



1216 21st Street
Vero Beach, FL 32960
PH: 772-567-3491
web site: www.indianrivered.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 30, 2019

Helene Caseltine, Economic Development Director

First IRC Manufacturing Boot Camp A Success

A Career Exploration Program for High School Seniors

Vero Beach, FL. The Indian River County Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the success of the first Manufacturing Boot Camp in Indian River County.

The program, held May 20-24, introduced eight recently-graduated high school seniors to the manufacturing industry, providing them an opportunity to explore potential careers in this industry sector. While touring local companies, participants asked owners and facility managers questions about the skills needed, entry-level pay scales and job responsibilities. The results: Two students received job offers and at least three others had follow-up interviews with local employers.

In partnership with the [Indian River County School District](#) and [CareerSource Research Coast](#), and the hard work of many volunteers to make this happen, the Chamber's Economic Development Office began planning the Boot Camp last summer. The students, all young men, had a very rigorous week, visiting nine local manufacturers plus the CVS distribution facility. Breakfast, lunch and transportation were provided. There was no cost for the students to participate.

"This is a component of our Business Retention and Expansion program," explains Helene Caseltine, Economic Development Director at the Indian River Chamber. She adds "Manufacturers throughout the region are in hiring mode, and who better to hire and train than someone fresh out of school who's looking for full-time

work?” Caseltine noted that many workers are starting to retire out of the workforce, so this program helps to build up that workforce pipeline.

Students met each morning at the [Treasure Coast Technical College](#) to complete the “FL Ready to Work” computer modules, which provide lessons in soft-skills training such as communication, teamwork and critical thinking. Students also took part in a virtual welding session and an intro to the Certified Production Technician. [Manpower](#) conducted sessions on interviewing, resume writing, and the importance of a firm but not bone-breaking handshake, and [National Bank of Commerce](#) offered tips on budgeting.

On Friday afternoon, a Speed Interviewing session was held for students to meet one-on-one with participating Boot Camp employers. Following the interviews, a special Completion Celebration was held to acknowledge the students’ hard work and commitment to the program. School Board Chair Laura Zorc handed out the Certificates of Completion and congratulated each student.

A special thank you to the local employers who hosted the group, many of whom provided lunch and take-away items for the students: [Triton Submarines](#), [Dragonfly Boatworks](#), [Girard Equipment](#), [Float-On Boat Trailers](#), [M.A. Ford](#), [Nylacarb](#), [Aluma Tower](#), [United Juice](#), [CVS Distribution](#), and [Piper Aircraft](#). And, to [Wells Fargo Bank](#) for providing goody-bags for the students. Planning is already underway for next year’s program.

The Indian River County Manufacturing Boot Camp program is based on the successful program in St. Lucie County. Employers in our region were concerned about a growing Skills Gap in our workforce. To address the challenge, the Boot Camp program was developed to focus on training and building a “pipeline” of future workers.

For more information on the program, call Helene Caseltine at the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce, 772-567-3491.

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