

New Partnership Taps Into Trade Opportunities With China

Five years ago, Albert Chen had an epiphany. “I saw the 21st century would be in Asia,” he shares. “Lots of (Hoosier) businesses concentrate on China ... I thought maybe there would be an advantage to put those two (groups) together.”

Fast forward to 2010 and the America China Society of Indiana (ACSI) was born. Chen, CEO of Indianapolis-based Telamon (an international telecommunications company), co-founded the statewide organization with Ryan Hou, owner of LHP Software.

The goal, Chen relates, is to “(help teach) Indiana small- to medium-size companies how to do business in China and to bring the Chinese trade groups to Indiana.”

He emphasizes that Indiana should capitalize on strengths such as agriculture, bioscience, and auto and IT technology. One way to do that is to concentrate on exports.

“China has a mass market and they love to buy American-made products,” Chen maintains. “I try to promote not just the high-tech (goods), but other things, too. If we know how to promote there, they will buy.”

ACSI hosts educational seminars and networking meetings, such as its January kickoff event, which attracted 18 Chinese



Albert Chen (center) talks with University of Indianapolis' Ron Dow, director for the Center of Business Partnerships, and Dr. Sheela Yadov, dean of graduate programs, at the kickoff event for the America China Society of Indiana.

dignitaries and business leaders from 14 companies. Activities included a matchmaking session and workshop revolving around opportunities in China and Indiana. More than 100 people attended.

Resource: America China Society of Indiana at www.chinaindiana.org

Crossroads ‘Banking’ on Young Leaders

Enhancing academic offerings. Giving back to the community. It's all in a day's work for Crossroads Banks' Junior Board of Directors, which is comprised of 16 students from four Wabash County high schools (two juniors and seniors from each). Juniors serve a two-year term.

“The goal of the program is to try to teach the kids about the business world and why it's so important to be involved in the community,” explains Jennifer Southers, senior vice president of retail banking and marketing. The schools involved are Wabash, Southwood, Northfield and Manchester.

Monthly meetings feature guest speakers such as local government and corporate leaders who highlight career prospects. In addition, some companies provide on-site tours to offer a glimpse of life in the working world.

“Students are seeing quite a few opportunities available to them that they maybe didn't know about,” Southers observes.

Board members conduct at least two community service projects each year. In 2009, the group led the implementation of a financial literacy class, which emphasizes budgeting, checkbook management and how to navigate credit card applications. It is a requirement for seniors at the four high schools.

Among recent endeavors were organizing a holiday season toy drive and delivering Easter baskets to patients at Vernon Manor Children's Home.

The program isn't just for aspiring bankers.

“One (individual) wants to start a veterinary business. We have a young man looking into engineering. We have a few hopeful accounting majors. Students come from diverse backgrounds,” Southers points out.

“It's fun for us to see what the kids can do,” she declares. “This is the next group of leaders. We want them to come back to Wabash when they graduate college.”

Resource: Jennifer Southers, Crossroads Bank, at www.crossroadsbanking.com

Shorts written by Symone C. Skrzycki

University to Mediate Labor Disputes?

No one likes conflict. But when problems do arise, sometimes the best way to resolve them is for a third party to step in. That concept is driving a proposed initiative involving labor relations – and stirring debate – in Northeast Indiana.

Andi Udris, president of the Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance, unveiled plans for the effort last summer. The goal: Nip issues in the bud before they go public. The strategy: Experts from Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) will serve as a go-between of sorts between businesses and organized labor (the latter represents 13% of Fort Wayne's workforce).

Udris' ultimate goal is to position labor-management relations in Allen County as a draw – rather than a deterrent – for businesses considering setting up shop there.

IPFW was on board. So were some area companies and even a few unions. But the proposal was met with opposition from conservative organizations and with silence from the majority of unions.

What's next for the project is uncertain. When contacted for this story, Udris said he was not speaking publicly about the efforts, but that an announcement would be made in the future.

Pros Help Teens Tackle Legal Curriculum

Most of us have seen at least an episode or two of television shows such as *Perry Mason* and *Law & Order*, but what is working in the legal profession really like? Students at one Hoosier high school are finding out through a national initiative called Street Law.

"The main part of the program is the corporate diversity pipeline. It's a way for businesses, law firms and communities to get minority students thinking about law (careers)," comments Alene Smith, a Street Law instructor at Shortridge Magnet High School for Law and Public Policy (part of the Indianapolis Public Schools district), where the program was implemented last fall.

A group of 30 volunteer attorneys from Eli Lilly and Company and Baker & Daniels LLP worked with Shortridge staff to co-teach civil law to all sophomores, who were divided into three classes.

"Anywhere from five to 10 a week would come into different classes and do an activity with the kids," Smith recalls. "We

went through all of the torts, contracts, warranties, intellectual property – that was one the kids really got into because it's something they deal with all the time whether or not they know it at the time.

"We also had paralegals who were part of the team, administrative assistants – anyone who worked in the profession."

In December, Lilly hosted a one-day workshop to cap off the semester. Students participated in four 70-minute break-out sessions covering topics such as sexual harassment and NFL negotiations. They also networked with attorneys.

"The students really enjoy the program," Smith shares. "They realize that they have opportunities they wouldn't have in any other school in the state right now."

During the spring term, sophomores studied criminal law and took part in job shadowing.

Resources: Shortridge Magnet High School for Law and Public Policy at www.414.ips.k12.in.us
Street Law, Inc. at www.streetlaw.org

Don't Judge These Libraries by Their Covers

"S hhh!"
Imagining librarians raising a finger to their lips to silence noisy patrons? While that timeless scenario still plays out at some libraries, many are launching a new chapter – one that's business centered and changing the way people perceive these cultural mainstays.

The key word is commerce: Adding a business twist puts money in cities' pockets.

Feeling under the weather? Check in at an on-site medical clinic. Want to relax for a few minutes while your children do something educational? Drop them off at a child care center. Need a java fix? Head to the coffee bar. In addition, libraries often host events (wedding receptions, reunions, etc.) and house businesses such as loan centers, bank branches and post offices.

Seattle started the trend domestically when it opened a \$200 million multi-purpose library in 2004. It features bold architecture, expansive conference rooms, a multi-media lab, art galleries, entrepreneurial seminars and more. In Salt Lake City, the Main Street Library is connected by a six-story curving walking path to a nearby shopping plaza, reading galleries and 300-seat auditorium.

What's in store for cities planning similar undertakings? We'll have to wait and see.

Healing Power of Music

During three chilly winter afternoons early this year, members of the Fort Wayne Parkinson's Support Group attended special performances by a small chamber ensemble of the local philharmonic. As the orchestra played, group members found themselves asking the same question: Was each performance alleviating their symptoms?

Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) and the Fort Wayne Philharmonic launched the Music as Medicine pilot study in January. It examines the effect of live, classical music on six areas: tremors, stiffness, handwriting, swallowing, dyskinesia (a generalized dysfunction of the large motor muscles) and energy levels.

"Music is inexpensive. It is non-physically invasive (whereas) other medical treatments are," contends Nancy Jackson, director of music therapy at IPFW. "Part of helping people is easing their symptoms so their quality of life can be good. If music can do that, what a great thing to use."

Participants (who were experiencing various levels of disease progression) ranked their symptoms prior to and following each concert, which took place in January, February and March on the IPFW campus.

"In the worst case scenario, the (findings) may say nothing statistically significant, but it's very clear to me that on an individual-to-individual basis, there are people who are saying, 'This has worked for me' and they're coming out (of the events) glowing and smiling," Jackson stresses.

"Just eyeballing the data without any numerical analysis, there are some pretty drastic changes in ratings."

Resources: Nancy Jackson, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, at www.ipfw.edu
Fort Wayne Philharmonic at www.fwphil.org



A small ensemble of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic plays for individuals with Parkinson's disease as part of a study examining music's effect on symptoms.