check in frequently to read these and other stories that underscore the value of skill standards in the lives of workers in America.

NSSB Online is here to serve you and get you the information you need. We welcome your comments about our site and the services that we provide. Please contact us with your thoughts at (202) 254-8628 or via E-mail at [information@nssb.org](mailto:information@nssb.org).



### National Skill Standards Board

1441 L Street, NW, Suite 9000

Washington, DC 20005-3512

Tel: (202) 254-8628 / (877) THE-NSSB

Fax: (202) 254-8646

Internet: [www.nssb.org](http://www.nssb.org)

E-mail: [information@nssb.org](mailto:information@nssb.org)

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