

# It's the time for March Madness — workforce style

PITTSFIELD — It's the time of year when even the most casual sports fans' thoughts turn to the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament, otherwise known as March Madness.



**Heather Boulger**

*Inside the Job Market*

In offices all over the country, employees will be filling out their brackets in hopes of choosing the ultimate winner and securing bragging rights with their coworkers. While the obsession with college basketball may seem like an unwelcome distraction at work, nearly one in four companies encourage their employees to celebrate the annual NCAA tournament. Fifty-three percent of employees celebrate sporting events like March Madness with coworkers; 39 percent say it supports a healthy mix of work and play; 27 percent say the tournament fosters teamwork; and 25 percent say it offers a nice distraction from the daily grind.

But let's go beyond basketball. Although we have been following the college teams and admiring their tenacity and spirit, we're not mad in March at the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board just busy as we prepare for a frenzy of organized activity.

It's our hope that initiatives occurring in March, April and the months ahead will benefit you and meet your expectations for workforce success. There is no doubt that we are on the winning team.

In thinking about BOREB and the myriad of programs it offers, we take great pride with the initiatives that are made possible through the efforts of a strong team that includes staff, corporate partners, boards of directors, committees, and our community partners. Here are some examples that confirm the belief that we can win as a strong team.

**• Job Fair:** We're giving employers and potential employees the opportunity to meet while reviewing resumes and filling out job applications. Berkshire and Berkshire Community College are hosting a Career Fair from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 29 in Paterson Field House at Berkshire Community College's campus at 1350 West St. in Pittsfield.

To prepare, the BerkshireWorks Career Center will be hosting a Job Club event on Wednesday, March 22 that will help outline job fairs "do's and don'ts." Several workshops will also take place on Monday, March 27 that will address how to create your resume and interview more effectively, and how to optimize your online job application. For more information, visit [Berkshire.com](http://Berkshire.com) and BerkshireWorks.org.

**• Jobs4Youth Campaign:** Employers, we need your help! Please support our youth, grow our economy

and enhance the region's workforce. Sponsor a young person. Just \$2,000 can provide a young person with a six-week summer work experience that will greatly impact their future career pursuits, personal aspirations and lifetime self-sufficiency.

Here are some other possibilities: Serve as a corporate sponsor to help expand and sustain youth programming. Participate as a host employer by providing low-income youth with a subsidized work experience. Or hire a young person between the ages of 14 and 21 directly to help shape their future and help the region qualify for additional resources. Information: Email [youth@berkshireREB.org](mailto:youth@berkshireREB.org). Interested young people should contact their school's guidance counselor to see if they qualify.

**• Training opportunities for unemployed individuals:** BerkshireWorks will hold an Intro to Computers course from 2 to 4 p.m.

on Wednesday, March 22. Basic keyboarding, operating a mouse, using flash drives and basic computer operation will be discussed. Pre-register by calling 413 499-2220 ext. 110. BOREB will hold advanced manufacturing training session on wastewater treatment Monday, March 27; a Hoisting 3A/1C Prep Class on Wednesday, April 5; and Introduction to Paper and Pulp on April 24-26 and May 1-2. Information: contact Sara at 413.442.7177 ext.144.

**• Hallof Fame: BOREB** has been recognizing some major players among its outstanding volunteers and community leaders. Andrew Frinks from General Dynamics, Arthur Milano from Berkshire Health Systems, and Daniel Korte from Lee High School were recognized for their outstanding leadership on March 9.

**• Community happenings:** Berkshire Community College will hold its Spring Open House from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March

## Boulger

FROM PAGE 1

guests are invited to campus to hear from current students about their experiences, and take a campus tour. Information breakout sessions will take place on paying for college, transferring to a four-year school and on pursuing internships and career opportunities. Information: [BerkshireCC.edu/openhouse](http://BerkshireCC.edu/openhouse).

**• EmployNorth Berkshire:** This is an initiative designed to meet local employers' needs.

Applicants must live in North Berkshire and have either a high school diploma or the equivalent. Information: Geoff Pawlowski at 413 663-7588 ext. 22.

**• BerkshireWorks Community Connector Program:** This program helps participants learn about assistance with heating fuel and food costs, energy savings programs, free income tax preparation, money management/budgeting, and a jobs/education/training fund. It takes place at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, March 28. TO reserve a spot call 413 499-2220 ext. 110.

**• The Rally Continues:** Celebrating, educating, and networking are in store for you. BOREB is your "final four" business resource for labor market information, training grants, youth programs, and connecting to employment opportunities. No madness, just the BOREB and partnering efforts that can help create your winning team. Thanks to you who make it possible.

*Heather Boulger is the executive director of the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board in Pittsfield.*