



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Opportunity Awareness Council holding a community conversation with Dr. Andrew Melin at the Fabiani Theatre, Trine on May 21st.

The Opportunity Awareness Council (OAC) of Steuben County along with Steuben County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) has announced that they will be coordinating a community conversation with Dr. Andrew Melin of Greater Clark County Schools on May 21st starting at 4:30pm in the Fabiani Theatre at Trine University.

The Opportunity Awareness Council (OAC) of Steuben County will be holding a community conversation with Dr. Andrew Melin, Superintendent of schools from Greater Clark County Indiana, to take place at Trine's Fabiani Theatre the evening of May 21. Dr. Melin's presentation, entitled "Embracing Community Partners to Transform Education and Build a Talent Development Pipeline," will focus on better preparing today's students for post-secondary opportunities, be they employment or post-secondary education. Working with the Steuben County EDC, the OAC was formed by representatives from local industry, to build consensus on an action plan that would meet the employment needs for local employers in the county in the coming decade. A catalyst for the creation of OAC was the first Workforce Taskforce meeting held at Trine University in October of last year, where the dominant feedback from employers was that workforce readiness was a major factor in their challenges in employee attraction and retention. The direction and goals for the Opportunity Awareness council were further cemented by the consensus of priorities that were confirmed by the Angola Hometown Collaboration Initiative (HCI) held at the Angola High School in March of 2018.

Through exhaustive conversation, the OAC developed a mission statement that includes the statement, "the council will communicate to, and collaborate with, area school districts, post-secondary educators, public officials, economic development corporations and other stakeholders of the community to build a stronger and larger population of future employees to meet projected demand." The OAC is responding to both the needs of employers, as well as the economic needs of the community, by focusing attention on growing the population of future employees who are ready for work. Gary Koester, the OAC chair quotes a statistic provided by the Isaac Lee, the Executive Director of the Steuben County Economic

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Development Corporation at the first “Workforce” meeting as his motivation for getting involved. That statistic indicates that 60% of the jobs that will need to be filled by employers in the next 10 years will not necessarily require more than a High School degree or equivalency.

Past Workforce events organized by the SCEDC looked for individuals and industries who were passionate about providing better pathways and opportunities for our current residents and future residents (talent attraction) to careers within Steuben County. The call to action then and now will be to continue to encourage individuals to participate in future meetings designed to address the objectives below.

- Meet the workforce development needs of the business community now and into the future.
- Develop a consensus path for training the next generation of workers for our industries.
- Determine the causes for the current shortage of workforce and address the impact of the shortages on future growth of our communities.
- Review current methods and resources available for training this new workforce
- Review the state and awareness of possible opportunities for the new workforce in areas of K-12, dislocated workers, veterans returning to work, and other individuals returning to the workforce.

More information can be found by going to our website at www.steubenedc.com/workforce-development/opportunity-awareness-council.

The SCEDC is a 501-c (3) non-profit, private entity contracted to administer economic development activities within Steuben County and every municipality within its county borders. The vision of the SCEDC is it will develop and sustain a diversified economy that promotes economic growth and innovation by embracing the ingenuity of employers, cultivating a highly-educated workforce, and maintaining a high quality of life valued by residents and visitors alike. More information can be found on our website at www.steubenedc.com.

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