New Richmond Business & Industry Leaders Forum Notes
August 25, 2008
(morning session)

Attendance - 21
Bd mbr: James Beistle
Admin: Bob Meyer, Joe Huftel, John Will, Diane Vertin, Kim Olson, Lenore Knock, Susan Yohnk Lockwood
Leaders from the community

➢ Joe Huftel welcomed the group and introduced James Beistle.

➢ James Beistle introduced Bob Meyer.

➢ Bob Meyer talked about the different handouts: 7th Ranking brochure, 2007 Graduate Survey, Forum Schedule, Core Trends, Current Strategic Goals/AQIP projects, and the Key Leader Survey.

➢ Input was given by key leaders 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. Welders with experience
      We are always looking for welders. One of the biggest issues is that students don’t have experience when they come out of the program. There is a need for more TIG Welders and on-site training.

   b. Health care – response to employer needs
      Trying to find a balance of keeping the student programs stabilized in the educational system is important, even when we are in economic times, because eventually we will need those students for the workforce in response to employer needs.

      Physical Therapist Assistants are greatly needed. There is a doctorate level of education that is required, which makes it more difficult.

      Nursing, surgery, and lab assistants are needed. The closest training for surgery is through the CVTC program.

      Perioperative nursing (registered nurses assist with patient care in the operating room) – it is more cost effective to send nurses to the program than it is to train them (it takes 12 months to train an OR nurse).

   c. Linemen – Electrical Distribution/Utility Workers
      Linemen are needed in the service area of installing gas and electric. Students come out of the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in Green Bay (competition). Approximately one-third of our workforce will be retiring in the next few years. Journeyman and electrical linemen training is needed.

      Customer service is a key area for our call center (300 agents). Typically we will do some in-house training; however, it is very important to continue the Supervisory Management program/course.

      Global Information System (GIS) training is key for GPS and CAD (or that type of skill set).

      Wind turbine technicians are needed for this emerging area.
d. Economic development
Economic development for the city is needed. The challenge is for businesses to build a better partnership with WITC. One company is working with Joe Huftel to create a model for jobs to bring businesses here. We are trying to work on a packaging cluster.

*Organic food processing* – Wisconsin is the number one producer of organic foods.

*Bio medical products* – work is being done to attract others.

e. Reaching smaller companies
Our economies have a large population with smaller companies. The challenge is for the college to reach the large population of small firms that may not know how to put the skill set together. The challenge is marketing. WITC needs to identify and offer training for small business.

f. Maximize resources
WITC needs to reach out to the K-12 districts and look for new opportunities to partner and pool resources. If we can share resources it would serve students and employers. There is a great opportunity to enhance partnerships with K-12 districts.

g. Growing our community
The Chamber of Commerce sees a lot of growth in New Richmond in many areas. WITC needs to determine how they can play a big role in growing our community. Everyone needs to make efforts to work together.

h. WITC education is valuable
Partner with business and industry to deliver the message about the value of a WITC education.

i. WITC’s reputation is an asset
A huge asset of WITC is its reputation and staying connected with everyone. Every faculty member should be getting out of their space. Leverage on that great reputation and connectedness for our business and industries. Marketing is getting better. Make a better link by getting more folks in the pipeline and having more interaction.

*Accidental Careers* – knock out the barriers (geography, time, distance, money, and gasoline) for the accidental group. Our competition is with the private colleges: video streaming, technology, and satellite campuses. Provide flexible learning environments.

We have some uniqueness and should regionally partner (CVTC, Rice Lake, Menomonie, etc.). We need to provide transfer opportunities and be able to move from a two year to a four year easily. Tell the stories of the students – we are missing out on peer-to-peer marketing. Getting Career Specialists out there to interface with business and industry, K-12, and WITC was brilliant and money well spent.

j. Aggressive partnerships
WITC is stepping more aggressively into the Momentum structure – that is where partnerships will evolve more effectively. The education consortium needs the leaders of the institutions to make the big ideas happen. Let’s just do it, not talk it. Grow economic opportunity as opposed to attracting it in.

k. Online progress
How is WITC doing with online courses? WITC is very interested in moving ahead with online courses and have accomplished some things. We are in the process of implementing the 5th Campus Plan, which is a huge opportunity. We have increased our distance learning (last year we offered 17 classes and this fall we are running 53 classes). In the online area we are trying to increase this plan through the co-facilitation of Instructional Technology and Academic Affairs divisions. We are also increasing our bandwidth.
l. **Generational management programming**
   In the management area there is a need to understand the new workforce and have a connection with the younger generation. It is important to know what drives new students.

m. **Alternative energy - sustainability programming**
   WITC has a committee where discussions are underway about sustainability. We do have a lot of sustainability in our programs. It was suggested that education has to model it and then business and industry will follow.

n. **Utilize WITC instructors to teach in the high schools**
   Space has been an issue for WITC. Can we look at a way to use WITC staff by bringing them into the K-12’s (high schools) to teach some classes? Can we have the traveling instructor?

o. **Geography – be adaptable to make it a strength**
   Instead of building bricks and mortar, look at more decentralized ways to reach out. There are students that leave the high schools and go nowhere (they are scattered all over). We need to be adaptable with our geography, making that our strength. Technological partnering with schools and tapping into businesses with technology is needed to maximize the regional impact we could have.

p. **Cross certification of instructors**
   Is there a way for us to look at the big picture of getting some cross certification of instructors? Language, arts, and math classes that would prepare students to come on campus after high school are needed. Introduce students to these courses in their high schools. Have the instructor go to them to teach basic level courses. Have an AP model but for technical college preparation.

q. **Wisconsin welding programs need to include engineering and/or specialty training**
   The technical college welding programs in Wisconsin are basically all one-year programs. Minnesota is beating Wisconsin as their welders have a little bit of engineering when they graduate and will start out $4 higher than our graduates. We could put classes together to deal with specialty areas such as TIG welding. This also ties into the adult learning area. Right now the specialty training ends up falling on the welding companies, and they would rather have welders get the training through the college.

r. **Process Technicians**
   *Process technicians* are needed – focus on the adult learner who needs to take a step up.

s. **WAT Grants**
   WITC needs to figure out how to use the Workforce Advancement Training Grants (WATG) for the one and two people companies. We need to figure out who those companies are and combine training.

t. **Wisconsin Technical College System Funding**
   Funding for technical college is going down. We need the key business and industry leaders to write their legislators to gain support for the WTCS funding request.

u. **Strengths**
   Focus on what are this area’s strengths. Momentum can push these initiatives. New North is marketing wind energy. Momentum West has a planning group meeting on September 17, at 1 p.m, at the Dunn County Work Center on how do you network together existing and entrepreneurial businesses.
v. **Help businesses survive - revitalize**

There are businesses in the New Richmond area that are struggling for the first time. WITC needs to play a role in figuring out how they can help these businesses out. What role does WITC play with entrepreneurs in the New Richmond area who are looking to create a new small business?

Bob Meyer thanked everyone for coming to the forum.