



NEWS RELEASE

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Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao to keynote Strategic Skills Initiative Summit in Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS (July 2, 2007) -- U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao will be the keynote speaker at a Department of Workforce Development conference next week devoted to Indiana's efforts to address skills and occupational shortages, officials announced today.

The Strategic Skills Initiative Summit is scheduled for Wednesday, July 11 at the Garrison Conference Center at Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis from 9:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m.

Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels will also speak at the event and introduce Secretary Chao. Other industry experts are scheduled to speak on workforce and economic development topics.

The summit will bring together regional workforce and economic development officials from throughout Indiana who have been implementing projects designed to address local skill and occupational shortages. One year ago, the state provided the 11 Regional Workforce Boards with approximately \$15 million in grants to begin the process. The grants were awarded after each region completed an exhaustive review of skill and occupational projections and proposed solutions to address projected shortages.

The summit is designed to review lessons learned and success stories, and provide officials with a status report on many of the initiative's projects currently being implemented. Projects have been funded to address projected shortages in advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, health care, orthopedics, biotechnology, entrepreneurship, logistics and hospitality.

Also to be discussed at the Summit will be the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development or WIRED grant awarded last year to North Central Indiana. The WIRED initiative is a project of the U.S. Department of Labor and is designed to encourage regional communities to partner together and leverage their collective public and private sector assets and resources to develop a more highly skilled workforce.

Elaine L. Chao is the nation's 24th Secretary of Labor and the first Asian-American woman appointed to a President's cabinet in U.S. history. She was confirmed by the United States Senate on January 29, 2001.

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Media coverage is invited.