New Richmond Community Forum Notes
August 25, 2008
(afternoon session)

Attendance - 13
Bd mbr: Dave Logghe
Admin: Bob Meyer, Joe Huftel, John Will, Kim Olson
Community & Business Leaders

Dave Logghe introduced Bob Meyer.

The open community forum was informal.

Input was given by community member in response to the following questions:

1. What are you willing to share about your business or community plans for the future (that might impact WITC’s planning)?
2. What educational, training, or recruitment issues do you face in accomplishing those plans?
3. In your view, how can WITC best serve your business/community?

   a. Governmental training is only currently offered through the UW-Extension. Offer training for employees that applies to their jobs; for example, excavation and road/safety courses. Our instructors could use the training room in their fire hall.

   b. Offer a training program for community charity leaders – for people in management and for the leaders of a charity to learn about legal requirements. Combine all of the service and charitable organizations together under one umbrella.

   c. Help people in government to learn how to work better together without chaos. There is a government entities project where leaders of the New Richmond community work with leaders of surrounding townships (be a neutral party).

   d. Packaging was home grown in New Richmond.

   e. Have local training opportunities for a trained workforce.

   f. What is WITC doing about the Nursing waiting lists? Joe noted that we are three years out in the Nursing program. Although we have hired 7 new instructors, we don't have enough space. Clinical sites are limited even though we use clinics, hospitals, and nursing homes. We have over 200 training facility agreements (including some in Duluth were we run into contract legal issues). Wisconsin has a different set of requirements than Minnesota. It was noted that we have a new partnership with the Marshfield Clinic in Rice Lake and hope to have more clinical sites in the future. It was noted that Wisconsin nursing students make $4,000 less than Minnesota students.

   g. A technical college strength is being in touch with the real world.

   h. The WITC burn simulator is taken to the firefighters, paramedics, EMS, etc., for training. We are currently working with the state to certify the burn simulator as a “live burn” rather than having to use a house for this certification.

   i. The legislators are hearing that Law Enforcement have to go far to get training.

   j. We’ve had conversations with Eau Claire about sharing programs, facilities, and instructors as we don’t have room.

   k. Can we use the technology? Joe noted that last year we offered 17 credit classes and this year we are offering 55. Because of the shortage of space we are pushing online and the virtual environment.
I. The New Richmond Conference Center is being used for general education classes; however, that was never the intent. One of our challenges is to gain more space. We will need $2.8 million for new space at New Richmond for the replacement of the Power Equipment Center. From 2000 and 2006, St. Croix and Polk counties combined grew by 21,500 persons (resource: http://www.census.gov/popest/counties/CO-EST2007-02.html).

m. Do we get private dollars for specific courses? We get a lot of industry support and equipment is donated. WAT grants have been helpful; however, Bob would like to see a change in how technical college dollars are used. He’d like to see the allocations for the WAT grants increased and the (25% external resource) restriction eliminated off of individual grants. This is a good way to grow partnerships. Sheila Harsdorf expressed a concern about the 25% restriction in using external partners and encouraged Bob to work with her on the issue.

n. Communication and customer service skills (soft skills) should start in the high schools.

o. Craig Fowler (WITC Rice Lake) is working on programming for 55+ and senior citizens.

p. Veterans are a growing segment of our population and we need support to provide opportunities to our veterans.