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**City of Madison Redevelopment Commission partners with Madison Consolidated Schools with approval of significant funding of advanced manufacturing training Innovation Center.**

Madison, IN: On Wednesday, April 7, 2015 the City of Madison Redevelopment Commission voted unanimously to fund \$130,000.00 for the Innovative Industrial Technology Training Center project planned for Madison Consolidated High School. “The Commission felt this was a good initial investment which will create opportunities for more students, help address local workforce development concerns of area manufacturers, and support local economic development,” states Joe Craig, Chairman City of Madison Redevelopment Commission.

Partnering with local manufacturers, community leaders, city officials, local and regional economic development entities, regional workforce agencies, and postsecondary education leaders within the community Madison Consolidated Schools is leading the way and changing the equation for students.

While the city of Madison is nationally recognized for its historical elements, the lifeblood of the local economy has generations of established roots and a global presence in manufacturing. Data shows 26.3% of Jefferson County employment is identified within the advanced manufacturing sector. Local industry leaders have shared they will face a large number of retirements in the coming decade in the skilled labor and trades professional areas. “This workforce bubble creates a concern as the current landscape of advanced manufacturing is changing very quickly and the availability of skilled workforce within our community is a challenge,” shares Roger Williams, President/CEO/Owner of Royer Corporation, a Madison based manufacturer specializing in custom plastic injection molding and decorations. “The skillset and knowledge necessary to operate and maintain the advanced manufacturing equipment in facilities today is very different from what was needed even five years ago. Through this partnership, industry leaders and educators are in a unique position to partner in a solution by providing an academically enriched, hands-on experience for the students through the

Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Pathway curriculum offered at Madison Consolidated High School.”

Leaders within local industries and Madison Consolidated Schools have been working together for the last year to identify ways in which students can graduate with advanced skills and industry certificates necessary to be hired at one of the many high-tech, global manufacturing facilities headquartered in Madison; having immediate, positive impact on the workforce needs on the horizon.

The answer comes in the form of an advanced manufacturing training Innovation Center. “We know our current space does not contain and cannot accommodate the types of high-tech equipment necessary to teach today’s students the skills needed to get a well-paid job at any number of our local manufacturing facilities. The bigger challenge is the pending workforce development bubble and fulfilling the skills gap for local employers. The manufacturing skills necessary today are much more technical than ever before, and certainly more advanced than can be taught with the outdated equipment found in the existing industrial arts classroom space,” states Kathy Huffman, College and Career Readiness Coordinator with Madison Consolidated Schools. “With this sizeable financial commitment, our community has made an investment in our schools and in our youth through the funding of this advanced training facility on our campus.”

This project will completely renovate, modernize, and equip a new Innovation Center where students will be given hands-on opportunity to learn on the latest, most sophisticated machines, and computer aided systems. They will learn to use programmable logic controllers that manipulate and control robotic systems on many of the high-tech machines used in our local manufacturing facilities. Students will have the opportunity to learn on highly specialized training equipment that teaches them the basic skills necessary to run the actual equipment they will encounter in the real world.

The longer-term goal for the students who are in the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering pathway curriculum will be to use their training and skills to operate a student run business. Through the creation of Cub Manufacturing, students will have the opportunity for work-based learning to help them understand all functional aspects of business including finance, logistics, inventory, purchasing, problem solving, teamwork, supervision, and time management.

Through the use of Indiana Career Explorer, Madison Consolidated Schools is able to confidently estimate that 40% of junior high and senior high school aged students career assessment results show interest in advanced manufacturing, STEM, or distribution logistics careers. Beginning in junior high, students are given the opportunity to participate in grade level appropriate surveys in order to assess their career interests. This trackable data allows schools and counselors access to student specific information, which in turn, assists in course selection at an earlier juncture to help students select an academic path to support their fields of interest. “Our goal is to have students, in grades 6 through 12, engaged each year with an assessment to gauge where their career interests lie. We will use this information to guide them along that path, assess performance and heightened/waned interest, or determine if interests have changed and redirect coursework,” states Huffman.

With 23% of MCS students currently enrolled in Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Pathway curriculum, there is an enormous opportunity to expand interests, enhance experiences, and develop skill-sets to fill the serious, upcoming applicant shortages for many local employers. MCS has worked to establish the curriculum that meets the classroom needs, but lacks the funds to provide the type of hands on experience that is crucial to getting ahead in the hiring process. The financial, human and capital investment made by the City of Madison within our community into Madison Consolidated Schools will have a huge return on investment for everyone within our community. Providing students with the required skills and hands-on business experience, they have an opportunity to graduate ahead of the curve with attributes which will make them an attractive, prospective employee for the many employers within our community. It is a win-win for everyone; students have potential to earn more, employers have an increasing number of job ready, skilled workers, and the community enhances its prosperity.

The Phase 1 project timeline will begin immediately, with the Innovation Center available to students in time for classes to begin in August 2015. Funding finalization and student scheduling is slated for March and April, equipment orders and preliminary and final renovation plans are set for the April/May timeframe, with construction beginning once classes dismiss in June. Phase 2 planning will begin immediately upon Phase 1 implementation with the goal of the Cub Manufacturing Pilot to begin in August 2016.

We would like to thank our industry and community partners who helped make this project a reality. Their commitment to this process through financial support, employee volunteer hours, guidance and feedback on certifications, and support of the academic environment through internships and mentoring have made this project possible. They are: Arvin Sango, Inc., Indiana Kentucky Electric Power Plant, Grote Industries, Koehler Welding Supply, Madison Precision Products, Royer Corporation, Vehicle Service Group, City of Madison, Ivy Tech Community College - Madison Campus, EcO15 and Dream It Do It!, Jefferson County Industrial Development Corporation, and SE Indiana Workforce Investment Board.

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