



MATT BARNARD / Tulsa World

Beth Henderson, career adviser with Tulsa Technology Center, talks with students at McLain High School for Science and Technology during a meeting of the school's widget factory.

Life lessons

Widget factory teaches students about money

By SHANNON MUCHMORE
World Staff Writer

When Michael Fugate's students at McLain High School for Science and Technology first started a "widget" factory project, they were impressed with the idea of hypothetically earning \$10 an hour.

Then they found out about taxes. Soon after, they discovered union dues, health insurance plans and the cost of renting an apartment.

"I think it's given the kids a lot to reflect on," Fugate said.

The widget factory is a semester-long project for about 20 freshmen in Fugate's math class at McLain, 4929 N. Peoria Ave. It is designed to teach students about the realities of earning a paycheck and supporting themselves after school.

Students filled out employment applications and received employee handbooks with information about cafeteria health insurance plans and

401K retirement funds. The handbooks also included harassment policies and employee discipline procedures.

Students were instructed to develop a budget based on their income, and most put big-screen televisions and designer sports cars as top priorities.

"Being ninth-graders, they're going, 'Hurray, we're rich,'" Fugate said.

When they got their first paychecks, however, they found out that net pay wasn't what they expected. They had to recalculate budgets and started asking about the price of Ramen noodles instead of fancy cars.

Students were given the opportunity to sign a lease for an apartment and watch more of their income used up.

Fugate said the lessons taught students what they would face if they dropped out of high school.

"We had some interesting discussions in class," he said.

In a recent class period, Beth Henderson, career adviser at Tulsa Tech-

nology Center, posed as line supervisor while students made "widgets" from toothpicks, marshmallows and gumdrops.

The students split into three groups and formed assembly lines. After a few minutes, the products were inspected for quality control.

After a few rounds and several discussions about what goes on at a factory, team one was issued a letter of reprimand and team two was given a \$20 bonus for good production and low error rates.

Jasmin Frank, a team two member, said the project has been an eye-opener for her. She already has a job, but there is still much to understand about independent living, she said.

"I learned a lot," she said.

Henderson said the project is successful because it shows students what life is really like.

"I love it because it makes what they're doing in class realistic to them," she said.

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BETH HENDERSON

TULSA TECHNOLOGY CENTER CAREER ADVISER

Mannford hopes to boost tourism

By BRIGID KIMERY VANCE
World Staff Writer

The Mannford Tourism Committee hopes 2008 will be a more profitable year for the community.

Last summer brought heavy rains to the area, causing Lake Keystone, among others, to reach water levels up to 20 feet above normal.

High water levels kept locals and tourists off the lake and, as a result, out of Mannford.

Rita Bougher, Chamber of Commerce president and co-owner of N-D-N Hunting and Fishing, 5006 Hwy. 51, said the community never recovered after the flooding.

"I own a bait shop as well, and so it affected me in more than one way," she said. "I'm hoping this year we can recover from what we lost last year."

The Tulsa World previously reported that even through October, water levels sometimes stayed a couple of feet higher than average.

Because the typical tourist season runs through October, Bougher said, the season was a bust.

"You just can't imagine how many people do come out here (in a normal year)," she said.

Town Administrator Mike Nunneley said Mannford lost \$50,000 last year, not including private businesses.

Mannford runs more than 70 campsites at New Mannford Ramp that usually are booked through the summer.

The weather kept them closed from the end of June through the beginning of August.

"It had a pretty major impact," Nunneley said.

One of 2008's first tourism campaigns will happen at next week's Tulsa Boat,

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"This is the first year that Mannford is having a booth at it," said Kent Dunlap, a member of the Mannford Chamber of Commerce and Army Corps of Engineers.

"It promotes Mannford, but it really promotes the Lake Keystone area."

Members of the tourism committee will run the booth to encourage show attendees to see what Mannford and the lake have to offer.

"(We want) to try to promote people to come to our lake — to let people know we are only 20 minutes from Tulsa," Bougher said.

The committee will hold daily drawings to give out a gas grill as well as Mannford recreational services, such as a meal at a local restaurant, free camping and more.

The event precedes the beginning of the tourism season, with bass tournaments in March and over Memorial Day weekend marking the start of the busy summer.

"We know we'll have to continue to work on drawing people, but this is one step towards it," Bougher said.

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Two council positions up for election

By SHAWN EPPERSON
World Staff Writer

Two city council positions in Sand Springs are up for election in 2008.

A primary election is scheduled for March 4, and a general election will follow in April, if needed.

The filing period for the primary is Feb. 4-6 at City Hall, 100 E. Broadway St.

Ward 3 and Ward 4 are up for election, said Sand Springs Mayor Bob Walker, who has held the Ward 4 spot for one three-year term.

Vice Mayor Mike Burdge has served four consecutive terms as Ward 3 council member.

Both men said they are not aware of anyone who intends to file for the wards.

Walker said if he is elected for another term on the council, he will continue to focus on creating and filling jobs within the community and supporting local business.

"I'm really big on growing jobs locally with the existing business and manufacturing," he said.

"Eighty-five percent of our new jobs come from existing business (within Sand Springs)."

Walker said watching Sand Springs continue to grow in many areas and being a part of that through the city council are important to him.

"We're excited (about the future), and I want to be a part of that the next three years," he said. "It's always been a good community. I want to go from good community to great."

Burdge said he wants to continue to work on economic development issues as well as promoting more community involvement throughout Sand Springs at all levels.

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