

Director's Report October 2005

Business and Industry. We are having more and more interactions with local business and industry. Workforce development seems to be a key issue for many companies and agencies. A summary of interactions follows:

Manufacturing Partnership. The Workforce Investment Board (WIB), based in Meadville, is leading this initiative. The WIB is working in conjunction with the National Tooling and Machining Association, Crawford County AVTS, local manufacturers and ECTS to develop a “careers in manufacturing” campaign. The WIB is also establishing relationships with school districts and career and technical schools to support different projects coming out of the PDE and Department of Labor & Industry.

MANP Partnership. An initiative similar to the NTMA project is also underway with the Manufacturers’ Association of Northwest Pennsylvania. Three of five superintendents met with two business representatives and MANP representatives on Wednesday, October 12. It was an excellent meeting. The group has decided to pursue “employability/soft skills” training and a corresponding certificate.

Welding Training. Three local manufacturers with a core business of welding and fabrication are meeting with us to develop a welding program. The Northwest Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC) and WIB are leading that project. The companies would like to conduct a 160-hour training program beginning in November. The plans include re-establishing a welding laboratory in the Skill Center building. To set-up the program, ECTS will have to acquire new power sources (welders).

Pennsylvania Automotive Association (PAA). The director attended a meeting in Hershey on September 27 sponsored by the PAA and its executive director, Paul McMillen. The PAA is the licensee for the Automotive Youth Education System (AYES) in Pennsylvania. ECTS is one of 26 sites in Pennsylvania that sponsors an AYES program.

The board of directors of PAA is looking closely at its sponsorship of AYES. They hope to make the program more productive and responsive to the schools and its member dealers. We are working with Mr. Sennett, secretary to the Erie Area Automotive Dealers Group, to schedule a meeting with Mr. McMillen and local dealership owners to see how we can enhance our current partnership.

Erie Regional Chamber & Growth Partnership. Four economic development specialists from the Chamber joined us for lunch and a tour of the campus on Thursday, October 13. Tom Kidd, Katrina Smith, Ken Schwab and Claudia Thornburg work closely with business and industry to help with their economic development needs. Often times, and especially of late, workforce development is a key issue. We thought it would be beneficial if individuals working directly with industry had an understanding of the resources available through the technical school. Elaine Shaffer, Business Partnerships Coordinator, arranged the visit (*see Regional Chamber is the supplemental section*).

Land Purchase by County. With County Council's approval of a bond issue, the Office of Emergency Management is once again interested in discussing the land purchase. Both the director and solicitor have received communications from the county.

Satellite Programming. Provisions within Chapter 339—Vocational Education Standards of the Pennsylvania School Code allow for school districts to contract with area vocational-technical schools to provide "satellite" career and technical education (CTE) programming. There are currently 80 CTE programs "on the books" in the county, which includes programming at Erie City and Erie County technical schools, Corry High School and seven of the 11 Erie County school districts. These seven districts enroll 657 students in CTE programs. Enrollments by district range from 11 at Iroquois to 366 at Millcreek (*see Satellite Subsidy Analysis in the supplemental section*).

We have held discussions with the superintendents to analyze the possibility of contracting satellite programs for all or some of this programming. There are several advantages to arranging satellite programs including: a slightly higher state vocational education subsidy, eligibility of programming for state equipment grants, improved program accountability and audit compliance, centralized state reporting and the administration of occupational advisory committees and state-mandated testing.

Regional Community & Technical College. Individuals from various groups and agencies are talking about developing a regional community and technical college. The superintendents recently talked twice about the community college concept. In addition, directors from seven career and technical schools in northwest Pennsylvania talked with the executive directors from two workforce investment boards about the need. Part of that conversation included an appraisal of the resources available in the CTE schools. It also appears that job training will be a conversation point in the upcoming race for Erie County Executive.

ISO Quality Registration Renewal Audit. For three days (October 10-12), Mr. Steve Pettyjohn, our SRI auditor, examined our quality management system (QMS). The QMS includes a quality manual of policies and procedures, supporting documentation and records, and operational practices. The audit covered our four key and 18 underlying processes.

The audit resulted in two non-conformances; one opportunity for improvement (OFI); and, one warning (*see ISO Audit in the supplemental section*). One non-conformance dealt with document and data control with regard to preventative maintenance. The other non-conformance dealt with supplier selection, evaluation, re-evaluation and performance analysis. The OFI dealt with the disaster recovery in our information technology department. The warning dealt with document control in curriculum.

Thanks to Natalie Fatica for coordinating the audit, all ECTS managers for their participation in the audit, Jim Bucksbee for observing part of the audit, and the faculty and staff for hosting Mr. Pettyjohn for program or service visits.