

Armstrong County Manufacturing Consortium

Thursday, July 02, 2009

Interim Chair Alex Stockmal opened the meeting at 8:01 AM by welcoming everyone to the July meeting.

Per Joanne Petras, the bank account balance is \$2690.90.

ARMTech Showcase

The sign up sheet for booth coverage was circulated again. If anyone who has not signed up already is available for Thursday evening and Friday morning to cover the booth, please let Dave English or Lori Harvey know. Pat Hollinger asked about the Thursday evening public showcase session. Dave English told the group that the plans are to encourage students to attend and participate that evening by providing incentives.

Justin Nolder is still looking for seminar topics; please contact him (jrnolder@co.armstrong.pa.us) with ideas.

Tri-County Manufacturing Meeting

Wednesday, July 29 at the Belmont. Invitations have been sent out. Please respond to Neil Ashbaugh (neil.ashbaugh@oberg.com). Full breakfast will be provided. There will be a drawing for a give away. A number of political leaders have responded that they will attend - County Commissioners, State Representatives, etc.

There is a conference call for the three county chairs next Thursday to go over agenda and related items.

Report on Health Care Reform Forum

Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper pulled together a forum at Allegheny College on health care reform Monday. About 70 participated. Vickie DeThomas was one of about seven who provided testimony (she was the only one representing industry - others were from hospitals, etc.)

Vickie suggested we have to take the time needed to do this correctly - we didn't get here in six months, we shouldn't expect to get out of this in six months. She wasn't sure everyone agreed. Some of the items on the table: helping companies with fewer than 50 employees, making insurance mandatory, etc.

The person speaking for the public suggested that health care is an entitlement, while another speaker suggested it is a right. Some other discussion centered on foreign nationals or companies providing benefits.

Representative from Manufacturer & Business Association who was attending spoke with Vickie about potential partnering.

2008-2009 Industry Partnership Update

IP Funds

Ken Raybuck reported that that the funding for this year was used except for \$1.16. They did pre-pay for a number of items. The funds were split evenly between all three counties. A lot of the partnership funds were used for outreach to the schools and the youth of the region - for STEM activities, camps, etc. Sponsorships for Educator in the Workplace and the Student Forum were part of this year's spending.

Indiana has a recruitment event coming up in a few weeks. We are continuing to look for other sources of funds - corporate, foundation, federal, and others.

Training Funds

Close to \$120,000 in tuition reimbursement was paid out this year.

Shared training is underway. IUP is offering a program on Update on Human Resources and Employment Law, Butler County Community College is offering an Advanced Customer Service/Business Communication program, and Lenape Adult Education and Penn State New Kensington are offering Building Green Products and Overview of Green.

Additional funds were made available, so each topic will add an additional day/session later in the summer or fall.

2009-2010 Industry Partnership Funding

Mary Salony is preparing a grant proposal for the new year. The state is requesting a shift to 75% shared training versus 50% which we have done in the past.

IUP is proposing a program on developing new products, which the chairs are discussing as a potential shared training topic. Kate Hall mentioned a number of providers for product development education and training in the region.

Vickie suggested that a local entity like SCORE (Service Corps Of Retired Executives) would be helpful. Kate reported that our local representative recently passed away, and we are not aware of a replacement yet.

Committee Reports and Plans

Public Awareness - Several shows were replayed during May and June since we didn't have a representative go over to the station. Ken Raybuck suggested we could add a radio program or two later. Vickie recommended a session on ARMTech before the event.

Preferred Vendors - Joanne is meeting with a potential vendor next week.

Training - Previously discussed.

Educational Awareness - The NW PA STEM regional meeting is planned for July 14 at Penn State Electro-Optics Center. This will be a follow up to strategic planning for funding requests for the coming year.

New Members - We hope to use ARMTech to recruit. A meeting this month to discuss ideas for recruitment may be held.

Old Business

Educator in the Workplace went very well. A lot of good feedback was received, especially from the teachers who went to Nature's Blend. A total of 34 teachers participated. Teachers had to submit a reflective essay as well as a lesson plan on how they will incorporate what they learned into the classroom. Joe Fullerton recommended that we develop for the future a connection with the employer to come to the classroom to follow up on the lesson plan (serving as an expert in front of the students in answering questions.)

New Business

Vickie shared a recommendation from Jim Pish for a speaker on unemployment compensation programs. She asked Alex if he would take on the responsibility of connecting with the speakers. She recommended that ideas be sent to Alex.

Vickie will be out until November due to some surgery. She will be working from home during her time out of the office.

Members' Updates

Vickie said things are going well for OmniTech Partners. She just hired one part-timer; formerly with DRS. She is looking at potentially hiring three others.

Partners' Updates

Kate mentioned concern about the budget; there is talk of no longer providing services and programs for free (\$20 administrative fee, \$10 for materials, etc.) Pat Hollinger thanked the WIB and the AET for the opportunity to provide the shared training they are conducting.

Marie Dillon-Griffith reported that unemployment rate now is 10.1 in Armstrong County while Butler and Indiana are still around the 8% mark. Many companies which typically take a one week shut down are planning two or even three week breaks this year. If the state budget isn't passed within the next couple of weeks, several programs will be suspended - youth programs, etc.

Vickie asked about utilizing contacts from elementary schools for a poster contest next year. There are funds in place with the Carnegie Science Center for assembly programs for the schools.

Ken reminded everyone to fill out in-kind reports and return them to him as soon as possible.

He also needs the training surveys as soon as possible. If you haven't completed it already, please go to

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 AM.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 3, 2009 at 8:00 AM.