



Celebrating Albany's Port Industry Day

Wage Center staff and partners attended the 4th Annual Port Industry Day on June 15, 2017 at the Port of Albany. Sandy Paben, CEO of Renaissance Groups, Steven Longo, Executive Director Albany Housing Authority and Lara Hammes, WAGE Center Community Engagement Coordinator had the opportunity to hear presentations and network with Port of Albany representatives, employers and community leaders who were among the participants.

Speakers featured Georgette Steffens, Chairwoman APDC, Richard J. Hendrick Sr., General Manager of the Port of Albany, Lauren K. Brand, the Associate Administrator for Intermodal System Development Marad, Jonathan Daniels, Executive Director and CEO of Mississippi State Port Authority of Gulfport and Andrew Kennedy, President and CEO of the Center for Economic Growth. Their comments and points of discussion largely focused on the effects the Federal TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Grant Program on the local and regional economy.



Andrew Kennedy discussed the idea of the region striving toward a “modern workforce” through collaboration with government and business leaders. The WAGE Center has been working with the Port of Albany to develop relationships that would benefit job seekers and both the Port as an employer and with tenants needing to hire. WAGE Center participants have been encouraged to pursue employment as Longshoremen with the aspiration of becoming members of the union, once requisite hours have been logged. Currently, there are a handful of WAGE Center participants working as needed at the Port, as a direct result of the relationship with Port of Albany representatives. Additionally, Port tenants have used the WAGE Center as a resource to receive applicants from neighborhood residents.

As the Port begins to make use of the TIGER Grant funds to expand and modernize capabilities, Kennedy talked about the area becoming a “Northeast commercial hub” with increasing warehouse and distribution capacity. He cited the location of Albany at the “nexus of two major interstates,” and rail proximity to the Port as factors that will increase the number of jobs, not only during construction at the Port, but also as cargo capacity is increased and business takes advantage of increased transportation options.

The WAGE Center is only blocks away from the Port of Albany, giving its participants, many of whom are Albany Housing Authority residents and Housing Choice Voucher recipients, a unique opportunity to be considered for employment as opportunity looks to increase during Port expansion and modernization and into the future as new business is generated.