LWDB 20, CareerSource Research Coast (CSRC) Workforce Readiness Taskforce QUARTERLY REPORT

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Report quarter: Quarter 2, 2026

Date of meeting: June 18, 2026

Report prepared by: Christina Coble, CSRC Business Services Manager

Local workforce development board contact: Christina Coble, Business Services Manager

Date 06/23/2026

B. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organization	Industry or Education Organization	Contact Information
Aliesha Seitz	St. Lucie Public Schools	St. Lucie Public Schools	772-449-5559 Vashitie.seitz@stlucieschools.org
Lana Barros (Matthew Patterson attended as designee)	Martin County School District	Martin County School District	772-219-1200 barrosl@martinschools.org
Linda Fitzpatrick	Keiser University	Keiser University	772-398-9990 lfitzpatrick@keiserunniversity.edu
Christi Shields	Indian River County School District	Indian River County School District	772-564-5006 christi.shields@indianriverschools.org
Jennifer Williams	Treasure Coast Builder's Association	Skilled Trades	workforce@treasurecoastba.com
Jennifer Hendry	Malibu Saltwater Boats	Marine	jhendry@malibuboats.com

Erica Navarro	Derecktor Shipyards	Marine	enavarro@derecktor.com
Kevin Kates	Rock Solid Yacht Services	Marine	kevin@rocksolidys.com
John Haggerty	Chapman School of Seamanship	Marine Education	j.haggerty@chapman.org
Robert McKeen	Marine Industries Association of the Treasure Coast	Marine	info@mckeengroup.com
Tracey McMorris	CareerSource Research Coast	CareerSource Research Coast	tmcmorris@careersourcerc.com
Christina Coble	CareerSource Research Coast	CareerSource Research Coast	ccoble@careersourcerc.com
Jennifer Eimann	CareerSource Research Coast	CareerSource Research Coast	jeimann@careersourcerc.com
Kurt Hawker	CareerSource Research Coast	CareerSource Research Coast	khawker@careersourcerc.com
Mitch Kloorfain	CareerSource Research Coast	CareerSource Research Coast	mkloorfain@careersourcerc.com
Maureen Harry	Keiser University	Healthcare Education	mharry@keiseruniversity.edu
Anne Everly	Florida Department of Education	Registered Apprenticeship	Ann.everly@fldoe.org
Tamara Staley	United Against Poverty	Non-profit community partner	tstaley@unitedagainstpoverty.org
Erin Bomengen	Lifescale Analytics	Information Technology	ericbomengen@lifescaleanalytics.com

B. SUMMARY REPORT

1. Summary analysis of the local labor market based on the industry representative needs and education offerings. (Provide summary)

This quarter's meeting focused on the marine services sector, delving more deeply into the needs and challenges of this industry from an employer and educator perspective.

Christina Coble, CSRC Business Services Manager, presented brief labor market information for the marine industry. She stated that the Treasure Coast is home to one of the most robust marine industry clusters in the country. The boatbuilding industry in the region has grown significantly over the last decade, making it the third largest manufacturing region of recreational boating in the U.S., with more than 20 boat and parts manufacturers stretching from Martin to Indian River Counties.

The economic impact is substantial. Florida leads the nation in boating activity. Florida generates $27.2 billion in recreational boating economic activity and supports 109,000 jobs — a 33% and 19% increase respectively from 2018.

Additional and more detailed LMI was provided via email following the meeting, as the agenda was time constrained.

2. Information on priority industry sectors and occupations for the local area. (Provide summary)

The marine sector is an emerging sector for CSRC and a focus in its regional partnership with CareerSource Palm Beach County. The industry is unique in that it overlaps with other industries, particularly the skilled trades, automotive and aviation, so trained workers may bounce between these industries.

As a biproduct of the need for skilled marine employees, the Chapman School of Seamanship has been providing marine education in Stuart for over 50 years. John Haggerty, Director of Operations, provided an overview of their course offerings and outcomes.

Mr. Haggerty presented the following information to the taskforce:

Organization Overview:

Chapman School of Seamanship is a 54-year-old 501(c)(3) nonprofit institution focused on marine education. Mr. Haggerty joined the school approximately two years ago with a primary mandate to develop workforce development programs

aligned with the needs of the marine industry.

Strategic Direction:

Mr. Haggerty identified a significant gap in the marine industry: employers struggling to source qualified employees. In response, the school made a deliberate strategic pivot toward short-term, industry-aligned certification programs. Key principles guiding this approach include:

- Programs must be short enough for prospective students to commit to
- Graduates must be job-ready and deliver value from day one
- Certifications must come from industry-recognized bodies, not solely from Chapman
- Programs are added only when genuine employer demand is confirmed

Current Program Offerings:

The school's longest program is nine weeks. All programs are designed for rapid entry into employment. Current and upcoming offerings include:

- Yamaha Marine Technician Certification
- NMEA Marine Electrical Certification
- ABYC Certification Program
- Professional Mariner Training
- Marine Detailing Course
- Upcoming: Yamaha Rigging Certification – Launch October 2026 and Volvo Penta Inboard Program – Starting January 2027

Mr. Haggerty stated that in order to ensure programs align with real employer needs, he maintains active involvement across multiple marine and business organizations:

- Board of Directors, Marine Industries Association
- Board of Directors, Martin County Business Development Board
- Chair of Workforce Development, American Refit Council
- Member, International Yacht Brokers Association (licensed yacht broker)
- Licensed Master Captain

This network provides a broad cross-section of employer perspectives from yacht builders and CEOs to brokers and refit operators informing which programs the school adds to its portfolio.

Workforce Development Mission & Student Outcomes:

A central theme of this presentation was the school's commitment to providing young people with a clear career pathway. Key points raised:

- Many young people currently lack direction or focus; short-term vocational programs can provide a visible roadmap
- Marine careers offer a path to financial independence, including homeownership, that many in the younger generation feel are out of reach

- The goal is to help students transition from outside the industry to employed, productive professionals within weeks
- A four-year apprenticeship program is anticipated in the future; the school intends to support and participate in that, but the current focus remains on short-entry programs

Mr. Haggerty noted that the school's approach, tying education directly to verified industry needs, aligns closely with the purpose of the Workforce Development Council. He emphasized that programs are not added for tuition revenue alone, but only when employer demand and student benefit can both be demonstrated.

3. Information on the status of existing talent pipelines for in-demand occupations. (Provide summary)

The meeting transitioned to a panel discussion featuring a cross-section of representatives from the local marine industry, convened to shed light on the sector's significance and dynamics in the Treasure Coast region.

Christi Shields, Workforce Readiness Taskforce Chairperson, introduced the panel participants and their industry roles:

- Jennifer Hendry – Regional HR Manager, Saltwater Malibu Boats
- Kevin Kates – Owner, Rock Solid Yacht Services
- Robert McKean – Executive Director, Marine Industries Association of the Treasure Coast (MIATC)
- Erica Navarro, Director of Human Resources, Derecktor Shipyards

Overall, the panel focused on the strength of the Treasure Coast marine industry and the workforce challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

Industry Overview:

- The Treasure Coast has one of the strongest marine industry clusters in the United States, with more than 20 boat and marine parts manufacturers across Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River counties.
- The region is the third-largest recreational boat manufacturing area in the country.
- Florida leads the nation in recreational boating, generating $27.2 billion in economic activity and supporting 109,000 jobs, representing significant growth since 2018.

Building Awareness and Attracting Talent:

Participants emphasized the need to better connect people's interest in boating, fishing, and outdoor recreation with career opportunities in the marine industry.
Key strategies discussed included:

- Promoting marine careers as pathways for long-term growth and advancement.
- Partnering with organizations such as the Treasure Coast Builders Association to leverage existing trades awareness programs and career events.
- Increasing visibility at career fairs through hands-on demonstrations, tools, and interactive displays.
- Expanding digital outreach through youth-focused content, including MIATC's "Pelly" YouTube campaign.
- Introducing skilled trades and workforce career options to students earlier, ideally by sophomore or junior year of high school.

Expanding the Talent Pool Through Transferable Skills:

Panelists agreed that the marine industry should recruit from adjacent industries such as:

- Construction
- Automotive
- Aviation
- Manufacturing

Valuable transferable skills include:

- Mechanical aptitude
- Problem-solving ability
- Reading technical drawings
- Safety awareness
- Electrical and DC power systems knowledge

Aviation workers were viewed as particularly well-suited due to their attention to detail and regulatory discipline. However, marine employers noted that customer-service etiquette and professionalism aboard yachts are critical and not always present in candidates from other industries.

Workforce Challenges:

Discussion highlighted that:

- The Treasure Coast's technical workforce is shared among multiple industries and remains relatively limited.
- Workers frequently move between marine, aviation, and manufacturing sectors depending on market conditions.
- The industry's long-term solution is not competing for the same workers but growing the overall talent pipeline.

Mentorship and Knowledge Transfer:

- Participants stressed the value of experienced workers in training the next generation:

- Veteran technicians possess significant institutional knowledge that is difficult to replace.
- Employers face challenges balancing the cost of having senior employees mentor others versus performing billable work.
- Capturing and transferring expertise before retirement occurs is a major workforce priority.
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Employee Retention:

Retention was identified as being driven by more than compensation alone. Important factors include:

- Fair pay
- Recognition and appreciation
- Trust and loyalty between employees and management
- Strong workplace culture
- Opportunities for mentorship and skill development
- Encouraging employees to take ownership of their work

Key Conclusions:

- Increase collaboration between marine employers, schools, and trade organizations.
- Use more engaging and youth-focused recruitment methods.
- Introduce trade and technical career pathways earlier in high school.
- Recruit workers with transferable skills from related industries.
- Expand the overall technical workforce rather than competing for the same talent.
- Preserve institutional knowledge through mentorship programs.
- Strengthen retention through culture, appreciation, trust, and career development.

The meeting concluded with recognition that many workforce challenges discussed in the marine sector are shared across industries, making ongoing collaboration valuable for regional workforce development efforts.