

Industry Leader Lunch Series 2011-12



Thanks to the members of the Frankfort business community who attended a recent Purdue Extension educational program and tour of our Scircleville grain operation. The Co-Alliance team gave a great overview of what farmers and co-ops mean to Clinton County!

The Need: To Offer Local Industry Leaders an Opportunity for Networking

While human resource directors, plant managers, and supervisors who work in Clinton County are located near to each other (mostly in the State Road 28 industrial park area), they tend to be so focused on their own business operations they pay little attention to the others around them. However, these industry leaders have a common need for professional development, community information, and networking. They also have a need to become organized as a group to take advantage of county and regional economic and development opportunities that may arise. By meeting monthly, industry leaders can keep each other up-to-date on local happenings and communicate important news to their colleagues. Several years ago, the Chamber of Commerce had organized these industry leaders to meet quarterly, but in the recent past no efforts had been made to unify the group. Following an Economic Development course run by Ball State, Chamber officials agreed to co-host the lunches with Purdue Extension.

The Response: Industry Leader Lunches Sponsored by Purdue Extension

Starting in August 2011, Purdue Extension's Learning Network of Clinton County reached out to industry leaders--those previously involved in the group as well as those new to the group--to meet on the last Friday of each month. A speaker from Indiana Wesleyan's adult continuing education classes launched the Industry Leaders Lunch series in September 2011. In October 2011, ACHEIVE Clinton County/Healthy Communities of Clinton County explained employee wellness plan options. No meeting was held in November, but in December 2011 the group was treated to a presentation by Manpower and free "holiday" massages from a new local massage therapy business. Participants responded positively to the idea of touring of each other's industries, so Cintas hosted the first tour in January 2012. In February 2012, an ergonomist from Purdue's Agrability explained how to "Work Smarter, Not Harder." In April 2012, the group toured DSM and learned about safety, and in May 2012, the group toured a local ag co-op, Co-Alliance.

The Impact: 25 Clinton Co. Industry Leaders Who "Lunch & Learn" Monthly

After one year of consistently offering the Industry Leader Lunches and recruiting new corporate entities and small businesses to join, a group of 25 regular attenders have emerged; they are the industry leaders (human resource directors, plant managers, and supervisors) who have attended the majority of the eight "lunch-n-learn" meetings, resulting in 200 direct educational contacts. Thirty-six percent of the industry leaders completed an end-of-series survey in May 2012.

- 1) **Of those who responded: 25% said that before the lunches, they were "not at all familiar," 63 said they were "somewhat familiar" and 13% said they were "on a first-name basis" with other industry leaders in Clinton County. After the first year of lunches, 78% of participants said they either agree or strongly agree that the lunches "have been a valuable social networking tool" and/or "have been a valuable professional development tool for me."
- 2) **Of those who responded: 78% said they were "satisfied with the content presented" and with the "style/approach of the presenter's delivery;" and 89% said they were satisfied with the schedule.
- 3) Three articles in the local newspaper, The Frankfort Times, familiarized (at least) 4,500 Clinton County residents (as indirect educational contacts) with the successes and challenges of local industries that drive the economy of their community.



THE TIMES / WWW.TIMES.COM / TUESDAY, MARCH 2011 / A.3

Program lets local industries n

Leaders meet monthly to compare notes, keep in touch

BY SCOTT OWENS
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While managers and officials working in local industries are all nice to each other, they tend to be so focused on their own business that they rarely discuss to the other around them.

The Industry Leader Lunch program by the Clinton County Chamber of Commerce and Purdue Cooperative Extension Service is working to change that.

Since September, industry leaders have met monthly for lunches that include discussion, programs and sometimes tours of local business.

"We've decided to offer some of a networking opportunity for the industry leaders," said Methods Gleason, economic and community development educator for the extension. "We talked in old with hours of the plans and we're combining that with a kind of business component that happens at each one of the meetings."

At the Feb. 24 meeting, Rob Barakatsis, an agricultural specialist at Purdue's AgrAbility Program, spoke about how to "Work Smarter, Not Harder."

He noted that companies, the study of work started in the U.S. military industry during World War II in an effort to increase efficiency and output.

Much of the discussion dealt with the properties of office equipment to buy, and the need to invest in the equipment.

The program is designed to let workers see more efficient and have fewer problems such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

Although the discussions are useful, Bob Gleason said, June Wilson of the Clinton County Chamber of Commerce said the lunch are very popular.

"People were really happy to show where they work and show what they do," Wilson said.

Some of the discussion also fills a specific need, because industrial chemistry members have very different requirements than small business owners in total companies, he added.

There is no March meeting because too many people will be out of town, but in April the group will host USA, which was recently named one of the 75 best companies to work for in Indiana. That will be followed by a tour of Co-Altus in May.

The focus of the program is on networking.

"There are lots of industries where if the resource level and the geographic level can work together, they can learn a lot of things," Gleason said. "The benefit is the sharing of best practices, and networking opportunities."

The Feb. 24 meeting also included the presentation of awards made of original crates in recognition of those of the four Japanese-owned companies in the industrial park.

The crates represent the community's support for the Japanese people after the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami that devastated much of the northeastern coastline of Japan.

WONKING GRANT — Rob Barakatsis, an agricultural specialist at Purdue University's AgrAbility Program, discussed "Work Smarter, Not Harder" Feb. 24. Make the image yours. Go to www.times.com.

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