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New Talent Attraction and Retention Initiative, ImaginePittsburgh.com Seeks to Fill the “Skills Gap,” is a “Help Wanted Home Run” for Job Seekers, Pittsburgh Employers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PITTSBURGH - (June 11, 2013) – A re-imagined and re-made Pittsburgh region faces a new challenge today – more open jobs than people with the skills to fill them – 30,000 open jobs in all, almost enough to fill [PNC Park](#), the home of the Pittsburgh Pirates. Today, one of the country’s premier civic leadership organizations, the [Allegheny Conference on Community Development](#), chose the ballpark as the backdrop for today’s launch of a new talent attraction and retention initiative designed to fill the so-called “skills gap.”

“From the worst of economic times and record-high, devastating unemployment in 1983, Pittsburgh is ready to be re-discovered as *the* place to “advance your career and build a life you’ll love,” said Allegheny Conference CEO Dennis Yablonsky. “We have almost 30,000 open jobs across a diverse economy and tens of thousands more to come between now and 2020, just seven years away. We are launching a major three-phase initiative to address this challenge with **ImaginePittsburgh.com**.”

Great Jobs, Great Life ... in Pittsburgh!

ImaginePittsburgh.com is a “virtual concierge” designed to introduce natives and newcomers to emerging opportunity in Pittsburgh: great jobs and great life. A one-of-a-kind among regions across the U.S., the website is the core of a new and major talent attraction program for the 10-county Pittsburgh region. The interactive, multi-media website features an upgraded job search engine that provides a searchable database of every job posted online in the 10 counties surrounding Pittsburgh. The site provides information about major industry sectors including advanced manufacturing, energy, financial and business services, health care and life sciences and information and communication technology and retail and hospitality, along with profiles of employers in the Pittsburgh region.

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“We hope to make it easier for everyone within our region and around the world to explore the opportunity that’s being created in the Pittsburgh region,” said Yablonsky. “Not only are companies investing and creating jobs here, but the Baby Boom generation is nearing retirement, which will add to the demand for skilled workers to replace them. We don’t have a crisis today, but we can see one emerging by the end of the decade if we don’t start now to do a better job of educating, training, elevating and attracting skilled workers to meet the demand.”

Meet the “Neighbors”

The new ImaginePittsburgh.com is much more than a jobs board. It is designed to engage people with a dynamic sample of real Pittsburgh and its people – both authentic and welcoming, and sometimes a bit quirky.

The site features “ImaginePittsburgh.com Neighbors” – dozens of mid-career professionals who are natives of the region, transplants to the region or “boomerangers” who have returned home. The neighbors share their stories to help others recognize the value of living and working in Pittsburgh.

Bryan Brantley, a 34-year-old attorney at McGuireWoods LLP and one of the 50-plus “Neighbors” currently featured on ImaginePittsburgh.com says, “Pittsburgh is a small city with big city ambiance. You never feel like a stranger here. When I came to Pittsburgh for law school over a decade ago, I didn’t expect to stay. But there are big career opportunities here in a city that’s both vibrant and affordable.”

Another transplant to the region and one of the “Neighbors,” Anne Marie Toccket has helped to found a nonprofit organization in Pittsburgh to support indigenous women and families in Peru who handcraft textiles. The proceeds help to provide access to healthcare, community education and sustainable tourism in Ollantaytambo and the surrounding high Andean communities. Of her decision to live, work and play in Pittsburgh, Toccket says, “I’ve been to 40 countries and I chose Pittsburgh. It’s a place where you can create institutions.”

The Allegheny Conference developed the new talent attraction and retention initiative at the urging of its members – leaders of the region’s major corporations and businesses – who expressed concern about their ability to attract and retain a variety of workers. In Phase One, the initiative will focus on mid-career professionals outside the region. Phase Two will seek to address mid-skill occupations by connecting job seekers to resources to get training for occupations that demand more than a high school degree but less than a four year college degree. Phase Three will focus on career awareness among young people, targeting students in grades 7 through 12.

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“The population of our region is growing again and it’s even getting younger, but it’s not happening fast enough to meet the increasing demand for skilled workers,” said Laura Fisher, senior vice president at the Allegheny Conference and overseer of its Workplace program. In addition to reaching out to talented professionals around the world, we have work to do to encourage young people in our region to get the skills that are going to be in demand in the years to come.”

A Human Resources Solution for Pittsburgh Employers to Attract, Retain Talent

Dozens of Pittsburgh region employers have stepped up to sponsor the new initiative, which was developed in part with the generous support of the Alcoa, Benedum, BNY Mellon, and R.K. Mellon foundations. Sponsors are profiled on the site in stories and with videos of employees who are living and working in the Pittsburgh region.

A benefit to employers is the ability to connect with job seekers using the site who elect to share their LinkedIn profiles and contact information. Employers can also access data analysis about site users and the job search engine. For human resources professionals, ImaginePittsburgh.com is part of a solution for presenting Pittsburgh and acclimating professionals who are re-locating to the region for work.

Founding sponsors of the new ImaginePittsburgh.com include [BNY Mellon](#), [PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.](#), and [UPMC](#) (University of Pittsburgh Medical Center) – three of the Pittsburgh region’s largest private sector employers. “ImaginePittsburgh.com is a perfect partner for BNY Mellon as we look to attract new talent to the Pittsburgh region,” said Katie Heinritz, vice president-director of global campus relations at financial institution.

To punctuate the launch of the site, ImaginePittsburgh.com will join forces with the [Allegheny Trail Alliance](#) for [Point Made!](#), a cycling celebration of the completion of the Great Allegheny Passage on Saturday, June 15. This 335-mile, no-cars-allowed biking and hiking trail links Washington, D.C. to Pittsburgh.

Gathering on the [Hot Metal Bridge](#), itself an icon of Pittsburgh’s history as steelmaker to the world, cyclists riding from Washington, D.C. will join will ImaginePittsburgh.com “Neighbors” and residents for the final leg of the ride to [Point State Park](#), the western terminus of the Great Allegheny Passage. Hundreds of riders will receive vintage-style ImaginePittsburgh.com bike bells and will ring them in concert as they enter downtown –celebrating the completion of the trail as a regional asset and international tourist attraction, as well as Pittsburgh re-made and its opportunities, as showcased on ImaginePittsburgh.com.

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