

Vocational Education Task Force  
Meeting – January 22, 2007  
1:00 PM

PRESENT: Jim Thompson (masonry), Randy Warnke (carpentry), Linda Crawford,  
Mike Nickel (electrical)

ABSENT: Dan Black, (Plumbing), Randy Grimmer (HVAC), Gary Farman (can be  
brought into the group)

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Current Construction Trades Program: Carpentry at this time. Josh  
Michelena/Instructor.

Summary: Philippe – Met with Randy Warnke October 10, 2006 following presentation  
to the BHHBA, where they indicated a program at the high school in the vocational  
programming is needed to capture non-college-bound students.

Educational system in U.S. focuses primarily on college-bound students. On a  
nationwide level 13% of high school students finish college education after 6 years of  
graduation. We have a system where kids who graduate from high school without an  
idea of what they want to do are lost. This is a huge majority problem.

Need is a program to help kids who don't know what they want to do find a path. Craig  
Dougherty indicated 40% are at risk (over all 3 years) – probably higher in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.  
Also District 1 is interested.

Schools will look at vocational programs if brought by the business sector. Forward  
Sheridan will help BHHBA come up with a plan to present.

We need a plan that will include not only programming, but also financing from the  
business community. Perkins Foundation is open to consider funding the program.

The top five specialties in need at this time are:

- Carpentry
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Masonry
- HVAC

Include the college from the beginning, because it can be a seamless transition to the  
college program and can segue into their additional needs at the college.

There is a group called the Northeast Wyoming Workforce Partnership which was created two years ago (at least 9 agencies) to start looking at issues we are dealing with, including the workforce shortage. Last July the partnership interviewed over 100 companies. February 8<sup>th</sup> there will be a symposium to discuss the results and what is being done to address some of the major issues revealed in the survey.

Randy indicated Johnson County has an awesome construction class. (contact Johnson County High School)

Jim Bennage is in charge of technical programs at Sheridan College and Gillette College.

Randy suggested students have field training on SHAC houses and school training with Josh Michelena.

Trades cannot hire kids under age 18 (OSHA regulations). Linda indicated a shadowing possibility may be possible. They are bored just shadowing and sweeping, etc. The college program collaborating with the high school could be timed with on-the-job stuff and we might be able to capture their interest.

Find out:

- Identify grades 10-12 are the grades we want to reach
- What would the companies do in order to help the program
  - curriculum
    - basic knowledge in math and English, drafting, reading blueprints, etc.
  - teach classes
    - future career
    - on-the-job training available (paid to learn)
    - high paying jobs
    - somewhat labor intensive
  - how do companies keep in touch with the kids?
  - mentor the kids
- What are requirement for graduation at Sheridan High School
- Where is potential for electives

Philippe: What we need to do before we start talking to the technical and career education people is to get an idea of what the industries want – common classes to all, followed by classes specific to each. The schools do not have a feel for what the businesses need.

Jim: If we know where the schools are at, and if the programs are available, the contractors need to be willing to go up once a year and help teach their trade.

Randy: In his meetings with Craig Dougherty, the school system feels that the vocational program has as much time as they can give it, because they don't have elective time available. Kids don't have time to spend in the programs at this time.

Philippe: When we start the initial discussion, need to know what the game plan is. Show them an overall plan in economic development and that it is for the benefit of the county to be fostered over the years. Funding should not be a deterrent. We will find the money. Where can the business sector and high schools work together to come up with a program for the at risk students? Need to provide exposure to various trades, so they can try them out ahead of time.

Randy: Hathaway and WYCAS requirements don't allow for applied subjects. There is only a 4-year college track and no accommodation for vocational tracking. The only way they can do it is through a construction trades program of plumbing, electrical, mechanical, construction, masonry. Get funding for a high school teacher and start a program similar to the one at the college. Businesses can mentor with them through the education program through presentations. They will need classroom time, as well as hands-on. Josh could have high school kids at the college classes.

Linda: Josh needs to be included in any discussions with the school districts. The college may have more of a role. The high school kids need to be able to come to the college.

#### NEXT STEPS:

1. Get to appropriate people at high schools and see what they are thinking?
2. What kind of kids do businesses want to hire right out of high school?
  - Tech Prep Conferences
  - Career Technology, i.e. Campbell County (Lynn Velle) -- Linda and Philippe
  - Natrona County career technology program
  - Kathleen Pilch, Kathy Hecker, Kerry Hoffman – Career counselors
  - Plus new counselors at Clearmont and Tongue River
3. Mobilize the business community together to be strong – Mandate from Businesses.
4. See if Josh Michelena would be interested and see if the college is interested (also certified secondary teacher for high school). – Linda and Philippe
5. Linda can gather the information for tech prep programming.
6. Biggest wall – school district mind sets toward vocational.
7. Start with general construction, then move into specialties. Work in information about individual trades. Ethics should be the first class.
8. Come up with packages – career packages.
9. Need to have opportunity to get H.S. Diploma as well as technical diploma or certificate to show what they did.
10. Get newer businesses that have 20-30 years ahead of them to get their energy to add them to the committee.

Workforce Partnership is putting together an agenda for the symposium. What do we want to talk about regarding the technical and vocational programs. How should

vocational to be presented at this symposium – just let business community know there are people working on it – talk about program at the college (Josh Michelena’s program). Maybe ideas at the roundtables can supplement what is being done here today. At the roundtables, they will identify a lead group or person for action – vocational can be this task force.

Symposium: February 8 – CTEL – 12:00 – 4:00 PM.