

CareerTech, Alliance partnership benefits industries

Several million dollars were added to Oklahoma's economy last year thanks to an economic development partnership involving the state CareerTech system, the Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence and several other state agencies.

The partnership had a positive impact of about \$134 million on Oklahoma's economy, according to Dr. Roy Peters, chief executive officer and president of the Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence. He said the return was measured in terms of retention of sales, cost savings and jobs created.

The Alliance is a nonprofit organization providing leadership and assistance to Oklahoma manufacturers to help them become more successful in their marketplace. It receives funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce and state funds from the Oklahoma Department of Commerce and the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology.

Peters said Oklahoma's technology centers contributed office space, clerical support and part of the salary for the Alliance's manufacturing extension agents. The agents are housed in local technology centers and work with manufacturers in their areas.

"These agents provide a variety of services such as developing marketing plans, helping introduce new technology and suggesting new training," Peters said. "They also provide training



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on Lean Manufacturing, which involves analyzing how information and materials flow in the manufacturing environment, then continuously improving processes to increase profitability."

The Alliance partners with 11 higher education institutions and 19 technology centers to fund manufacturing extension agents across the state. Oklahoma technology centers involved in the Alliance partnership and the city they are located in include Chisholm Trail, Omega; Francis Tuttle, Oklahoma City; Gordon Cooper,

Shawnee; Great Plains, Lawton; Red River, Duncan; Southwest, Altus; Caddo Kiowa, Fort Cobb; Pioneer, Ponca City; Moore Norman in Norman; Northeast, Pryor; Pontotoc, Ada; Mid-

America, Wayne; Southern Oklahoma, Ardmore; Tri County, Bartlesville; Tulsa Tech, Tulsa; Metro Tech, Oklahoma City, Autry Tech, Enid; Indian Capital, Muskogee and Kiamichi, Wilburton.

"The model is based on the agricultural extension system," Peters said.

"Their goal is to help manufacturers increase sales and reduce costs," Peters said.

"At the end of every project, the manufacturing extension agent sits

down with the firm's CEO to determine an estimate on the dollars saved and retained," he said.

Manufacturers have been pleased with the results of the partnership. Richard Reynolds, owner of Bermuda King, a Kingfisher firm that build planters and harvesters, said the Alliance and its network of manufacturing extension agents helped speed up production time.

"It used to take us two weeks to build a machine. Now it takes us two days," he said.

GirlTech mentoring program receives *Journal Record's* Innovator Award

The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education's *GirlTech* program recently received *The Journal Record's* Innovator of the Year award.

The award recognizes Oklahomans who set themselves apart with products and services that change the market and make Oklahoma a better place.

"We were really surprised to receive the award and elated the project was recognized," said Fern Bowling, equity specialist at the state *CareerTech* agency.

Bowling, along with Dr. Belinda McCharen and Kelly Arrington, served on a team that developed the concept of *GirlTech*.

"The real significance of *GirlTech* is getting young girls interested in nontraditional careers," she said.

GirlTech is a mentoring project designed to help female students



From left are Dr. Belinda McCharen, ODCTE; Lt. Gov. Mary Fallin; Jo Kahn and Kelly Arrington, both ODCTE, and Mary Melon, publisher of *The Journal Record*.

succeed in nontraditional career paths such as information technology and scientific research/engineering professions. *GirlTech's* database, designed by Oklahoma City-based information technology company, matches female students with mentors who work in these professions.

The program is currently being piloted at Meridian Technology Center in Stillwater and Francis Tuttle in Oklahoma City. Site coordinators are Barbara Miller and Jennifer Haile-Egbert at Francis Tuttle and DeAnna Little and Lawanta Ramsey at Meridian Technology Center.

Bowling said mentors at these schools have been matched with 32 students. Students and mentors in the program are recruited by the site coordinators.

"The students participate in activities such as online mentoring, job shadowing, career exploration, communication skills, course advisement, workplace etiquette and portfolio development," she said.

According to Bowling, the state *CareerTech* agency plans to expand the *GirlTech* project to two additional sites next year.

GIRL TECH

Expressions the official publication of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. It is published nine times per year (from September through May) by the Communications and Marketing division. Story ideas are welcomed. Please send your ideas to the address below, or telephone (405) 743-5109.

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This publication is printed and issued by the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education as authorized by 70 O.S. 1981, Sec. 14-104, as amended. 2,000 copies have been prepared and distributed at a cost of \$xxx.xx. Copies have been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

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Georgia-Pacific vice president recognizes Indian Capital Tech Center as valuable partner

Karl Meyers has watched the Georgia-Pacific Corporation's paper manufacturing mill in Muskogee grow from one paper machine in 1978 to five machines, a \$900 million capital investment. The mill has 1,500 employees and produces \$400 million in shipments annually.

The Muskogee mill manufactures name brand facial and bath tissue, towel, and napkin products.

"Since the startup of our Muskogee mill in 1978, it has not only been advantageous but necessary for our maintenance department to work with Indian Capital Technology Center to provide quality education and training for our maintenance mechanics and electricians," Meyers said.

"During the initial months of our first construction phase, our team members used the resources of the tech center to bring their skills up to requirements," he said. "Over the years, we have been actively involved with Indian Capital to satisfy special maintenance training requirements. Indian Capital facilities, instructors and equipment, along with Georgia-Pacific resources and trainers, have been the answer to most all of our needs."

That's why Georgia Pacific is being recognized as one of Oklahoma's *CareerTech* Business Champions, according to Dr. Ann Benson, *CareerTech* state director.

"*CareerTech* Business Champions attribute much of their economic success to the partnerships they have formed with the local technology center or high school *CareerTech* programs," Benson said.

In 1986, Georgia Pacific's maintenance department kicked off

a bold training program to ensure that all team members were trained in a broad-based skills program.

"Indian Capital was there," Meyers said. "We had a long list of needed skills training in this program. During the training, more than 200 of our maintenance team members completed an average of 500 hours each in education and



Karl Meyers

training for an estimated total of 100,000 hours from 1982 to 1992."

In 1992, Georgia-Pacific announced a \$160 million mill expansion project.

"Again, Indian Capital met our training challenges by offering specialized training to meet our growing requirements and those of our ever-changing technology," Meyers said. "This was accomplished through training set up with equipment vendors at our Muskogee and Green Bay mills, at vendor-offered schools, and, of course, at our tech center."

Indian Capital has played a tremendous role in coordinating and providing training opportuni-

ties for the company's team members, and it continues to meet challenges. More than 498 people were trained in expansion-related skills, totaling approximately 95,000 hours.

"This magnitude of learning would simply not be possible without the support of the Oklahoma *CareerTech* system," Meyers said.

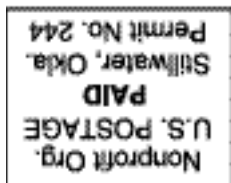
In 1968, Oklahoma *CareerTech* developed a state-funded training support system to use as a selling point for new or expanding business and industry to locate in Oklahoma. In that year, the Oklahoma Training for Industry (TIP) program was introduced.

"We believe that what has developed is a mutually beneficial, showcase system to promote investment in Oklahoma's future," Meyers said.

Over the years, the Muskogee mill has entered into many partnerships with the technology center, such as serving on Indian Capital's advisory boards. The mill has been honored through both the state and national *CareerTech* system as an outstanding corporate citizen, educational partner, and for boosting Oklahoma's economy and employment opportunities for its citizens.

"Indian Capital Technology Center programs are an integral part of the success of our Muskogee mill's continued growth," Meyers said.

"Skills and continued training provided by Oklahoma's technology center system are progressive and a definite investment in the people of eastern Oklahoma," he said. "We are strong supporters of the Oklahoma *CareerTech* system and look forward to a continued partnership in the future."



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Volume 33 • Number 4 • April 2002

CareerTech's reputation spreads to China

The Oklahoma career and technology education system has discovered word of mouth is a great advertising tool since several educational delegations from across the globe have traveled to Oklahoma to see the system in action.

The latest delegation was a group of educators from China's Gansu Province.

Ivan Armstrong, coordinator of international services at the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, helped organize the delegation's tour of the state CareerTech agency and Meridian Technology Center in Stillwater. The delegation was scheduled to visit New York and California but made a detour to visit education sites in Oklahoma, he said. According to Armstrong, the Chinese learned about CareerTech from members of an Oklahoma economic development mission team that visited Gansu Province in January. Gansu Province became a sister

state with Oklahoma under Gov. George Nigh, in 1984.

"When the Oklahoma group went to China, they talked about how supportive CareerTech was," he said. "The delegation included representatives from industry partners such as Boeing and Ditch Witch."

The Chinese delegation, which was made up of two officials from the Gansu Department of Education

and five university administrators, were interested in the CareerTech Learning Network, which provides distance learning and online instruction. They also visited the University of Oklahoma, Norman, and the Teletraining Institute in Stillwater.

According to Armstrong, the Chinese educators are interested in using distance learning to train educators.



Pictured from left are Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education employees Larry Keen and Rusty Muns. They are demonstrating the CareerTech Learning Network, which provides distance learning and online instruction, to a delegation of educators and university administrators from Gansu Province in China.