

Armstrong County Manufacturing Consortium

Thursday, September 03, 2009

Attending: Alex Stockmal, Joe Goldcamp, Mick Livingston, Ezra Mihalcin, Ken Raybuck, Pat Hollinger, Kate Hall, Joe Fullerton, Lori Harvey, Dave English

Chair Alex Stockmal opened the meeting at 8:06 AM and welcomed the group to the meeting.

Tri-County Consortia Meeting Recap

The meeting held on July 29 at the Belmont Complex was successful with representatives from all three counties as well as politicians and other community leaders.

A follow up session is tentatively planned for April 2010 with a candidate forum approach. All state representative seats and half the state senate seats are up for election next year.

The group is planning to put together a legislative committee with two representatives from each county. Lori Harvey is one member of the committee from Armstrong, but we need another member. Lori reported on a tri-county meeting with SMC which already has a strong legislative presence. If any member is interested, please let Dave or Lori know.

The Tri-County Manufacturing Consortia website may be updated in a couple of ways. First, we are considering using it as the landing/starting place for all three counties - then a visitor could access the individual county pages. Second, a page/connection for idea generation is under consideration. The group agreed that both of these are good ideas.

ARMTech Recap

Pat Hollinger and Kate Hall mentioned some of their comments on the public showcase on Thursday evening. Both feel the attendees are most interested in the free items (giveaways) rather than learning about the companies and their products and services.

Ideas for improving this might be to have an invitation-only showcase to bring in the members of the local business community through the Chambers of Commerce as well as the students participating in the Student Forum. Perhaps we need to open it to prospective job seekers as well since some attendees use the showcase to circulate and meet prospective employers. Educators should be participating, too, so that there is more buy-in from the students and the schools. School board members probably should be involved as well.

Can we control where the booths and students are located so that each group received the time they deserve? This will be considered.

Dave will collate comments and submit the evaluation form to Justin so that the feedback is considered for the future program.

Pat mentioned that there are four prospective members she spoke to at the event. Alex was pleased to see some new exhibitors this year.

Meeting Schedule for 2009-2010

Dave referred to the proposed schedule for the year which was listed in the minutes of the recruitment committee meeting on August 6. Speakers will be the program every other month, starting in October. The other months will be business meetings. Next month's speaker will be from the Small Business Administration (the director from Pittsburgh); Kate is making these arrangements.

2009-2010 Industry Partnership Funding

Ken reminded everyone to complete in-kind reports so we can document what we've been doing.

There is no new information to report on state funding for industry partnership support. There are rumors that whatever funding is available may be focused on training as opposed to outreach, marketing, and other activities.

At the meeting with SMC, we discussed sustainability. We need to consider how we go forward without funding from the state. Working regionally may help since we have strength in numbers and a broader approach. Efforts such as the Dream It Do It campaign would only work if it were conducted regionally. With the three counties, there are 70 manufacturers involved.

Shared Training Topics

We need to begin preparing if we do receive funding for what to offer in terms of shared training. Ken shared copies of the results from the survey done on line (all three counties), but we still can collect feedback.

Areas of current interest are website optimization and human resources.

Pat asked if resource partners could be pulled together to see if students could conduct projects for manufacturers without a lot of expense. Lori suggested that perhaps having students job shadow or something similar while working with manufacturers on enhancing their sites.

Committee Reports and Plans

Public Awareness - No report.

Preferred Vendors - Dave reported for Joanne that the committee is working with two prospective vendors, a shipping company and an engineering firm. She will have more to share later.

Training - This information was already covered under shared training above.

Educational Awareness - This information is covered below under Old Business.

New Members/Recruitment Campaign - The committee is preparing a packet and letter to recruit. Also under consideration are other membership categories such as an associate member category for banks, insurance companies, accountants, etc. Pat has reviewed the northern Westmoreland County list of employers to make recommendations for reaching out to them to participate.

The plan is to get out recruitment materials to these contacts during September and invite them to the October meeting. After these materials are sent out, members will be asked to contact the prospects personally to work on recruiting them to join us specifically.

Old Business

Student Forum Recap - Dave and Lori reported on the Student Forum at ARMTech Showcase, where 40 students attended the Thursday evening public showcase and 15 students worked with mentors and met with Congressman Murtha in the exhibitors' booths on Friday morning.

Workforce Forum Plans - Dave reported that the committees are meeting this month to plan for 2009-2010, and we expect Educator in the Workplace to be repeated as well as the Career Fair. The Student Forum committee will review this year's event and begin planning for next year.

Joe asked about evaluation feedback from teachers and employers. Lori will be sharing these results with everyone.

FASE - The Female Alliance STEM Excellence group will meet on September 14 so we will know more later this month.

Member Updates

Ezra reported that the parent company (Matric) is preparing to work with China on electronic circuit boards for wind turbines. This is quite unique.

Partner Updates

Lenape - Joe mentioned that there are 25 classroom sets (30 seats each) for e-Mentoring, so those who are interested in working with students in preparing for careers. Sign up process is 15 minutes and each lesson takes about 10 minutes. All is done on the computer, so there is no travel or other issues.

Penn State New Kensington - Pat said the fall schedule will be coming out shortly to all. If there are topics of specific interest to the county, let her know and she will follow up.

There is an opening for an assistant in the Finance Office at the campus; if anyone knows an individual who might be interested, please let her or someone at PSNK know.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM.

The next meeting of the Armstrong County Manufacturing Consortium will be held on Thursday, October 1, 2009 at 8:00 AM at the Armstrong Educational Trust.