

7,870 ride-share slots declared available for applicants — LTFRB

THE Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has opened up the application process for 7,870 transport network vehicle services slots, citing the need to expand public transportation capacity.

In a statement over the weekend, the LTFRB said it released Board Resolution No. 065 Series of 2022, which set the quota at 7,870 units for accredited transport network companies (TNCs) seeking to expand their fleets.

Some 7,000 slots are up for grabs in the National Capital Re-

gion (NCR), 500 units in Region V (Bicol Region), 220 units in Region III (Central Luzon), and 150 units in Region VI (Western Visayas).

According to the LTFRB, the slots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Applicants will need to register to an online system before personally filing the application at the LTFRB. Application filing for slots outside of Metro Manila will be scheduled by the Regional Franchising and Regulatory Office.

Required documentation includes four copies of the verified application form to be accessed at www.ltfrb.gov.ph; a photocopy of the official receipt and certificate of registration (if the vehicle is mortgage, only applicants with certificates of conformity will be considered); and proof of Filipino citizenship, such as a passport or birth certificate.

The formal offer of evidence is to be submitted five days before the scheduled hearing. Other documentary requirements include proof of existence of a

garage; proof of financial capability; 5R photograph of each unit to be applied for; Department of Trade and Industry business name registration; Bureau of Internal Revenue Certificate of Registration to offer transport services or proof of filing; Certificate of accreditation with the accredited TNC; National Bureau of Investigation and police clearance of authorized driver; proof of publication; affidavit of publication; copies of publication; and affidavit of attestation. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

US healthcare outsourcer seen expanding PHL footprint

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said it is currently facilitating the Philippine expansion of US healthcare information technology outsourcer Anthem, Inc.

In a statement on Sunday, the DTI said Trade Secretary Ramon M. Lopez met with Anthem Executives led by Rajat Puri, chief operating officer of the firm's Diversified Business Group, and Stella Aquino, strategic operations head, to discuss the company's expansion.

According to the DTI, Anthem seeks to continue growing its operations and is also exploring opportunities in the pharmaceutical technology sector, adding that the company is narrowing its search down to Iloilo, which it considers to have a strong nursing talent base.

"Infrastructure development in the countryside will mean better economic activities and more opportunities in other areas of the country," Mr. Lopez said.

Anthem is one of the biggest health benefits firms in the US. Its operations in the Philippines began in November 2018 with its Global In-House Center project, which trades as Legato Health Technologies Philippines, Inc. The project took

investment of P950 million and employed 1,000 staff initially.

"Anthem has established offices in Bonifacio Global City and Iloilo and currently has grown its workforce to over 8,000 in just four years," the DTI said.

Mr. Lopez said US investments in the Philippines are growing, particularly in green metals mineral processing, renewable energy storage systems, and digital infrastructure.

He added that the Philippines is seeking to attract foreign investors in light of the recent economic reforms, such as the amendments to the Public Service Act, Foreign Investment Act, and Retail Trade Liberalization Act.

"With the Duterte administration's continued push for major economic reforms, supplemented by the country's sound policies and systems in place, we are beginning to see increasing interest in many new sectors such as those related to telecommunications, broadband, interconnectivity, satellite services, and other digital infrastructure such as data centers for hyperscalers and the corresponding renewable energy projects that are expected to serve as the source of power for these projects," Mr. Lopez said. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

GOCC subsidies in March rise 180% year on year

SUBSIDIES extended to government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) expanded by 180% year on year to P10.747 billion in March, the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) said.

Data from the BTr showed that budgetary support to GOCCs also increased by nearly 89% from February, while the year-to-date total hit P19.304 billion.

Subsidies are granted to GOCCs to cover operational expenses not supported by their revenue.

The top beneficiaries were the National Housing Authority (NHA) and the National Irrigation Author-

ity (NIA), receiving P2.979 billion and P2.566 billion respectively, both accounting for over half of the total subsidies. The NIA subsidy was nearly unchanged from the preceding month, when it received P2.570 billion.

Other top recipients were the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) and the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority, receiving P2.170 billion and P828 million respectively.

The Small Business Corp. received P500 million, while the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. received P299 million.

GOCCs that received more than P50 million were the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the National Dairy Authority, the National Kidney Transplant Institute, the Philippine Coconut Authority, the Philippine Children's Medical Center, the Philippine Heart Center, the Sugar Regulatory Administration, and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority.

The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority was the lone GOCC to not receive subsidies in March. It received P3 million in February. — **Tobias Jared Tomas**

Trade dep't claims to hit recovery blueprint jobs target of 1 million

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said the 1-million-job target set by the National Employment Recovery Strategy (NERS) has been achieved.

"Based on the last report that I got, I know that we have reached already the 1-million-job (goal) that was set as the NERS target. Because in the last meeting, we were close to that. My recollection is about 980,000 jobs already created," Trade Secretary Ramon M. Lopez said during the 2022 Task Group on Economic Recovery-NERS Labor Day Job Summit on Sunday.

"The bulk of which (was generated by) the construction and IT-BPM sectors and now the recovering tourism and the restaurant sectors as we reopening those particular industries," he added.

According to Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) President Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr., the goal of one million jobs under the "Reform, Rebound, Recover: One Million Jobs for 2021" program was reached by the first quarter of this year.

"I am proud to report that through this program, over 600,000 jobs were provided by the end of 2021, and the goal of the 1 million jobs was reached by the 1st quarter of this year," Mr. Ortiz-Luis said.

Labor Secretary Silvestre H. Bello III said the NERS task force has assisted many individuals and establishments since the NERS's employment agenda was issued in June last year.

"A year since we unveiled our eight-point employment agenda, we are very happy to report that our combined efforts in the NERS task force yielded assistance to more than 6.5 million individual beneficiaries, and more than 270,000 establishments in the form of employment facilitation, training, and livelihood, among others," Mr. Bello said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Ortiz-Luis said that ECOP, along with other private sector groups and member government agencies of the NERS task force, renewed their commitment to create more quality employment.

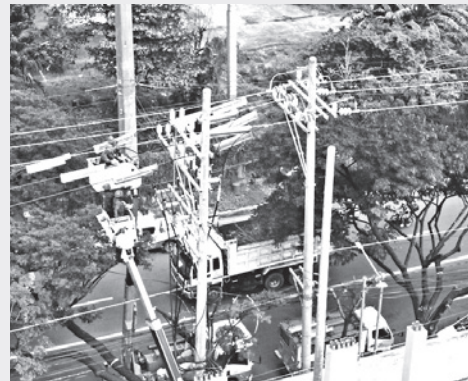
He added that the project will now be called "Beyond One Million Jobs: Create, Sustain, Transform."

The private sector groups involved in the project include the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc., the Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines, Philippine Constructors Association, Inc., Philippine Hotel Owners Association, Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Foundation, Inc., IT & Business Process Association of the Philippines, and the Philippine Association of Legitimate Service Contractors. Their government partners are the DTI, the Department of Labor and Employment, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

NERS was created during the pandemic to help the labor market recover. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**



MACROVECTOR-FREPIK



MERALCO COMMISSIONS NEW BINANGONAN SUBSTATION

— Meralco recently commissioned its new Binangonan 115 kV-34.5 kV Substation located along Manila East Road, Tagpos, Binangonan, Rizal which addresses the critical loading of Dolores Substation power transformer bank 1, reducing the exposure of its circuits. Aside from providing additional capacity to accommodate new and additional power requirements in the areas of Angono, Antipolo, Binangonan, Cardona, and Taytay in the province of Rizal, it will also provide additional switching flexibility during contingencies, improve voltage regulation, and reduce technical system loss in the area. Despite the continued implementation of community quarantine measures or the alert level system throughout the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Meralco and its subsidiaries are continuously working to improve its distribution system in order to provide safe, adequate, reliable and sustainable electric service to its customers.

OPINION

Managing the hybrid workforce

(Second of two parts)

LOOK into worker sentiment points to a general preference for an arrangement that involves flexibility in when and where employees perform their duties.

For one, the recent EY Future Consumer Index shows employees "losing interest in pre-pandemic work patterns," a finding that reinforces those made in the EY 2021 Work Reimagined Employee Survey that showed the majority of surveyed employees in Southeast Asia preferred not to return to pre-COVID ways of working.

In the first part of this article, we looked at the rise of the hybrid workforce and tackled the challenges in managing the workplace. Now we will look at the challenges of keeping employee well-being at the forefront in the hybrid work environment.

Two years of remote work have given employees more choice over how they spend their time and how to be productive outside of the office. It has given them a better appreciation of how important the quality of their time is in comparison to how much they earn. They have found renewed enthusiasm for staying in and buying experiences rather than new material goods.

It's a cultural shift that can have profound implications for corporate leaders. One area that will demand greater attention is managing the workforce and the company culture as organizations institutionalize hybrid work strategies. We look at a few key items critical to success in embracing the flexibility that most employees crave for after years of remote work.

THE RIGHT WORKFORCE STRATEGY

The level of uncertainty on how an organization's "return-to-office" position unfolds post-pandemic can be as high as that felt in the first couple of weeks when the pandemic catapulted much of the country into lockdown in 2020. How organizations have remained productive throughout the last two years can fuel speculation among employees who favor continuing with telecommuting.

They certainly will look to the leadership team for a clear message on the workforce strategy that will be in force in our post-pandemic world. It may not suffice to simply confirm that an organization will embrace a hybrid workforce strategy. Corporate leaders will have to answer such questions as whether the organization is leaning towards a remote-first strategy or is it gravitating back to the traditional set-up with a little flexibility.

But how does the organization arrive at such a decision? Do we bring the employee along for the journey and listen to what they have to say? All this will depend on company culture. Once a strategy is chosen, the workforce approach can be documented properly so that the entire organization is prepared to support this decision.

Communicating this to the entire organization can help various teams decide on how they can best support and enforce the strategy. Will a playbook be necessary to manage the change over the next six to 12 months?

A clear workforce strategy and a communication plan can work favorably for employees. It tells them what the company wants and gives teams the chance to contribute to achieving goals with the end-view of maintaining the hybrid workplace.

SETTING MILESTONES

The last thing corporate leaders would want to be in is a situation that requires closer monitoring of employee activity. Will putting in place measures that allow management to do real-time tracking of employee activity run counter to the workforce strategy? Workers may look at closer monitoring as a sign of a lack of trust, and this may eventually adversely affect company culture and employee engagement and retention.

SUITS THE C-SUITE
CZARINA R. MIRANDA

To choose a hybrid team as a workforce strategy moving forward may be taken to mean accepting that productivity has not been compromised over the past two years, when the pandemic forced us into remote work. This is the message that workers will read from a workforce decision to go hybrid. It can reinforce their own argument that it is possible to keep productivity up even in the confines of their homes or other alternative work sites.

It pays to set milestones on productivity to help teams work in unison to continue to deserve the flexibility that they desire from hybrid work arrangements. Clear milestones make it easier for teams to figure out on their own how to achieve team goals even as they remain in the comfort of their homes for most of the work week.

It is advisable though for teams to have a set day of the week when they are compelled to be in the office for various reasons. It can create what many have referred to as moments of spontaneous exchange of ideas that lead to innovation, heightened productivity, or better ways of doing things in the organization. It can also provide an "anchor" for your people to feel connected to the organization and to each other. This is especially meaningful to possible new hires who were onboarded during the pandemic and who may not have yet had in-person interactions with other team members.

PROMOTING INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Choosing which set of workers can be allowed to work from home and who remains on-site may not be as simple as identifying who faces clients and who works at a plant. Hybrid work models can be vulnerable to instances of resentment when disgruntled staff can feel left out of the perceived benefits of remote work, or conversely, remote employees may feel that those physically present in the office are more "favored" by the managers. It's friction that, if left unresolved, may eventually create trouble within and among teams and stand in the way of productivity. However, building a company culture that fosters inclusion and a sense of belonging will help prevent this from happening.

With a remote workforce, an inclusive workplace culture becomes all the more important in keeping employees engaged. It all begins with a sense of belonging that can translate to employee satisfaction with work and productivity. In the traditional work arrangements, it is easier to cultivate that much-needed sense of community among team members. Remote work, however, can hinder interaction that is a building block to building belonging.

Leadership can play a vital role in this department to ensure that employee welfare programs adapt to these realities. The hybrid workplace also presents an opportunity to revisit programs on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I), as this can contribute to successful recruitment and employee retention.

There can be many more challenges to learn along the way as most organizations take this route. Leaders' responses can vary from one organization to another, but what matters is keeping morale and productivity high. In designing remote and hybrid work strategies, it is best for leaders to place employee well-being at the forefront and optimize available resources to support employees.

This article is for general information only and is not a substitute for professional advice where the facts and circumstances warrant. The views and opinions expressed above are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of SGV & Co.

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