

Armstrong County Manufacturing Consortium

Thursday, June 04, 2009

Acting Chair Alex Stockmal opened the meeting at 8:04 AM and welcomed members, resource partners, and guests.

ARMTech Showcase of Industry and Technology

- August 19-21 at the Belmont Complex
- Need for booth coverage - sign up sent around
- Justin is looking for feedback on seminar content - contact him directly at jrnolder@co.armstrong.pa.us

Tri-County Manufacturing Consortia Meeting

- July 29 at the Belmont Complex Banquet Room
- Speakers: Tom Palisin, PA manufacturing ombudsman and others from DCED and DEP
- Continental breakfast
- Members and partners as well as County Commissioners will be invited

Industry Partnership Funding for 2008-2009

Shared training planned -

- Advanced HR class - 18 already signed up beginning on June 12 FILLED
- Openings still for Green (2 sessions) and Strategic Business Communication classes (room for 10-12 in each of these sessions)

Tuition reimbursement: still some money left but must be used by June 30

Tri-County Technology Consortium

There are training funds still available there as well as shared training programs

Don't forget to fill out in-kind reports for every meeting and consortium-related efforts; these should be returned to Ken.

Industry Partnership Funding for 2009-2010

Looking into if we can get reimbursement for in-house training for next year

Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper's Representative, Simone Baer

Request for feedback from employers:

- Card Check - it is off the table right now
- Health Care Reform is on front and center - this is a huge issue since costs are going through the roof (17% increase)
Hearing that there will be legislation for the President to sign by August
Will not be a universal health care plan
Wants to build on employer-based plans to keep companies competitive
- Banks and credit markets - accountability? When will loans be available for emergency stabilization?
- The office has a business liaison - Rebecca Cornish 814-456-2038
rebecca.cornish@mail.house.gov (invite to the tri-county meeting?)

Conducting business roundtables - one in Butler - and Armstrong companies will be invited

- Kate mentioned concern over impending bank loans through the SBA
- Not enough is being done for small and medium-sized businesses? Especially immediate assistance
- The Congresswoman is the chair of the Small Business Committee, and she had a representative from OmniTech Partners testify in front of the committee recently
- Congresswoman's vision for energy and "green"? Brian suggested looking at the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance's initiatives
- Concerns about de-regulation of the electric industry? Can anything be done for small businesses?
- How does the Congresswoman feel about cutting expenses and balancing the budget? Reform for Medicare, reform for health care, adjusting the trade deficit
- Working regionally with other Congressmen - Altmire and others to elevate the bio-medical industry locally and regionally

Simone left her business cards for members - she is building an e-mail list for updates - we will send her e-mail addresses to keep people in the loop on efforts (David will send this list to Simone)

Committee Reports

Public Awareness - Ken will check on the contract to see what is left - Ezra did the last show

In the future, could this be done for all three counties?

Preferred Vendors - Joanne has information on a potential new vendor (shipping company)

Training - already covered

Educational Awareness - Educator in the Workplace - 31 teachers going to companies in June/July (3 already went to Oberg earlier in the year) minimum of half-day experience

Everything is on-line (forms, etc.) at www.acworkforceforum.org

Student Forum for ARMTech planned - 2 students from 8 high schools to work with mentors representing exhibitors before and during the showcase - students to assist in giving presentations on the company during the Congressman's visit on Friday, August 21

Working on elementary school programs for next year - poster contest for schools with prizes to schools bringing in Carnegie Science Center to make presentations FASE (Female Alliance for STEM Excellence) is working to connect more girls on science, technology, engineering, and math

Summer camps - electro-optics and robotics through partnerships with Penn State Electro-Optics Center and IUP Northpointe www.electro-optics.org/eosc/index.html

Elementary school Dino Days programs this year was a success

New Members - Kate and Dave have a recommendation for the Executive Committee for a new approach to recruit members

Old Business

Already covered

New Business

Lori Harvey has volunteered to assist as a co-chair

Members' Updates

Joe - not doing nearly as much as they would like due to the downturn in the housing industry

Mick - refractory business is off about 65% - they are trying to get into some new markets with a high duty brick - there are positive comments but no one is willing to spend money right now - possible market in South America - chemical-resistant brick

Partner Updates

Vickie asked that partners give an idea of what they need support for now for the 2009-2010 year so the request can be placed in the grant requests

Marie asked that that anyone who has layoffs related to foreign trade apply for the new benefits - there are a number of new benefits under the updated regulations - health care benefits, extension of unemployment compensation benefits, and additional training benefits are all part of the new regulations

Changes to estate tax - can be paid to a non-profit instead of paying the tax?

Survey sent out to employers for skill needs - important to respond for funding purposes in the near future

www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Y9iusWVK_2fMxWG7MXRzGGtA_3d_3d

Penn State New Kensington working on STEM-related activities - summer camp content as well as their program with Kiski Area School District to take students to a manufacturing environment

They would like to add Armstrong School District this year and may ask the consortium for financial assistance

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 AM.

The next meeting of the consortium is planned for **Thursday, July 2 at 8:00 AM at the Armstrong Educational Trust.**