

Minnesota West – Electrician Program
Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday – October 25, 2018 – 5:00 p.m. - Key Largo on Lake Shetek
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order – 5:07 pm

- **Trevor Humphrey – Facilitator**
 - *Meeting Minutes by Meghan Hanna - Canby*

Roll Call – Member Contact List

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|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| • Brett Ruppert | • Andy Toft | • Lance Baumann |
| • Hans Ritter | • Trevor Humphrey | • Garrett Balcom |
| • Colin Brennan | • Jim Brewers | • Liam Kelly |
| • Bruce Gemmill | • Gary Olsen | |
| • Jim Skjefte | • Rob Arp | |

Approval of Last Meeting’s Minutes

Old Business

- **Enrollment**
 - **Report on Current Numbers**
 - Jackson has turned the corner with 20+ first year students but a weak 2nd year.
 - Canby is down for both first and second year enrollment numbers. It’s a big struggle.
 - **Discuss How to Increase Enrollment**
 - Jackson used Marketers to get the word out to a wide area of prospects. States the Auto and Power Sports programs were in dire trouble until the team went out every Friday to recruit and talk to students. Numbers have increased as a result.
 - Canby feels numbers have declined since the Marketing team was pulled out. Recruitment is up to instructors which is difficult when teaching multiple programs and having a full Monday through Friday schedule. Finding additional time to get to schools is challenging.
 - Group agreed that attending Career Fairs is almost too late in the game. There is a need to reach the students earlier on in high school.
 - Trevor said he is part of a panel that meets with 7th & 8th graders, then 9th & 10th, as well as 11th and 12th graders to field questions, tell about the industry and different facets of being an Electrician or in a related field (sales – etc.). The goal is to plant the seed early and groom prospective students.
 - Group agreed that instructors can communicate with students in a way that Marketers cannot, but finding the time to do this every Friday is difficult.
 - Jackson is hosting an event for 35-45 School Counselors on 10/26/18 to give campus tours and provide information about various programs.
 - Trevor suggested reaching out to Alumni / Journeymen to meet with students and tell them what they do and talk about being an Electrician. Suggested an incentive amount of \$100. Everyone agreed that the best referrals come from word of mouth.
 - Parental involvement when touring and “selling” the school/program to prospective students is important. Canby has hosted several family visits and having the parents hear about job prospects and the potential for success seems to help with commitment.
 - Canby also noted the importance of marketing to Non-Traditional students.
 - It was stated that 53% or more jobs will be “non 4 year degree” jobs. The trend is toward trade careers.

- **Industry Partnership**

- **Past Years Progress**
 - Question: “What do industry partners NEED to see in strong candidates?”
 - Understanding the theory portion is highly important. Candidates need to know the “why” in addition to the “how to” in order to troubleshoot and have success in the industry.
 - Jackson put out a general statement of thanks to the industry partners for collaborations and donations which shows their interest in the program’s success. (Example: Donation of 7000 ft. of conduit)
- **Ideas for Future**
 - Stated: “Better colleges programs are better for the industry which is better for ALL.”
 - The strongest industry partnerships / collaborations seemed to be forged by individuals and not the state.
 - Incentive gifts for students / prospects have declined over the years. Previously a full set of tools might be given away which was a strong incentive, but now a certificate and a pliers are more the norm. Canby stated the value of the Skills USA competition and the winners at Nationals receive a big set of tools / incentives.
 - Agreed that there is still value in Job Fairs overall. Canby hosted one last year with good results. Seven industry vendors came to discuss their organizations as well as recruit and meet candidates. Canby will host another Job Fair, which will be held in the spring of 2019. Jackson stated they may do the same.
- **Leveraged Funds**
 - **Current and Future Projects**
 - PLC Trainers were sold to Jackson at a 50% discount by Alan Bradley. One was on display at the meeting for everyone to see.
 - Software and Hardware donations were received.
 - Canby received a generous donation from Lab Volt for transformer and banking training and lab work.
- **PV Certificate**
 - **Low Enrollment**
 - Jackson stated they have no numbers to speak of. There is a three college collaboration and they have been unable to put together a program.
 - Contractors are screaming for certifications and there is a large amount of solar work out there. (Example: 900 acre Solar farms are in the works)
 - Student/employees are asking “what is the benefit of PV certification?” because they are getting solar jobs without the certification?
 - Discussed the importance of having licensure. Lots of work is being done by non-licensed people to “save a buck”. However, if there is trouble down the line, the licensed electrician could be held responsible if they did work before the non-licensed person
- **Exam Prep / Continuing Ed**
 - Not much has been done on this since last year’s discussion, but everyone agreed it is a great idea.
 - Providing Customized Training is profitable and there is a need for Continuing Ed hours. This could be a cash cow for the programs.

Open Discussion (Contractor Needs)

- Discussion how “Tech Ed / Shop” teachers seem to be obsolete at the High Schools.
- Jackson suggested offering classes in the High Schools equaling 2 credits that could be used toward a future course at MN West. This might be an incentive for schools to develop the curriculum and students would get “something” for taking classes. (\$400 worth of tuition.)

- Conversation about seeing potential employees who want to make big money but don't want to invest in themselves or challenge themselves professionally. What do they bring to the table to warrant higher wages? However, demand has affected wages drastically and many are being offered \$18-\$20 per hour right out of school.
- Unemployment is at 3% and all industries are competing for workers.
- Many young people want to leave the area and it is difficult to find good candidates to fill jobs.
- Historically, there has been a stigma associated with being in a trade or going to school for a trade. The thought was "you can't cut it in a 4 year school so you default to a trade". But the current trend is OVERCOMING this stigma and it is everyone's job to inspire the younger generation and find the people who can and will fill the role of Electrician well.
- Some of the industry partners stated they would be HAPPY to team up and meet with students. Showing that there are other aspects to have an electrical degree and a variety of positions besides the traditional electrician...sales, data, solar, construction, and so much more. Canby states they impress on the students from the very first day of classes that they are NOW Professionals in the industry.
- Discussion about other contractors doing electrical work without proper licensure and how to keep the work within the electrical realm.
- Discussed fixtures and the use of equipment which is not UL listed (made in China). However, wholesalers state they will stand by their products.

Adjournment – 6:12 pm