



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

By Marci Hummel | The Bryan Times
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The theme of Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel at Monday's roundtable discussion at Spangler Candy Co. was Ohio's workforce. The key point to the discussion was workforce development: How to grow it and how to manage it in northwest Ohio. Mandel noted, is aggressively pursuing new business, and Ohio must adopt effective strategies to meet the challenges.

One of the ways to do this, he noted, is to have an adequately trained workforce. This workforce must be trained. A bachelor's or master's degree no longer guarantees a good job.

More and more, as I've traveled in this state, Mandel said, I'm hearing from folks in manufacturing and other areas that require trades that as the baby boomers retire they can't find young people (to fill jobs) electricians, carpenters, machinists and what not. I call this issue a quiet crisis because it doesn't make headlines.

Mandel was in Sandusky County Monday morning and said he was told there are 3,500 jobs available in the region but employers can't find people qualified to fill them.

I believe that there's an over-saturation of bachelor's degrees in America, he continued. You have this generation of young people with four-year liberal arts degrees (that are) \$100,000 in debt, and many of them are serving in the military or working retail from home.

Mandel said according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 48 percent of people with bachelor's degrees in America are in jobs that don't require a bachelor's degree. He said the United States needs to get back to basics and invest in vocational training. We need to put shop class back in high schools, he said, and instill a sense of pride in young people in manufacturing jobs... These jobs are the backbone of our country.

Mandel suggested policy-makers talk to colleges and universities in Ohio and give them incentives to produce graduates who are qualified for jobs that are productive in the marketplace and not spend as much money and taxpayer resources on traditional degrees.

As a community college president I can agree with you, said Dr. Thomas Stuckey, president of Northwest State College. Stuckey said the demand is high for manufacturing jobs in northwest Ohio. I met an employer this week who was upset with the college because we couldn't send him five resumes, he said. We don't have five students that are unemployed...

Ohio Rep. Lynn Wachtmann said the business community must promote the jobs for which such training is needed and aren't going into the right careers where there's jobs available, he said.

30 EAST BROAD STREET · 9TH FLOOR · COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
PHONE: (614) 466-2160 · WWW.OHIOTREASURER.GOV · FAX: (614) 644-7313



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Diamond Zimmerman, coordinator for the Williams County Economic Development Agency, said WEDCO this issue with educators and manufacturers, specifically at its U.S. 6 manufacturers roundtable Community College. She also discussed the Oct. 4 Manufacturing Day when school guidance counsel spent the day touring manufacturing companies to see what the companies do and the skills their it was a real eye-opener for those schools, she said.

Zimmerman said the companies provided profiles listing the skills they will need in the near future were very competitive, she added. Also, many companies now offer tuition reimbursement.

How are we doing with job growth? asked Bill Martin, chief financial officer with Spangler Ca

Unemployment is down, but (Ohio) is above the national average and so it's not good enough, I where there's predictability and a strong financial foundation... We're doing a lot better, but

Mandel and others agreed the message is the same throughout Ohio: Manufacturers cannot find the