

### **Mo Counties Working Toward Certification**

#### **News**

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The Missouri Department of Economic Development has announced 20 more counties are working towards becoming designated Missouri Certified Work Ready Communities.



Three of them are in north central Missouri: Grundy, Livingston, and Chariton. And state officials report they will have 24 months to achieve certification status.\*

The Certified Work Ready Communities program is a voluntary initiative designed to strengthen local economies and give counties what's considered a competitive advantage in attracting businesses and new jobs. It links workforce development to education; aligns economic development needs of communities; matches appropriate applicants to jobs based on skill levels; and strengthens and grows businesses.

\*(17 other counties are Barry, Barton, Boone, Cole, Cooper, Gasconade, Greene, Howard, Laclede, Lawrence, Moniteau, Monroe, Newton, Phelps, Randolph, Vernon and Washington are working toward the designation.)

13 (Thirteen) other counties began the review process in January toward receiving the designation. Among them from rural north Missouri are Adair and Linn. (Others: Butler, Cape Girardeau, Clay, Franklin, Henry, Howell, Jefferson, Pettis, Ripley, Saline and St. Francois counties.)

Jasper County of southwest Missouri is not only the lone county in the state to achieve Certified Work Ready Community designation, but it is said to be the first in the nation.

Earning Certified Work Ready Community status assures that local workforces have the talent necessary to staff existing jobs and master innovative technologies that jobs of the future will require. Each designated community gathers local support and commitment; then applies for the Work Ready Community designation.

Developed by ACT, which is known for its college admission tests and workforce training programs, the designation is conferred by the Missouri Workforce Investment Board (MoWIB) It is based on criteria established by the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center. Acting Director of Missouri economic development Mike Downing stated businesses demand a talented and well-trained workforce. He considers applying for this designation is evidence of a counties' commitment to reaching education, workforce, and economic development goals that make their communities a desirable place for companies looking to expand or relocate.