

Hockaday, Eagles chosen for state business, education board

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A state coalition of business and education groups has selected two North Coast representatives to help develop materials encouraging the development of a more skilled workforce for businesses throughout California.

Former acting California Education Secretary Scott Himmelstein picked Garry Eagles, superintendent of the Humboldt County Office of Education, and J Warren Hockaday, CEO of the Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce, to participate in a statewide dialogue on how changes in education programs and policy can help foster

more economic growth.

Himmelstein, a recent appointee to the California Community College System Board of Governors, said he chose officials from Humboldt County to be part of the panel because of the county's current and ongoing efforts to focus education on vocational and technical skills.

"There appears to be energy here around that," he said.

Starting in February, the panel, which will consist of business and education leaders from 10 to 12 communities, will meet three times over eight months to discuss programs and practices, and share resources. The panel will also meet with members of the state Legislature to discuss policy.

Himmelstein said that by August, his office hopes to release materials on its Web site outlining ways to create resources, internship programs, and funding opportunities.

Eagles said this will be an opportunity to share Humboldt's efforts in this area, as well as to learn how other communities address these issues, and to develop statewide partnerships.

"Because we're rural, we've actu-

ally entered into some partnerships and programs that larger areas are unable to pull off," he said, citing vocational programs already in place at high schools in the area, as well as data collected by the county's Workforce Investment Board that identifies sustainable job markets.

Hockaday added that other communities may have resources Humboldt hasn't tapped into.

"We don't necessarily have to reinvent the wheel," he said.

Eagles agreed. He said he hopes to make partnerships with other business communities that will translate into both bringing more jobs and businesses into Humboldt County and providing a network for students wanting to leave the area for work.

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Eagles



Hockaday