

Compendium:

NORTHEAST
INDIANA
WORKS



Board Newsletter, April 2023

Dear Board Members:

Forty middle school students participated March 11 in Manufacturing Experience 2023 at the Amp Lab at Electric Works in Fort Wayne.

The students got hands-on experience in soldering, 3D printing, circuitry and the basics of electricity. Attendees took home their soldering kits so they could continue practicing with them.

The free day camp was made possible through a collaboration involving Northeast Indiana Works, the Don Wood Foundation, Fort Wayne Community Schools' Career Academy and the Amp Lab.

Second Manufacturing
Camp Held; Interest
Growing Rapidly

The camp was the second in a series designed to expose students to various aspects of manufacturing. The first camp was held in October in Noble County. The plan is to continue conducting the camps throughout northeast Indiana.

Preliminary conversations have already been conducted about having camps in Grant, Huntington and Steuben counties.

Interest in the camps is growing. Twenty-five middle-schoolers signed up for the Noble County camp. More than 300 signed up for the Fort Wayne camp and Northeast Indiana Works will meet soon with partners to determine how to best accommodate the students who were unable to attend because the latest camp was full.

The camps are part of a larger manufacturing awareness campaign aimed at enhancing the talent pool for the manufacturing industry, which is the largest-employing sector in northeast Indiana. The campaign is anchored by a website that can be accessed at www.beginswith.me.

Northeast Indiana Works, in conjunction with Fort Wayne Marketing, has also begun producing a series of short videos designed to demonstrate how a young person's interests and eventual skill development can lead to a career at a local manufacturer. The videos will be posted on various social media platforms.

Additionally, Northeast Indiana Works is distributing manufacturing career promotional material to entities that have significant interactions with young people.

"The groundswell of interest in these activities is notable and bolsters the hope that we can collectively grow the next generation of manufacturing talent in northeast Indiana," said **Rick Farrant**, director of communications for Northeast Indiana Works.

JAG Students Earn Statewide Recognition: Northeast Indiana Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) students and schools picked up eight awards at the 2023 State Career Development Conference March 17 in Indianapolis.

The winners: **Gavin Martin**, Manchester High School, first place, Creative Solutions; **Josh Steely**, Manchester High School, first place, Entrepreneurship Plan; **Sierra Brandenburg**, DeKalb High School, first place, Cover Design; **DeKalb High School**, first place, Chapter Brochure.

Also, **Hope Martin** and **Skye McCullough**, Manchester High School, second place, Project-Based Learning; **Carleigh Blevins**, Manchester High School, second place, Career Presentation; **New Haven High School**, second place, Chapter Social Media Campaign, and **Abby Love**, Manchester High School, honorable mention, Outstanding Senior.

JAG builds a talent pipeline to Indiana’s employers by helping high school students achieve success through high school graduation.

Northeast Indiana Works oversees 14 JAG programs at 13 high schools. The programs are administered by Brightpoint.

Schroeder, Farrant Attend Annual NAWB Forum: Northeast Indiana Works Board Member **Rebecca Schroeder** and Farrant attended the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) Forum 2023 in Washington, D.C. March 25-28.

More than 1,400 people from throughout the globe attended the forum.

The forum addressed a wide variety of topics, including apprenticeships and other work-based learning strategies, non-traditional funding, national policy updates, diversity and inclusion, and storytelling.

Advancing the INWBA Messages: President and CEO **Edmond O’Neal**, along with executives from each economic growth region, attended a legislative meet and great February 21 at the Indiana Statehouse on behalf of the Indiana Workforce Development Board Association (INWBA).

The group provided information to elected officials about the roles of workforce development boards (WDBs) throughout the state and how local WDBs serve constituents.

On March 10, Farrant was one of three WDB representatives presenting at an INWBA workshop in Indianapolis regarding effective branding and communication strategies. The other presenting organizations: EmployIndy and the Southwest Indiana Workforce Board.

Community Collaborations Conducted: Northeast Indiana Works hosted open houses (community collaborations) at WorkOne Northeast career centers in Allen and Grant counties in March to enhance or forge relationships with community organizations serving people in need.

The goal: Promote WorkOne services and encourage the organizations to refer people to WorkOne when appropriate.

The open houses were part of a larger outreach campaign drawing attention to WorkOne Northeast.

Going Full Circle: Last year, **Daniel Foster** walked in to the Steuben County Community Job Fair looking for a new career. This year, he helped coordinate the event.

“It’s pretty unique,” he says. “There were some employers there this year who remember me coming to their tables and talking to them.”

Foster, 50, was a supervisor at a food vending company, where he had worked for nearly 23 years. He says he was fiercely loyal to the company but was looking for a job that involved less travel and one where he could connect with more people in the community.

He passed out a few of his resumes at last year’s job fair at Angola High School and was about to leave when **Remona Kamer**, a Local Veterans’ Employment Representative (LVER) with WorkOne Northeast, suggested he consider a Business Services Representative (BSR) position that was about to open at the WorkOne career center in Auburn. He took her up on her suggestion, was offered the job by Northeast Indiana Works, and accepted.

Northeast Indiana Works oversees WorkOne Northeast career centers in 11 counties.

Northeast Indiana Works and WorkOne Northeast play a significant role in planning the job fair at Angola High School, where employers are available to both students and the general public. This year, Foster helped recruit 40 employers for the event and met with high school representatives to plan the day’s logistics.

Foster says he enjoys his new job, which is in keeping with his desire to serve people. Outside of WorkOne, he is a pastor at two churches.

“It’s a great work environment at the WorkOne center,” he says. “It’s a great opportunity to meet people and serve.”

He thinks his story may give hope to some employers struggling to find workers.

“I think it lets employers know that there are some people out there who are seriously looking for professional careers.”

(The next board meeting will be from 9 to 10:30 a.m. April 14, 2023. It will be in person and virtual.)