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## Chicago Initiative Focuses on Adult Education

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### Chicago — Oct. 20

Deputy Mayor Mark Angelson and CEOs and leaders from local employers gathered to discuss workforce and educational needs in the Chicago area. The CEOs and HR leaders are part of an organization called WorkforceChicago, which was formed to strengthen the Chicago talent pool through a more educated, skilled workforce.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel introduced and endorsed Complete the Degree via a pre-recorded video address. Complete the Degree is a Chicago-based college completion initiative focusing on adult learners, co-founded by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), Chicago Workforce Investment Council (CWIC), Illinois Education Foundation and Women Employed.

According to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, the U.S. will need 22 million new college degrees by 2018 — but will fall short of that number by at least 3 million postsecondary degrees, associates or better. In addition, the U.S. will need at least 4.7 million new workers with postsecondary certificates.

Pamela Tate, president and CEO of CAEL, explained the challenge this entails for Chicago and the rest of the nation: “Surprising as it may be, despite record unemployment, employers are still finding a shortage of the skilled help they need in this economy. It’s a huge problem for employers and it is not good for our economy, not to mention how difficult it is for the large number of unskilled, unemployed adults. We used to lead the world in the number of adults with post-secondary degrees. But the world has passed us up.”

In addition to the speeches by the deputy mayor and Tate, the CEOs from both winning companies and other Chicago-area employers spoke of their challenges and successes in educating and developing their employees. John Werrbach, president and CEO of Alexian Brothers Medical Center, and Ron Bullock, chairman, and Martin

Swarbick, CEO, of Bison Gear & Engineering Corp., elaborated on their employee learning and development practices and how investing in this has given them a competitive advantage. Jeffrey Malehorn, president and CEO of GE Capital Commercial Distribution Finance, addressed the business impact of investing in the workforce, using GE as an example. Angelson presented both Alexian Brothers Medical Center and Bison Gear & Engineering Corp. with the WorkforceChicago Award for their exemplary practices in learning and development.

*Source: WorkforceChicago*



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