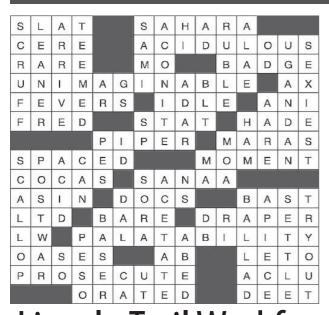
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vestment Board, Lincoln Trai Workforce Investment Board and Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board wil hold a virtual public hearing to receive feedback on the FY26-FY29 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Regional Plan on Wednesday, April 16 at 10 am. This plan encompasses workforce development planning for the 33-county region that makes up the Bluegrass Lincoln Trail, and Northern Kentucky Workforce Development Areas. The draft plan is available for review and comment at NKADD.org and NK careercenter.org. To register for the hearing, visit NKADD.org. Questions or comments regarding the plan may also be submitted to correy.eimer@nkadd.org by 4 pm April 22, 2025.

coming years through collaboration with

SEE LINCOLN/PAGE B5

Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board focuses on collaboration to shape future

thriving workforce, like the one we have here in the

Lincoln Trail region, doesn't happen on its own. It requires a collective effort, including strong employers who draw talent to the area, top-notch educational and training institutions, workforce development organizations to

facilitate quality partnerships between employers and prospective employers and leaders that can help attract business and address

overarching obstacles. To ensure these key components

work together seamlessly, it's essential to have a group of committed community leaders focused on the details of these relationships and the continued

growth of our region's workforce. This is the mission of the Lincoln Trail Workforce **Development Board** (LTWDB), a board I've had the privilege of serving on since 2018 and currently chair. LTWDB is made

up of 25 business and community leaders from across Central Kentucky, working to oversee career centers, youth services and employment and training initiatives funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Additionally, the board fosters relationships with economic development and employer communities, encourages private sector involvement in workforce development and collaborates with local education and training institutions.

While I am proud of the progress we've made in these areas, there is

still much work ahead. A key metric our board closely monitors is the **Labor Force Participation** Rate in the region, which reflects the percentage of the working-age population actively engaged in the labor force. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 63% of the U.S. population over the age of 16 is in the labor force, and in Kentucky, that number stands at 59.2%. However, when we average the labor force participation rates of the eight counties in the Lincoln Trail region, the rate drops to around 57.5%. Even more concerning, the average

all. Key challenges to economic development in our region include

part of the workforce at limited access to childcare, transportation, affordable housing and mental health or substance abuse issues. These are critical issues that LTWDB will focus

on addressing in the

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