
Texas Economic Development Council Recognizes Local Industrial Development Corp

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Texas Economic Development Council Recognizes Local Industrial Development Corp and Community College with Workforce Development Award.

The Texas Economic Development Council honored the Mount Pleasant Industrial Development Corporation (MPIDC) this week by presenting them the Workforce Development Award for Cities with a population of 15,000 to 40,000. For the past two years representatives of NTCC, the MPIDC and community leaders have met to develop a strategy which would mitigate some of the loss of jobs experienced by the area, retrain workers that may have been laid off and assist existing industry with their needs for a trained workforce. The partnership that formed as a result of these meetings was the basis for the creation of the Industrial Technology Training Center which has recently opened in Mount Pleasant. The award given by TEDC recognizes the MPIDC for its vision and leadership in putting \$230,000 toward the creation of this training resource.

NTCC, took the seed money offered by the MPIDC and used it as a "match" to apply for and receive funds from the Comptroller of the State of Texas to purchase training modules for industrial training. The College Board for NTCC felt strongly enough about the future of the project to commit to the purchase of a facility on Interstate 30 in Mount Pleasant to house the training program. Specific training will be offered in the areas of Mechanical/Electrical Maintenance for Industry, Process Logic Control (PLC) Maintenance and Programming, along with Pneumatics and Hydraulic Power Delivery.

Additional monies were received from the State Comptroller and Northeast Texas Workforce Solutions to offer scholarships for the training and fill the classes which started in early March. College President Brad Johnson

announced as the classes were starting up that the Mount Pleasant ISD had committed significant support to the future growth of the project by agreeing to locate their existing electrical program and their Auto CAD training program at the facility. Harts Bluff Schools had partnered with the group to allow training in the area of CNC Programming on their equipment at their high school. Johnson indicated that the initial class of 20 persons could soon grow to both evening and daytime training occurring at the center with over 100 students.

The award presented to MPIDC recognized this partnership as being the platform and foundation of the program which will deliver the workforce of the new economy to Mount Pleasant and the northeast Texas region. Erman Hensel, who serves on the Mount Pleasant City Council and President of the MPIDC stated that this program was viewed by the Board and Council as a WIN, WIN, WIN for Mount Pleasant. "It allows us to provide a much needed trained workforce to those industries operating in Mount Pleasant and the area. It provides our citizens and young people an opportunity to pursue a career in Industry and benefit from some of the highest pay and benefits in an industrial organization. It gives the MPIDC an excellent marketing tool to work with other technology based industries looking for a community to expand into."

In receiving the award from TEDC, Charlie Smith, Executive Director of the MPIDC told economic developers that it was a part of the nature of economic development professionals to want to "make a difference" in each of their communities. Smith indicated that this effort was one of the areas that would make a powerful and positive difference in Mount Pleasant over time and one that he was most proud of. Smith said the Boards of the IDC and the Industrial Foundation as well as the City Council had been behind this project from the beginning, which made his job an easy one. Smith said, "Mount Pleasant works together to build on their future, they have in the past and they will in the future."

Since the start up of training classes local industry and business have enthusiastically stepped forward to support the project and the expansion of the project. Guaranty Bond Bank recognized the number of industrial customers it served in the region and contributed \$100,000 to the new academy. SWEPCO made major electrical service changes to the facility in support of the training and promised additional support in the future. Other local industries

are offering training assistance or mentoring to further the program. Mayor Jerry Boatner, Mount Pleasant's Mayor for twenty-two years, indicated that this was certainly a moment that all of Mount Pleasant could be proud of. "It demonstrates what a community can do when a need is recognized and when we work together."

This is the third statewide award presented by TEDC to the Industrial Development Corporation. In 2006, they won the CEDA Award (Community Economic Development Award) for packaging a deal which brought Newly Weds Foods to the community, a forty million dollar investment with over 100 jobs. In 2008, they received a CEDA Merit Recognition Award for their work with expanding industries in the community.