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WPWDB to Hold 2023 Hybrid Annual Meeting on June 22, 2023 Emerging Workforce Trends; *Utilizing Technology & Private Partnerships*

White Plains, NY (June 5, 2023) – County Executives **George Latimer** of Westchester and **Kevin Byrne** of Putnam invite businesses, partner agencies, community organizations, and educational leaders to participate in the Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board’s (WPWDB) **2023 Hybrid Annual Meeting** to be held on **Thursday, June 22, 2023 from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.** There will be breakfast and networking at 8:30 a.m. followed by the WPWDB meeting. The annual meeting program will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m.

This year’s program will feature keynote speakers **Dana Politis**, *Associate Commissioner, Workforce Development*, NYS Dept. of Labor and **Matt Berndt**, *Director of Job Search Academy*, Indeed.

Dana Politis and her team will demonstrate a new program that uses Virtual Reality (VR) technology for workforce training and career path exploration, as a service to both job seeker and employer customers. Career Center customers will be able to “try out” multiple jobs and/or trainings without leaving the career center, saving them precious time and money.

Matt Berndt will present the details of a groundbreaking partnership between Indeed’s Job Search Academy and the Westchester-Putnam Career Center Network that will expand training and workshop services for customers. This private/government partnership is the first collaboration of its kind between a workforce board and Indeed in the country. Matt will also address the potential for developing custom workshops for the under-utilized workforce who have barriers to employment.

Westchester County Executive **George Latimer** said: “We are excited that the NYS Dept. of Labor is leading the charge on integrating Virtual Reality into our career centers. It’s especially valuable for our youth to experience the day to day reality of many different kinds of jobs before committing to an expensive education or training – and it’s what’s necessary to keep Westchester looking forward.”

“Incorporating new technology and new partnerships with private sector businesses like Indeed will be a great benefit to residents,” adds Putnam County Executive, **Kevin Byrne**. “The Job Search Academy will give them access to the latest cutting-edge workshops and training for a successful job search, and help us conserve government funding for the programs and personal service customers need.”

“The innovative use of VR technology and private sector partnerships within our career centers will add new tools to the toolbox. They won’t replace what we are doing, but will give staff additional ways to serve our customers,” stated **Thom Kleiner**, WPWDB Executive Director. “These tools will help our customers save time and money exploring new career paths and getting the training they need.”

Registration: This event will take place both **in-person** and **virtually** using WebEx video conferencing technology. Breakfast will be served. All are welcome to attend in-person, but also may attend virtually! Please note the 2 ticket types when registering at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wpwdb-2023-hybrid-annual-meeting-tickets-645435403667>.

THE WESTCHESTER-PUTNAM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WPWDB) is comprised of leaders and staff of state and county government agencies, non-profits, public education, and the private sector who work together to strengthen the partnerships between business, education, and service providers within the “Career Center Network” to meet the needs for a skilled workforce. The WPWDB pursues funding opportunities and develops model programs and leading-edge practices. The “Network” is made up of four Career Centers (White Plains, Mount Vernon, Peekskill, and Carmel) as well as partner agencies that provide state-of-the-art technology, training, resources, and services to youth, adults and employers. For more information, visit www.westchesterputnamonestop.com.

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