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A Full SLATE of Resources to Get People Back To Work

The unemployment numbers are pretty staggering, but predictions are that it may get worse before it gets better. At the time of this writing, the state of Missouri is sitting at just over 9.2 percent unemployment, while the St. Louis rate is 10.5 percent. The White House recently predicted that 2010 might see a slight dip from the 9.7 percent nationwide level, but it would more than likely hover around 10 percent.

We are fortunate to have excellent resources available to those who are looking for work, and one of the best is the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment, or SLATE. This agency is a free service that puts job seekers and employers together, and they have three centers at 1520 Market Street, 4811 Delmar Boulevard., and 3901 N. Union Street.

SLATE offers many services for job seekers. There's a resource center that allows access to computers, job-searching publications, and faxing and copying services. SLATE holds workshops on writing resumes and career strategies, as well as computer or occupation-specific training. They also have regular job fairs, such as the U.S. Census jobs testing they held throughout the month of February. They focus on the next generation of workers through their UrbanWORKS program, which provides jobs and unique opportunities to at-risk children.

For those people who have had a conviction, SLATE has formed the Re-Entry One Stop Career Center, or REOS, in collaboration with Missouri Probation and Parole (Department of Corrections) and the U.S. Probation system. The ultimate goal of REOS is to keep offenders from going back to jail by providing links to employment, training, housing assistance, and substance abuse/mental health programs.

The SLATE Missouri Career Center offers businesses a variety of human resource assistance such as candidate pre-screening, recruiting, employee retention and incumbent worker training, all at no cost. They also offer a rapid response team for companies who may be closing or experiencing a downturn.

On a larger scale, SLATE's Workforce Investment Board gathers area business leaders, economic development agencies, education agencies and workforce organizations to tailor the region's approach to local workforce issues or concerns. It's a concentrated effort that strives to help area workers become self-sufficient, while benefiting the bottom lines of businesses.

It's going to take a heroic collaborative effort from all of us to get those looking for work back in the job market, and organizations that bring us all together, like SLATE,

will help get us there. For more information on SLATE, visit www.stlworks.com or call them at 314-589-8000.