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**WDB Advanced Manufacturing Committee**  
**Mercer County Administration Building – Room 212**  
**November 14, 2016 at 2:00 pm.**

**Present:** Scott Needham (Chair), Anthony Carabelli (County Economic Development), John Hagemann (Express Employment Professionals), Mary Smith-Jones (Mercer County Technical School), Sally Nadler (Advanced Manufacturing Talent Network), Jüergen Strauss (KNF Neuberger) Staff: Virgen Velez, Cathie Doolan

**Welcome**

Scott Needham, the Chair of the Advanced Manufacturing Committee, opened the meeting at 2:15 and introductions were made around the table.

**Review of Minutes**

Minutes from the October 20, 2016 meeting were reviewed. 1<sup>st</sup> motion to approve: Mary Smith-Jones, 2<sup>nd</sup>: John Hagemann, minutes approved.

**Report – TIP Event at Middlesex County College**

Sally Nadler reported out on the Advanced Manufacturing, Targeted Industry Partnership (TIP) Meeting for the Central Region that was held at the Middlesex County College on October 26<sup>th</sup>. The meeting had a good turnout with about 56-58 people representing County Vocational Technical Schools, Community Colleges, manufactures and employers.

To further the objectives of the Talent Network three (3) Key Committees were appointed with assignments given to the committee members:

1. Outreach – focused on getting more employers to join and attend meetings.
2. Career Pathways – focused on highlighting career paths for manufacturing and apprenticeship programs.
3. Marketing and Branding – focused on getting the message out to the public that this is a good place to learn skills and careers.
  - a. An agenda action item is Identifying Industry needs, i.e. what are the credentials that are valued by industries and how to develop curricula for the programs under development.
  - b. Subcommittees are sending out the meeting information and there will be another meeting in early December to follow up on the assignments.

The Workforce Development Board (WDB) will work closely with the Talent Networks to develop and expand on the lists of Employers that the WDB can work with.

Jüergen gave perspective on some points for the future of manufacturing:

- Students are coming into the workforce unprepared and lacking the schooling needed for manufacturing programs, i.e. basics in penmanship, math etc.
- Aging workforce - since 1997 workers who are 65 and older has more than doubled.
- Positive - the average income in manufacturing is \$85,840.00.
- Declining numbers in manufacturing, 90% of all manufacturing in NJ has 50 or less employees and 50% have 4 or less employees.

## **Local Plan Discussion Continued From Last Meeting**

Virgen asked the committee to continue the discussion on what information is still needed for the Local Plan. The two major topics are Building Career Pathways and Expanding on High Quality Partnerships. It was decided that it will be more advantageous to work hand-in-hand with the Talent Network especially in identifying the skills gaps, identifying what will be needed in programming going forward, and outlining future program ideas.

Career Pathways - The State is close to finishing the credential list and we need to find out where the credentials are available in Mercer and the Central Region. Sally offered to bring a list of industry valued credentials for the next Advanced Manufacturing meeting. This way we can compare what is available and what is needed, and where they are available.

Mary said the Vo Tech has a current list of available credentials. The school does have a process for developing the processes into a curriculum. Their HVAC program offers an EPA credential, the school prepares the student to take the test but they have to apply to the State themselves to actually take the test. She also spoke on some of the MCTS experience with their apprenticeship programs:

1. Employers do need to be approved by the federal government to be a sponsor.
2. It is difficult to find students to enter programs because most schools push for the college track.
3. It is difficult to recruit students with the basic academic skills needed for some programs
4. MCTS has a successful School to Work Program that does include a job skill component

Sally reported that her employer, Megatronics, is in the process of building Apprenticeship programs and the Advanced Manufacturing Talent Network will be the sponsor. They will manage the administrative burden then replicate in other programs i.e. Industrial Maintenance Mechanic. They expect to be able to offer this to Mercer County Employers in 2017.

She also suggested that while developing and building career pathways for NJ we look into an "Employability Skills Credential". She will speak to the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) about this. It was suggested that we look into if there is consistency in other areas of the United States or if there is a Best Practices Ombudsman on the national level.

Other points made in the discussion:

- It was reiterated that it is necessary to invite Mercer County Community College to the table. Dr. Wang and/or Dr. Edwards will be invited to the next meeting to share with the WDB what the college is doing programmatically, if they have an advisory board in developing the program, and/or is everyone around the table to prepare programs and curricula.
- It is really important that more employers participate in the meetings to share their experience, to help develop future career pathways, and give information on what credentials are valued in their industries. To maximize their time and talents Mercer needs to find a way to make it easier for the employers to participate without redundancy of time and information. Since it is difficult for employers to get time away from their business Scott suggested in the future maybe we could look into having the employers participate in virtual meetings. This way they would not have to leave their office.
- There is also a need to find money for programs. At the TIP meeting a point of discussion was there is a high demand for teachers for the programs but a low supply of people to fill positions. It was suggested that we look into the status of Camden County's Ready to Work grant to see if this is how they funded their mobile teaching labs.

## **Committee PY 2016 Goals**

There is a need to increase WDB members who are involved in this industry. Suggested contacts to be made include Gaum Manufacturing, Hutchinson Manufacturing, Crest Ultrasonic and Amazon.

Suggestions on how the WDB may be able to attract more employers to join the Board. It was suggested that the WDB look to the Talent Network to be the coordinator of information shared from the Talent Network, and TIP meetings and this in turn will allow the employers to be involved and give input yet devote a maximum amount of their time to their business. The TIP committees will do the productive work in developing the career pathways and the high quality partnerships:

- To define the skills necessary for the occupational field
- Creating packages of the specific skill sets necessary for manufacturing occupations
- TIP has access to a survey that will be used for all industries statewide to identify where these skills are supplied

This is an important time for the future of manufacturing and changes will not happen overnight. Some of the problems the industry faces include the following:

1. There is a need to get educators to the table to improve the skills of youth graduating from the high schools.
2. Many employers don't know if their businesses can survive because there are not enough skilled workers coming in to grow their business.
3. We may need to look to a National Association that may have already defined the training needs of their associated membership.
4. It is difficult to get guidance counselors in the High Schools to support vocational training because the focus is on getting at least 95% percent of youth into colleges.
5. It is important to educate the One-Stop staff of the many opportunities available in Advanced Manufacturing in order to maximize the customer's opportunities for fields of employment.
6. A statistic Jürgen gave is of the 52% of all college graduates employed - 42% could have the same job with just a high school diploma and no debt.
7. The incoming administration is saying they are going to bring industries that went to Mexico back to the US and we will need to have a skilled workforce to be able to fill these jobs.
8. Immigrant workers in the US come here "to work" and will create a competitive environment to fill the void.

Suggested future program for the WDB is to sponsor a Vocational Training Fair for students who are graduating from high school but do not plan on going to college. College bound students already have their path forward but youth who don't know what they want to do can be targeted for attendance.

1. Timing would be important and it may be best to have this in the spring before graduation.
2. It would be advantageous to contact the County Superintendent of Schools in Mercer County to attend the WDB meeting and then disseminate the information to all of the other schools.

John shared that his company, Express Employment Professionals, can supply the Job Genius Video's and handouts to classes and to TIP meeting participants. His company covers the entire State and is willing to help in educating the youth.

#### **Next Meeting Date**

It was established that in 2017 the Advanced Manufacturing Company will meet **bi-monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday** of the month. The next scheduled meeting will be held on **January 9<sup>th</sup> at 2:00** at the **Health Occupational Center of the Mercer County Technical School**, 1070 Klockner Road, Hamilton NJ.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting ended at 3:45 pm