

# Governor Recognizes Delaware Businesses for Commitments to Strengthening State's Workforce

*Companies partner with state agencies to engage students in career planning and experiential learning opportunities*

**Wilmington, DE** – Emphasizing the importance of the business community's engagement to improve educational opportunities for Delaware's students, Governor Markell today credited ten companies for their efforts, while urging schools and businesses to form additional partnerships.

The Governor provided details of the Success Plans and Roads to Careers (SPaRC) partnership, which involves businesses, community organizations and state agencies working together to help middle and high school students develop their career goals with the goal of providing a clear path for Delaware youth from the classroom to career opportunities. Ten employers have committed to assisting students through mentorship, job shadowing, internships, summer jobs, and other forms of engagement, while community services organizations will provide additional services to underserved youth. The effort was led by Gary Stockbridge, President of Delmarva Power and Chairman of the Delaware Workforce Investment Board.

**(more details below)**

"We know our students are more likely to transition smoothly into careers after they graduate when they have a plan and they've been given opportunities for on-the-job training," said Markell. "This initiative is perfect example of the kind of collaboration we need to see, and the kind of commitments we need from our employers to set up our students, and our

economy, for success.”

Markell outlined the effort at the Hotel Du Pont during an event he cohosted with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation to promote the importance of raising standards in Delaware’s classrooms and providing students with workplace opportunities to ensure they graduate ready for their next steps.

“While we are excited about this opportunity to help more students get the best possible education, we don’t see our involvement as community service,” said Ernie Dianastasis, Chair of Vision 2015, a public/private partnership focused on education, and the Managing Director of Computer Aid Inc. (CAI), an IT company taking part in the SPaRC initiative. “If we want the best possible workforce to grow our company, we must support our education system and help expose students to opportunities in the IT field. All of the companies involved in this effort recognize that engagement in our schools is critical to our businesses’ futures and the future of Delaware’s economy.”

Today’s event also highlighted relationships between businesses and institutions of higher education to prepare students for available jobs. University of Delaware President Patrick Harker discussed his institution’s work with JP Morgan Chase on providing a high quality workforce for the state’s growing financial services sector. In addition, Mark Brainard , Executive Vice President at Delaware Technical Community College, joined an executive at PATS Aircraft Systems to discuss a program to train students for the highly skilled work done by the Georgetown company.

**Commitments by SPaRC Partners (full list of companies below):**

**Each Employer has committed to:**

- Provide \$3,000 to purchase Career Cruising software modules – “Springboard” and “Inspire” – to help students connect and engage with local companies

- offering career development opportunities;
- Use the software modules to connect students with their own companies; and
- Offer students opportunities such as mentors, workplace visits, summer jobs, internships, and scholarships.

### **Commitments by Other Organizations:**

- Delaware Department of Education: Secure 5-7 school partners by May 2014; conduct presentations on SPaRC at each pilot school by August 2014; and provide technical assistance as needed to initiate SPaRC at their school site.
- Junior Achievement: Presentations to 150 businesses by December 31, 2014; 75 employer profiles established on SPaRC software platform by September 1, 2014; 150 e-mentors featured on SPaRC platform by September 1, 2014; 1,750 students accessing SPaRC platform by December 31, 2014; one business engagement opportunity per business identified by December 31, 2014; and 37 businesses engaging in opportunities by December 31, 2014.
- United Way of Delaware: Conduct 10 community conversations / presentations to secure Partners and advocacy for SPaRC; Engage / align 15 community organizations to commit to the implementation of 20 strategies that support SPaRC; engage 25 employers that will support aligned career exploration and readiness strategies; recruit and engage 50 employees as volunteers for SPaRC strategies conducted by SPaRC Partners; and secure \$50,000 to support SPaRC development and implementation.

### **SPaRC Companies:**

- Delmarva Power
- Chase
- AstraZeneca
- First State Manufacturing

- DuPont
- Dow Chemical
- CAI
- PSEG Nuclear LLC
- Bank of America
- Sallie Mae
- Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Bassett, Dawson & Foy, Inc.
- R.S. Widdoes & Sons, Inc.
- WJ Publishing

**Other SPaRC Partners:**

- The United Way
- The Business Roundtable
- The Rodel Foundation
- Junior Achievement
- State Chamber of Commerce
- NCC Chamber of Commerce
- Delaware Workforce Investment Board
- Department of Labor
- Department of Education
- Over 10 United Way partners
- Delaware Society for Human Resource Management