

Manufacturer & Business Association

VOLUME XXVII, NUMBER 6 JUNE 2014

BUSINESS MAGAZINE

ERIEBANK[®]

A division of CNB Bank

Passionate About Customers,
Co-Workers and Community / Page 12



Schools and businesses face a shared challenge — preparing students for the work force of the future. Schools are struggling to improve student outcomes, while businesses struggle to find capable and qualified employees. Recently, the Business Magazine sat down with Jennifer Nygaard Pontzer, executive director of Career Street, to learn about the new career exploration initiative, and the necessity for employers, educators and students to work together to develop a well-prepared work force.



What is Career Street and how is it different from other business-education partnerships?

Career Street is Erie County's newest and most promising initiative to bring local employers, educators and nonprofit organizations together around a common goal — exposing youth throughout Erie County to a wide variety of careers that exist in Erie County businesses. Through a variety of programs and services, Career Street will ensure youth and schools see the career opportunities in the local community. CareerStreetErie.org is where it all begins. Career Street also has the ability to promote and fund career experiences. There is a strong focus on promoting interaction amongst the participants that will generate stronger connections between educators, employers and nonprofits.

How did the program come about?

Over the last few years, Erie Together had community discussions about the growing disconnect between local business and education. The discussions indicated local employers were not finding applicants for the jobs they offered, and local educators were looking for ways to improve their connection with the business community. Through a grant provided by the Erie Community Foundation, a career exploration leadership team was established to research how the problem could be resolved. The team's recommendation was to establish an entity that would assist businesses, nonprofit organizations and educators to work together to offer career exploration experiences for all youth in the county.

What is the goal of Career Street?

The 'micro' goal for Career Street is to provide a variety of quality career exploration opportunities to all youth in Erie County. Ideally, by the time the student has finished eighth grade, they will have experienced three or more career exploration opportunities. The 'macro' goal for Career Street is to help employers find qualified employees.

How will the program be executed?

Career Street was launched on February 24 with the rollout of the website and my appointment as executive director. The marketing push continues as we encourage local employers and nonprofit organizations to become involved. All of the public school districts in Erie County, as well as the Catholic Diocese are already financially committed and partnered with Career Street. Besides funding from the school districts, we are grateful to the Erie Community Foundation, the United Way of Erie County, and the Workforce Investment Board for their financial support.

How will you measure the success of the program?

Erie Together and Career Street sponsor an annual *8th Grade Career Readiness Survey*. The survey measures the number and type of career exploration experiences of eighth-graders in Erie County. It also measures other career readiness characteristics of the students. As mentioned earlier, the goal is to have 80 percent of eighth-graders throughout Erie County have three or more career exploration experiences.

Career Street also will focus on other measures, including: the number of businesses registering with Career Street, the number of experiences they offer, the number of matches made between schools and businesses on those experiences, the number of students reached, and, of course, the customer's satisfaction with all of Career Street's services, for both employers and participants.

How can employers get involved?

It is very easy to get involved. Merely go to our website, www.CareerStreetErie.org, and register. Registering is quick and simple. Once the employer's registration is approved by Career Street staff, they can create experiences on the website. They should then be ready to accept matches for their experiences from schools, guidance counselors, and teachers. For Career Street to be successful, everyone, schools and employers alike, must be engaged.

What is the best way to learn more about Career Street?

You can learn a lot by visiting the website www.CareerStreetErie.org. Anyone is welcome to contact me directly at 814/520-8376, and I'll gladly explain the program and how they can best be involved. ☆

BUSINESS MAGAZINE

VOL. XXVII, NO. 6 JUNE 2014

Manufacturer
& Business
Association Board
of Governors

Joel Berdine
John Cline
Harry Eighmy
Andrew Foyle
Mark Hanaway
Donald Hester
Bill Hilbert Jr.
Timothy Hunter
Phil Katen
Paul Kenny
Jeff Plyler
Sue Sutto
Mike Weber

Editor in Chief Ralph Pontillo
rpontillo@mbausa.org

Executive Editor John Krahe
jkrahe@mbausa.org

Managing Editor &
Senior Writer Karen Torres
ktorres@mbausa.org

Contributing
Writers James Spoden
Ryan Wasleski

Feature Photography Contributed
by ERIEBANK

Additional Photography Casey Naylor
Karen Torres

Advertising Sales Patty Welther
814/833-3200
pwelther@mbausa.org

Design, Production
& Printing Printing Concepts Inc.
printcon@erie.net

ON THE COVER: ERIEBANK has experienced phenomenal growth through a commitment to its customers, co-workers, and community. Shown here, at the construction site of the new West 12th Street bank location, are: Bill DeLuca, senior vice president, Commercial Banking; Don Damon, senior vice president, Private Banking; Dave Zimmer, president; and Katie Jones, regional retail administrator and community office manager of ERIEBANK's Harborcreek Office. For full story, see page 12.

Mission Statement

The Manufacturer & Business Association is dedicated to providing information and services to its members that will assist them in the pursuit of their business and community interests.

— Board of Governors

Manufacturer & Business Association
2171 West 38th Street
Erie, Pa. 16508
814/833-3200 or 800/815-2660
www.mbausa.org

© Copyright 2014 by the Manufacturer & Business Association. All rights reserved. Reproduction or use of editorial, pictorial or advertisements created for use in the *Business Magazine*, in any manner, without written permission from the publisher, is prohibited. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a properly addressed envelope bearing sufficient postage. The magazine accepts no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts or artwork. The *Business Magazine* and Manufacturer & Business Association do not specifically endorse any of the products or practices described in the magazine. The *Business Magazine* is published monthly by the Manufacturer & Business Association, 2171 West 38th Street, Erie, Pa. 16508. Phone: 814/833-3200 or 800/815-2660.