

St. Lucie Schools counselors' turn to learn

Port St. Lucie/October 25 – The Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County (EDC) and the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association (TCMA) introduced 15 high school guidance counselors from St. Lucie Public Schools to some of the county's most prominent manufacturers yesterday.



St. Lucie County high school counselors listen to Advanced Machine & Tool General Manager Jerry Jacques, far right, on his company's production floor in Fort Pierce.
Photo by Jill Marasa.

The inaugural School Counselor Tour showcased the wide variety of rewarding careers in manufacturing available to their students right here at home. The group visited A-1 Roof Trusses, Phoenix Metal Products, Maverick Boat Group, D&D Welding, and Advanced Machine & Tool.

“The work these people do is incredibly important and has a powerful impact on students' lives for decades,” said Scott Deal,

CEO and founder of Maverick Boat Company in Fort Pierce. Deal said he appreciated the counselors taking time to learn about his business and his need for quality workers of all kinds.

“We not only build boats, we build things that go into boats,” said Deal, explaining that the company employs a wide variety of workers to do programming, accounting, sewing and upholstery, lamination, hanging motors and much more. “The three Qs are the biggest thing for us,” he said. “We are a quality company with quality people building quality products. We are looking for the three As – attitude, aptitude and attendance.” Deal said Maverick Boat Group will train workers who demonstrate the three As.

“I think this tour opened the counselors' eyes to a lot of good, local career possibilities for their students that they weren't aware of,” said Jill Marasa, EDC vice president, business retention and expansion.

“These manufacturing jobs pay well and have great benefits. They are a fantastic option for students who are not college-bound.”

“It was great to see the counselors touring our local manufacturers. Several of them had no idea the careers that these local companies have to offer their students. What an eye-opening experience for them,” said Tammy Roncaglione, CenterState Bank St. Lucie County community president and founding member of TCMA.

Korissa Diaz, counselor at Performance Based Preparatory Academy, a public alternative high school in Fort Pierce, agrees wholeheartedly with Marasa. “I kept thinking, as we were going through the different businesses, what an untapped resource this is,” said Diaz. “I’ve lived in St. Lucie County all my life and I had no idea any of these businesses existed. You could have told me about this all day long, but I wouldn’t have realized the magnitude of it.”

Diaz said that more than half of her school’s 120 students would benefit from taking entry-level jobs with these local manufacturers and working their way up.

The tour was one of the initiatives the EDC is fostering to address the Treasure Coast Skills Gap Study findings that confirmed a significant shortfall in manufacturing, skilled construction and healthcare workers in the Treasure Coast region.

About the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County

The EDC is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting economic vitality in St. Lucie County through the attraction, retention and expansion of businesses in the community. The EDC works in partnership with local governments and the private sector to advance its goals of creating more and better-paying jobs for residents, broadening the tax base and improving St. Lucie County’s economic quality of life. Contact the EDC at 772.336.6250 or <http://www.youredc.com>.

About the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association

The TMCA is a private, not-for-profit membership organization established in 2016. The TCMA seeks to enhance job and economic development in the Treasure Coast’s vital and growing manufacturing sector. Focusing on mutual areas of concern, the organization promotes the collective interests of manufacturing, distribution and wholesale trade companies, including advocacy for business-friendly public policy. Visit <http://www.tcmamfg.com> for more information.