

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lana Gordon at 3:30 p.m. on February 9, 2009, in Room 711 of the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Jason Long, Office of the Revisor of Statutes  
Doug Taylor, Office of the Revisor of Statutes  
Reed Holwegner, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Ann Deitcher, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Rae Anne Davis, Deputy Secretary, Department of Commerce

The Chair introduced Rae Anne Davis who offered an overview and update on Workforce Services. (Attachment 1). She told the Committee that Workforce Development was moved to Commerce from the Department of Labor in 2005. At that time, 300 positions transferred, bringing the total number of Commerce employees to 400. Since the transfer, Commerce staff has been reduced by 21% (87 positions), despite the addition of tens of millions of dollars in new programs.

Ms. Davis said that prior to their reorganization, the workforce system failed to meet minimum federal performance standards but in the past two years, Kansas has met or exceeded all standards and is poised to do so for a third consecutive year.

Ms. Davis stressed that there were companies still looking for people and that there were jobs here in Kansas. She told of the “come home” campaign where they had developed partnerships with state schools. Reaching out to those who had Kansas ties, employers from across the state met with retiring military who had served in the state and came away with 118 job offers.

Asked if the failure of work force to meet minimum standards referred to Commerce people, Ms. Davis said that it referred to employees of local boards.

Following a question and answer session, Representative Hill thanked Ms. Davis and Commerce Secretary David Kerr who was in attendance, for their impressive actions during the layoff of employees in Emporia following the closure of the Tyson Company. Secretary Kerr then announced Ms. Davis’ departure from the Commerce Department and her move to the office of the Governor. He thanked her for her outstanding work for the Department and wished her well.

The Chair called the Committee’s attention to the copies that had been distributed of the Legislative Post Audit’s letter concerning the K-GOAL Audit of Commerce, Reviewing the Department’s Management Staffing Levels. (Attachment 2).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2009.