

Armstrong County Manufacturing Consortium

Thursday, November 05, 2009

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

2009-2010 Industry Partnership Funding

Ken Raybuck reported that the state has announced that the manufacturing partnerships in the Tri-County area have been awarded a total of \$220,000 (out of an application for \$265,000). Given that the partnerships statewide were cut by over 50%, we did very well. Of the total, \$50,000 is earmarked for partnership efforts and \$170,000 is earmarked for training. Of these totals, there are administrative fees to come off the totals before our final totals. Vickie DeThomas believes ACMC will receive about \$8,000 for partnership efforts. Ken mentioned that we will receive more details later on restrictions on this funding, especially for training.

Vickie shared that our efforts to work regionally may have played a role in getting the amount of funding we received. She hopes that the funds will actually be available within the next several months so we can move on programs soon.

Ken said the chairs will be working together to determine training topics and partnership initiatives.

Ezra Michalcin asked how the decisions are made about this funding. Vickie, Ken, and Lori Harvey suggested that the application sent in by Tri-County was received positively because the data has shown increases for us, especially in terms of tuition reimbursement participation.

Concerns were expressed by members about the process and procedure for collecting and entering data (social security numbers) for participants in training. Vickie recommended that the WIB prepare a written procedure for everyone to see and understand.

Shared Training Topics

The survey prepared by Ken for collection of information on training topics and sustainability for the consortia has not been completed by many members. Dave English will re-send the survey link and a plea to complete it as soon as possible so we can use the information to plan for use of the state funds.

Tri-County Manufacturing Consortium Plans

A legislative committee for the tri-county including two members from each county has been established. According to Lori, there are several materials already in place. Among the issues is health care.

The tri-county chairs will be meeting via conference call again in November. The group is planning for another face-to-face tri-county meeting in April. One idea is to hold a candidate forum since the general election is a heavy-duty one next fall with a gubernatorial race, all state house seats up for election, and a percentage of state senate seats up for election.

An option to hold meetings via WebEx Conference Call was proposed by Gorell. The question is whether we might want to use such a tool for all of us since it could reduce windshield time (driving to a central location.) Lori shared that she believes this could be a useful tool and show connections across industry partnerships. Mike Rempel from Gorell is exploring this option and will get back to us with details.

Committee Reports

Public Awareness - Each of the counties has been using its own website as a means to get the word out about manufacturing. But we have a tri-county site, and in order to look more regional, we are proposing to use that page as a landing site for all three counties.

Preferred Vendors - Joanne Petras is looking into opportunities for a couple of additional preferred vendor programs.

Training - An additional "green" training session is in the works. Stay tuned for more information.

Educational Awareness - We are still looking at a possible Carnegie Science Center program to connect with local elementary schools.

New Members - We are going to put together a plan for the next year to share with prospects: speakers planned for the meetings, training potential, awareness initiatives, etc. Any input from members and resource partners would be appreciated.

Old Business

Workforce Forum Plans - The committees are working on expanding career fairs to include elementary/middle school students along with offering a high school program again. In addition, more teachers are expected to participate in Educator in the Workplace program again this year so we need more employers to participate. The group plans to add to the Student Forum program for the coming year by having students participate in more activities (commissioners' breakfast, visit to steering committee meeting, serving as student mentors at career fairs). More employers are needed for the e-mentoring program.

FASE Plans - The group is looking into establishing its own website. Also, the possibility of offering local programs for girls to promote careers in science technology engineering and math is under consideration.

New Business

Speaker for next month is not set yet. Vickie has a possible speaker for us and will check with her.

Alex mentioned interest in PennTAP, but the program was zeroed out in the budget so we're not sure how they will move ahead. We will look into what the rates might be for assistance.

Vickie announced that the Butler Manufacturing Consortium starts their showcase at the mall tomorrow. One of the programs is a Carnegie Science Center program from 4-8 PM tomorrow and Saturday.

Member Updates

Vickie announced that her company has been acquired by FLIR, now known as FLIR Government Systems Pittsburgh. She believes this will be a very positive move for the organization and the area.

Ezra reported that they shipped their first prototypes over to China recently. They hope to have some contracts as a result in the near future.

Partner Updates

Kate Hall reported that the Small Business Development Centers received half of their requested funding statewide. There have been a couple layoffs at the state level. The centers have not yet learned what their funding will be. They are starting to charge for their workshops.

Groundbreaking for Tech Center II at Northpointe will be held on November 20.

Penn State New Kensington is holding a regional internship workshop for employers on November 19. Flyers were available at the meeting.

Ken mentioned the opportunity for welding training through a program at Clarion University. He has sent out information on the opportunity to members for response but has not had a positive response.

Ken asked that all complete their in-kind reports and return them to him as soon as possible.

The meeting concluded at 9:23 AM.

The next meeting of the consortium is scheduled for **Thursday, December 3, 2009 at 8:00 AM at the Armstrong Educational Trust.**