

Manufacturing Magic: Area students participate in the Assemble ur Career Tour

On Tuesday, February 10th, 136 students from DeKalb, Sycamore, Genoa-Kingston and Rochelle Township high schools participated in a visit, got a plant tour and then listen to business professionals' talk about careers in a variety of area manufacturing industries. As part of the Assemble ur Career Tour coordinated by the DeKalb/Ogle Workforce Development Consortium, students visited S-K Tools, Dawn Engineering, Dun-Rite Tool and Machine, the Suter Company, Custom Aluminum Products, MPP (Sycamore Container), Swenson Spreader and Maplehurst Farms.

Area leader Karen Schmitt was with Sycamore High School students at S-K Tools and says, "It's amazing to watch a student link what they are learning in the classroom to how it will be applied in their future career. A confident excitement is seen on their faces and heard in their voices." While at S-K, the students got to see raw steel being turned into bright, shiny tools and sockets, through one of the area's most modern and efficient manufacturing facilities.

Following the visits to area industries, the buses converged on the Engineering Building on the campus of Northern Illinois University. Hosted by David Grady, Assistant Director of Engineering and Engineering Technology Outreach, and accompanied by numerous NIU Ambassadors, the students got to see the various components that make up NIU's Engineering and Engineering Technology Departments. Following the tour, a pizza lunch was served and Associate Dean Omar Ghrayeb addressed the students and encouraged them to follow their curiosity, look toward the future and imagine the results through engineering.

Dawn and Maplehurst addressed the often bypassed big business of farming. Dun-Rite and Custom Aluminum showed the advantage and future of computer numeric controller machinery. Swenson's fabricating capabilities were on display when the students visited their Lindenwood location. MPP showed the students often overlooked packaging industry and the Suter Company represented the food industry and its' attempt to suppress our appetites.

Ellen Divita, Community Development Director for the City of DeKalb says, "Introduction to career choices can play a powerful role in a student's decision. The City of DeKalb supports the DeKalb/Ogle Workforce Development Consortium. This growing partnership between the private sector and all levels of our school system is set up to mentor and guide our DeKalb High School students. This week's tour showcased manufacturing processes at two local companies and provided an opportunity to meet top educators and students at the NIU School of Engineering. Several students indicated a plan to return to Dun-Rite Tool and Machine in Cortland to learn more. Suter Foods provided a tour and discussed internal safety programs, and company culture and expectations. The learning labs at NIU were of great interest and provided an opportunity for the students to connect again with several staff members they have already met with at the High School."

A special thanks to all of those who participated in any way. For more information, contact the DeKalb/Ogle Workforce Development Consortium at 815-593-0865 or e-mail Gene Fogle at gfogle@dcedc.org



Sycamore students gather at S-K Tools.

Photo by Kay Robinson of S-K Tools



Dan Appleton, Quality Control Manger at Dawn Equipment talks to students on the Assemble ur Career Tour on February 10th. Photo by Brian Davis of Sycamore High School