

BUTLER COUNTY MANUFACTURING CONSORTIUM

Minutes for January 21, 2009

Jim Ferguson welcomed everyone, immediately followed by introductions.
Copies of the December '08 minutes were emailed prior. Accepted as written.

Doug Bartosh reported we have \$1145.00 remaining in the Treasury. Doug has invoices for the 2009 dues.
Welcome special guests: Dr. John Misner and Dr. John Buttermore from Slippery Rock University's School of Business

Previous Business

1. Training -
 - A. Shared Training – Mary Salony, TCWIB, stated they still need RFQ's for all training topics. Our window of time to spend the money for this grant year (7/1/08 – 6/30/09) is becoming shorter with each month we don't receive the money; however, we should be able to pre-pay for training even if actual training is received after June 30, 09.
 - B. Lisa Campbell, from BC3, commented that any company participating in WebNet, must FIRST have funds go through WedNet before being put through under a Tuition Reimbursement grant.
 - C. Jim reminded all that slower business times can be an opportunity to do additional or cross training that sometimes does not get done when production levels are busier.
 - D. Lisa Campbell also shared that BC3 now has a welding class open to the public starting in January. She is waiting to hear feedback from students.
2. **2008-2009 Grant Update**
 - A. Mary Salony reported that the majority of grant money still has not been received yet. However, \$50,000 has been released for manufacturing shared training.
 - B. High School Connection
 - 1) Job Shadow program - we have more students interested than opportunities. January's edition of the Butler Business Matters contained a flyer to promote Job Shadow program and to register participating businesses. The B.C.M.C. will re-send the flyer in a separate email to all members.
 - 2) Educator in the Workplace – targeting this summer to have teachers come in to manufacturing businesses so they can see what we do and the skills needed. Would like manufacturers to then go into classrooms to show students the application of what they are learning (geometry, chemistry, math etc...) Would you have any employees (or retirees) interested in doing such a classroom presentation?
 - C. Manufacturing Class in the high school – although all the components are in place, this is not moving forward. There was a presentation about this at Knoch, but unfortunately it did not generate a real interest at this time. This could be due in part to the Knoch strike and the economic slowdown.
 - D. Kids on Campus – last year, the BCMC sponsored two kids camps at BC3 (Get Wired and Gadgets and Gizmos). Do we want to do this again for summer 2009? We will send out the BC3 2009 proposal for our Kids on Campus involvement and vote at the February meeting.

Image

1. **BCMC Website** – further discussion about creating a training page. Training page would be 2-part: focusing on training for members' incumbent workers (ie. WedNet, Tuition Reimbursement, Shared Training, etc...) and another section for job seekers interested in training resources to help them prepare to enter a career in manufacturing. MediaFrogg has submitted a quote for services to develop these pages for \$875.00. More detailed information and proposed text will be emailed to members for review and vote in February. Because grant monies do not pay for website updates, the cost would need to be absorbed by the consortium. At this point, the BCMC has approx. 30 members. It was proposed that if each member paid an additional \$30.00 for 2009, that would fund the training webpage development. Will discuss further at February meeting.
2. **Radio** – Jim will do February show to promote Job Shadowing. We will have to decide whether we want to continue radio show and manufacturing radio ads for new grant year. Will vote on issue at February meeting.
3. **Butler Business Matters** – February edition will focus on Manufacturing.
4. **TV Show** (Armstrong) – this attempted promotion seems to be dead in the water as there has been no response or feedback from manufacturers.
5. **Manufacturing Expo 2009** – on hold at this time as we need more member participation.

Growth

1. Non profit status – no update.
2. Manufacturing Consortium vision is to promote and grow manufacturing in Butler County. What can we do to work together to promote and increase business for our companies? One suggestion is to do what the Erie/Meadville area did and that was to create a website to promote the various manufacturing capabilities of their area businesses. They created "The Source" (www.nwpasource.com) to draw potential customers to their manufacturers. When potential customers are looking for a company for their manufacturing need, we need to do all we can to make sure they find Butler County manufacturers. But not only our county, but we could make this a Tri-County effort to also include members in Armstrong and Indiana counties as well. Members at the consortium were able to log onto the www.nwpasource.com website and look at the way Erie/Meadville structured their business promoting website. If members were interested, this would not be a small undertaking. Our biggest obstacle could be funding – running into the grant regulation that monies are not to be used for website development. The Tri-County WIB received \$100,000 for being a "High Performing WIB". As of yet, this money has not been allocated for any specific need. We could potentially write a request for exception to see if the state would allow us to create such a website for our Tri-County region. This could be our own economic stimulus plan!

Current / New Business

1. Slippery Rock University – Dr. John Misner and Dr. John Buttermore from S.R.U.'s School of Business were our special guest speakers to discuss ways they can help promote manufacturing.
 - a) They have business students available as resources and interns
 - b) Looking for ways to improve linking their students with the local business community. Students are not thinking about staying in Western PA for their careers and we need to educate them on the many real opportunities that are here in our region. S.R.U. has brought entrepreneurial companies in to the college to discuss with students the idea of being business generalists and having a broader understanding of business.
 - c) Would like to develop learning seminars in the future. Nadine Tripodi from Butler Technologies participated in Univ. of Pittsburgh's Entrepreneurial Excellence sessions that targeted business owners and put together a series of seminars on marketing, financial statements, etc... Each was a ½ day or longer once a month. They also put together roundtable discussions on 1 agreed upon topic. Nadine shared that she found it very valuable. Peggy W. from PA CareerLink stated that CareerLink has received numerous requests for small Training seminars, so she agreed there was a demonstrated need for such a service.
* Would need to define who the learning seminars are targeting (business owners, employees, or both?)
 - d) In the process of building a new "Innovation Center" at Slippery Rock to promote entrepreneurial ideas and new businesses.

2. "OutLook" – further discussed replicating LeHigh Valley WIB's monthly publication (which provides current information and trends in business in their region) for this side of the state. We were able to look at the current edition on-line and review the features of their report. LeHigh's PA CareerLink has 1 person dedicated to gathering the information and formatting it. Because our PA CareerLink is short-staffed, they would not be able to produce this. We would need to look elsewhere for the manpower.
 - a) S.R.U. 's students may be interested in a revolving internship to develop this. If so, how could paid internships be funded?
 - b) Members and partners agreed that in order to be successful and relevant, all the data needs to be current.
 - c) Some members expressed they may not need to see that information every month, it may depend upon the economic situation.
 - d) Could an email go out a monthly basis that surveyed the business community and that information automatically populated a report?
3. The TCWIB needs a new Manufacturing & IT Coordinator. Interviews for this position are scheduled for next Monday and Wednesday

What's In It For Manufacturing

1. BCMC meeting schedule for 2009 – posted on BCMC website.
Next meeting will be held at BC3's Cranberry branch campus, 8:00 am February 18th. A great way to increase our membership is if each company brings a new employer with them to the next meeting to introduce them to our Consortium.
2. At the next meeting, the following issues will be voted upon:
 - a) Creation of a website that would serve as a SOURCE for marketing the manufacturing capabilities of our Tri-County businesses.
 - b) The addition of a training resources webpage on the BCMC website.
 - c) Sponsorship BC3's Kids on Campus Summer Camps for 2009
 - d) Continuation of WISR Radio Commercials and show after 5/09

**Next meeting will be *Wednesday February 18th 2009* at 8:00 am at
*Butler County Community College's Cranberry Campus***