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Upcoming program aims to boost students' futures

By Ryan Silvola
Sep 15, 2017

BELOIT — Television host Mike Rowe, Gov. Scott Walker and business leaders will be featured at an upcoming event aimed at inspiring students to think about their future.

On Oct. 5, Hendricks CareerTek, the Hendricks Family Foundation and Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) will host a free event titled, “Dare to Dream: A Discussion of Hard Work and Innovation” at the Eclipse Center in Beloit. The event, which is being held in conjunction with Manufacturing Month, will open with networking between students and business leaders from 3:30-5 p.m. A presentation and discussion with Rowe will follow. Rowe is the former star of the Discovery Channel TV show “Dirty Jobs.”

“Trying to determine the next step after high school can be overwhelming for students and parents,” said Lisa Furseth, executive director of the Hendricks Family Foundation. “Our goal in partnering with CareerTek and WMC for this event is to talk with students about the myriad of opportunities that exist in the state. There are high demand opportunities in good paying jobs that might be the right path for some of them.”



Students from Beloit Memorial High School, Beloit Turner and South Beloit High School and their parents are invited to participate and arrive at 3:30 p.m. to meet local business people from a variety of skilled trades and other professional fields for informal conversations about careers. Following the networking, the featured speakers – which include Rowe, Walker, WMC President Kurt Bauer and local business leader Diane Hendricks – will address the need for skilled trades workers in the state.

According to WMC, the average salary for skilled trades workers in Wisconsin is \$55,000 annually – \$10,000 per year more than the average private sector job. Additionally, 85 percent of manufacturing workers in Wisconsin receive health benefits through their jobs compared to 72 percent of all workers.

With Wisconsin and much of America facing a skilled trades worker shortage, demand for well-trained, educated workers in fields such as construction and manufacturing and other areas has soared. A survey conducted earlier this year by the Associated General Contractors of America shows that 73 percent of Wisconsin construction firms can't find enough skilled workers to fill jobs. Nationally, companies such as BMW and Fiat Chrysler have started their own automotive technician training programs because there are not enough qualified adults entering the workforce.

“High school graduates may be familiar with options such as four-year university programs or military service, but the skilled trades is not an area that is talked about as much,” Director of Education Services at Hendricks CareerTek Susan Day said.

“We want to shine a light on careers that lead to financial prosperity for people in those fields and fosters pride in the work done, which impacts all of us.”

High school students and parents interested in attending the event are encouraged to register at <https://hendricksareertek.org/event/dare-to-dream/2017-10-05/> Space is limited, with emphasis placed upon student attendees.

Additional support for the event is being provided by Regal Beloit Corporation, Kerry, Alliant Energy, Frito Lay, R.H. Batterman, Rock County 5.0, Mid-States Concrete Industries, Blackhawk Technical College, Angus-Young Associates and North American Tool. Proceeds will benefit Hendricks CareerTek, a program of the Stateline Boys and Girls Club.