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PRESS RELEASE

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Director Elisa Cafferata announces resignation from the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR)

CARSON CITY, NV- Elisa Cafferata, Director of the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR) announced her resignation today, effective Jan. 2, 2023.

“Serving the state of Nevada as the Director of the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation has truly been an honor and a privilege,” Cafferata said. “I joined the team at the height of the pandemic, and I have been impressed with the level of service and dedication of the DETR staff every single day. I am grateful to Governor Sisolak for this opportunity to lead.”

Cafferata was appointed as the Acting Director of DETR on August 6, 2020. When Cafferata and the Strike Force began, there were over 800,000 initial claims for regular unemployment benefits and over 750,000 initial claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits to be process in the backlog. Prior to the pandemic, there were approximately 1.4 million people employed in Nevada; yet there were ultimately over 2 million unemployment claims filed.

The Strike Force recommended several critical improvements and under Cafferata’s leadership the backlog was eliminated, and initiatives to address the challenges are underway:

- DETR eliminated the backlog and delivered the benefits Nevadans needed:
 - Despite all of the challenges, by and large, the DETR staff got it right. Over the last 2 ½ years, DETR has paid out over \$12 billion in unemployment insurance benefits to over 600,000 Nevadans. The team implemented fraud prevention measures including ID.me and prevented over \$2 billion in fraudulent payments. The agency worked with DHHS to “borrow” 200 Welfare eligibility staffers (in overtime) to help DETR process claims and get through the backlog.
- Improvements to be made in customer experience, business processes and staff training:
 - The U.S. Department of Labor approved a \$4,562,000 Unemployment Insurance (UI) Equity Grant for DETR to help ensure all eligible workers have fair access to unemployment insurance September 2022. This grant will fund seven projects including language translation, the addition of American sign language, instructional videos, artificial intelligence virtual assistant for unemployment claimants using self-service, adjudication staff and ADA remediation.
 - Nevada was one of the first states to receive assistance from the U.S. Labor Department’s specialized “Tiger Teams” of national experts to improve system operations in 2021. Areas targeted and funded for improvement include simplifying instructions and system

prompts, and bettering “translation, disability access, addressing bottlenecks and improving fraud prevention.

- Unemployment Insurance modernization is on track:
 - At the December Board of Examiners meeting, DETR received the final approval needed for \$72 million modernization contract with FAST. To get to this point, DETR needed to get legislative approval for ARPA funding for project, bring in a national expert on Unemployment Insurance (UI) modernization projects to facilitate the process of identifying system requirements and creation of the RFP, issue the RFP and evaluate resulting proposals, hire a project management consultant to support completion of the project, and negotiate the contract being presented to the BOE.

In recognition of Cafferata’s leadership, Governor Sisolak appointed her as the permanent Director of DETR January 26, 2021.

Beyond unemployment benefits, DETR is successfully delivering on its strategic plan to rebuild into a modern, innovative, accessible and accountable client-centered agency. In the last two years, DETR has focused on rebuilding agency staffing, leadership and morale. During the pandemic Vocational Rehabilitation and the Nevada Equal Rights Commission put their applications online, so that clients could get services without coming in to the offices. In the last year, Vocational Rehabilitation achieved a impressive 30% increase in successful employment outcomes for its clients. This year, Nevada’s Bureau of Disability Adjudication was the only one in the country to reduce the time needed to adjudicate claims for people with disabilities.

In collaboration with its state and local workforce development partners, DETR is rebranding the state’s workforce efforts under EmployNV to help jobseekers and employers find the services they need more easily.

DETR has award-winning staff and programs as well as many staffers who serve in national positions of leadership:

Award Winning Staff:

- Marche Sneed, Pinnacle Award from Public Relations Society of America LV for Spring Job Fair
- Steve Moul, National Social Security Administration Adjudicator of the Year
- Julie Kujath, Lewis Buckingham Award, National Association of Disability Examiners (NADE) highest honor

Award Winning Programs:

- EmployNV Career Hub, National Program of the Year award from National Association of Workforce Development Professionals, 2022
- Research & Analysis Bureau, National 2020 Data Insights & Innovations Award

Nationally Recognized Expertise:

- David Schmidt, Chief Economist, Workforce Information Advisory Council member and committee chair
- Lynda Parven, ESD Administrator, Secretary of the Executive Committee of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) Board
- Jennifer Nottingham, Vocational Rehabilitation, President of the National Association of Disability Adjudicators

Prior to coming to DETR, Cafferata was Deputy Administrator at the Division of Welfare and Support Services, directing the division's support programs including Child Support Enforcement, Fraud Prevention, and Quality Control.

Cafferata holds a Bachelor's in Communications from Mills College in Oakland, California, and a Master's of Business Administration from the University of Nevada, Reno.

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ABOUT DETR:

The Department of Employment, Training & Rehabilitation (DETR) is the state's lead workforce development agency. It consists of divisions that offer workforce related services, job placement and training, services for people with disabilities, investigation of claims of discrimination, unemployment insurance benefits, labor market data and more. Many of these services are provided through EmployNV Career and Business Hubs and in cooperation with its community partners.