

EDA News

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540.635.2182 . www.wceda.com

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"Practice is the hardest part of learning, and training is the essence of transformation."

*Ann Voskamp,
One Thousand Gifts: A
Dare to Live Fully Right
Where You Are*

SUMMER



Career Connect : Students + Local Employment

Last Fall, a group of leaders from LFCC's Workforce Solutions, Warren County Public Schools, and the Front Royal Warren County Economic Development Authority joined forces to address the awareness gap of local high school students for careers available in local business and industry. The initiative was given the name "Career Connect". Many local career opportunities require a post-secondary credential, which often only takes months, or even weeks, to obtain, in order to gain entry level jobs. Too few people pursue "middle class" careers because of outdated societal stigmas, or they may be unaware of the types of careers available. Many students don't realize how well local employers pay, the advancement opportunity, available training programs offered by the company, or how to secure the credential(s) necessary to pursue these local careers.

The Career Connect project targeted local industries that are looking to build a pipeline of future skilled employees. Employers such as Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Baugh Northeast Cooperative (SYSCO), the Regional Jail, Lord Fairfax Community College, AireServ, the Warren County Sheriff's Department, the Front Royal Police Department and others participated in a one week event during April that provided day-long, on-site shadowing opportunities for students. Students were assigned to on the job mentors who provided actual "day in the life" scenarios for experiencing these careers and shared information on the industry, advancement, and existing training opportunities in meaningful and rewarding local careers.

Employers were excited to participate in

the project because it allowed them to reach out to a potential pool of talent. The community may not be aware that many of these employers operate in technically advanced industries which offer engaging work environments. Partner employers worked with the students to raise awareness of the types of jobs and careers available to them with as little as a post-secondary credential. They shared the backgrounds of current successful employees, and the availability of local career advancement opportunities.

One of the students, assigned to Baugh Northeast Cooperative (SYSCO), shared that he did not know how much technology was used in the facility, and how much a high performing material handler could earn in salary. He said he would definitely consider a career at SYSCO.

Greg Drescher, Superintendent of Warren County Public Schools said, "The Career Connect Program is a great example of what we believe the high school experience should be more about, the opportunity to experience real world situations and see first-hand what today's jobs require.

"Through partnerships like this one, my hope is all high school students will be afforded the opportunity to gain this first-hand knowledge so they can have greater direction in planning out their career goals."○



"...they can have greater direction in planning their career goals"

Shenandoah Valley Regional Entrepreneur Café

“Innovation is the specific instrument of entrepreneurship. The act that endows resources with a new capacity to create wealth.” Peter Drucker.

The first regional Shenandoah Valley Entrepreneur Café was held in April at The Corron Center in Middletown, Virginia. It was an overwhelming success. There were eighteen participants in the 6-class educational component that included instruction on developing a business plan, market analysis, finances, sales and pitch presentations. Instructors – who are business people from around the region – were assembled and many of them served as judges in several aspects of the evaluation process.

Out of the eighteen participants, nine went on to compete for the grand prize which consisted of a \$5,000 cash award and a marketing and membership package valued at \$3,500. Business plans were developed, written and submitted to a panel of judges for evaluation. Pitch presentations were designed and practiced prior to delivery before an audience and another panel of judges. From those evaluations, six finalists were selected to move into the formal competition.

The event and awards were assembled from regional sponsorships and in-kind donations, including Bright Box in Winchester, First Bank, Dish/Via Satellite, Valley Health, The Northern Virginia Daily, InterChange, LD&B Insurance, Edward Jones, AireServ, Joe’s Steakhouse, The River 95.3, SymbNex and many other generous contributors. Additionally, Community Partnerships were established with all of the northern Shenandoah Valley Chambers of Commerce, EDAs, Shenandoah Uni-

versity’s Byrd School of Business, People Inc., the Regional Commission and the Small Business Development Center. Each of these organizations provided specialized services including one-year free memberships in each of the Chambers.

“This was truly a regional initiative,” said Marla Jones, Director of Marketing at the Warren County Economic Development Authority. “So many organizations rallied in support of the entrepreneurial program. I think we all agree that it’s a very important piece of economic health and business development.”

“The diversity of the participants is remarkable,” said Leslie Currie, Business Development Manager at People Inc. “We had an interior design company, an outfitting company, an outdoor biathlon/triathlon promoter, an auto mechanic, an IT consulting firm, a Reiki and health food provider, an organization expert, a baker, a staff training professional, a farm products producer, and several emerging entrepreneurs looking for education prior to launching their businesses. This is such a testament to the viability of the program.”

The instructors included John Elrick, a distinguished toastmaster and SCORE counselor; Mike Guevremont, a very successful entrepreneur; Dale Maza, an SBDC marketing counselor; and Andrew Gauldin, a banker and entrepreneurship advocate. Judges included Marilyn Finnemore, owner of Bright Box and Bright Center in Winchester; Jeff LeHew, owner of Dish/Via Satellite; Joe Wobbe, owner of Joe’s Steakhouse; Flynn Hulver, owner of LD&B Insurance; Dennis Dysart, COO and President of First Bank; Darla Guevremont, President of Distinctions, LLC; Len Capelli, Executive Director of Clarke County IDA; and

Floyd Heater, Vice President at Valley Health.

The final competition event, held on April 19th, offered exhibits and displays by each of the finalists including Route 11 Outfitters, Rev 3 Adventures, Queen Consulting and Technology Services, Language in Bloom, Bijou’s Sweet Treats, and Auto Care Clinic. Food was catered by Joe’s Steakhouse, and approximately 150 members of the public attended. Each finalist gave a five minute presentation and then answered to five minutes of questions from the judges and the audience, as well.

When all six had made their presentations, evaluations were calculated and the audience had the opportunity to vote by ballot for their favorite contestant. The Peoples’ Choice award was made up of the \$10 entry fee collected at the door. In the end, Laura Gomez of Route 11 Outfitters won The Peoples’ Choice Award of \$750, and Bill Long of Auto Care Clinic won the grand prize valued at \$8,500. Marilyn Finnemore, owner of Bright Box theater in Winchester (the naming sponsor for the event) and a successful entrepreneur in her own right put it this way, “I loved the experience and felt that it was a hands-down success.”

The Advisory Committee will soon begin work on the Entrepreneur Café 2017, so watch for more information as the roll-out begins in the Fall. ○



... where bright ideas are nurtured.

The Lemonade Stand : An Enrichment Program

As we know, entrepreneurship is not limited to the adult world. And, Joyce Jenkins-Wimmer is discovering first-hand through her work with the 21st Century Learning Grant and the Warren County Middle School after school enrichment program, that 6th and 7th graders are interested in entrepreneurship too!

The Warren Coalition was awarded the grant in late 2015, and Ms. Wimmer decided to utilize part of it to coach young people in the principles of entrepreneurship. The Lemonade Stand is an existing curriculum designed by an entrepreneur to instruct children on how to build and sustain a business and she is utilizing the curriculum as a guide through the project. So far, her group of 25-30 students aged 11-13 have created a greeting card company and are now designing their own Lemonade Stand business.



“We have talked about the best recipes for making lemonade and those that are most cost-effective,” said Wimmer. “We’ve calculated the per cup expense and how to eliminate waste. We’ve also researched recyclable cups. We recently met with the Planning and Zoning Director for the Town of Front Royal and learned a lot about where we can set up our stand -- very interesting information. And, now they’re looking for investors!”

Two of Ms. Wimmer’s students attended the Entrepreneur Café to observe and learn about local entrepreneurs and their businesses.

“It was wonderful having young students attend the Café,” said Marla Jones, Director of Business Development at the Warren County EDA and an organizer of the Entrepreneur Café. “We hope to educate and inspire students starting at a young age. There’s tremendous value in promoting entrepreneurship to children, for it teaches lessons in all aspects of life – not just building a business. “

If you are interested in The Lemonade Stand project or the Entrepreneur Café, call Marla Jones at the EDA, 540.635.2182 or jones@wceda.com. ○

Virginia Jobs Investment Program : Retrain & Retain

Created in 1965 as part of the Industrial Training division of the Virginia Community College System, the Virginia Jobs Investment Program provides consultative services and funding to companies creating new jobs or experiencing technological change.

VJIP is state-funded, demonstrating Virginia’s commitment to enhancing job opportunities for its citizens. It is estimated that VJIP has supported more than 2,500 projects, over 365,600 jobs and \$29 billion in capital investment within its 50 years. VJIP was moved to the Virginia Department of Economic Development in 1985, and then to the Virginia Department of Business Assistance in 1998.

Working closely with company personnel, the Virginia Jobs Investment Program offers consulting services at no charge, in addition to direct funding to offset eligible companies’ recruitment and training costs.

Assistance in any of the programs offered by VJIP is eligible to projects that create basic employment for the Commonwealth, as basic employment brings new income into the state, stimulates additional employment, and is the basis for further economic growth. These businesses or functions must directly or indirectly derive more than 50% of their revenues from out of state sources, as determined by VJIP.

For more information on VJIP, please visit

<http://www.yesvirginia.org/AssetRich/VJIP>.



**The
Economic Development Authority**

Post Office Box 445
Front Royal, VA 22630

www.wceda.com |
www.facebook.com/frwceda

T 540.635.2182 | F 540.635.1853

Jennifer R. McDonald, DFCP
Executive Director
mcdonald@wceda.com

Missy Henry
Administrative Assistant
mhenry@wceda.com

Marla Taylor Jones
Editor, Director of Marketing
jones@wceda.com

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The Virginia Herb
Festival, June 11-12, 2016

At Sunflower Cottage &
Backroom Brewery
150 Ridgemont Road
Middletown, Virginia

Workshops, cooking &
brewing demonstrations

virginiaherbfestival.com

knowledge 2work

Knowledge to Work is a new and exciting competency-based education program that designs personalized learning plans. LFCC currently offers programs in the following areas:

- Health Information Management
- Information Systems Technology
- Administrative Support Technology

Personalized learning plans are also available in skilled trades like electrical, plumbing, and HVAC. We make it faster, easier, and more affordable to achieve higher education goals with flexible, self-paced degrees and certificates in high growth/high wage industries.

Instead of counting credits, the focus is on attaining and verifying competencies. Leading employers in the region help align program competencies with changing job requirements, making graduates more employable.

Check it out today at <http://knowledgetowork.com/> !