



News

Rose-Hulman ready to make local impact Leaders celebrate new partnership formally

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Shelby County and the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology formally kicked off their partnership at a ceremony Thursday.

The City of Shelbyville, Shelby County and the Terre Haute university signed paperwork legally signifying their partnership that city and county officials will hope keep talent from leaving Shelby County and the surrounding area for good after high school.

The program is dubbed Innovative Model: Positioning Communities for Transition 2016, or IMPaCT 2016.

IMPaCT has several components, including programs to keep students interested in math, science and engineering in high school, to seek engineering internship opportunities in Shelby County and the surrounding area, to work through Rose-Hulman. Ventures to enlist engineering students to solve local engineering problems, to offer continuing professional studies through programs housed at the Intelliplex certified technology park and to develop an entrepreneurial network.

Shelbyville Mayor Tom DeBaun spoke at Thursday's ceremony about the need to keep educated people living in the area.

"Now we've found a way, we think, to resolve that issue," he said.

The program is unapologetically focused on manufacturing, which local officials and Rose-Hulman leaders said at the ceremony important for Shelbyville. It seeks to create engineers and scientists who won't leave for what a might be perceived as a bigger, better opportunity.

"How many people have heard of committing a community to manufacturing these days," said Stu Kaplan, owner of Makuta Technics.

The plastic parts manufacturer, Kaplan said, is an example of the future of manufacturing. His factory, he said, is high tech, and robots do most of the physical labor.

"We have people in-house who designed the robots," Kaplan said. "That's the people we need."

IMPaCT also seeks to make sure those not called to attend college have the math and comprehension skills needed in a modern factory.

"We've taken a focus in our school on science and mathematics," said Bobby Thompson, assistant principal at Triton Central High School.

He said his school is focusing on rigorous curricula to get students ready for real life, whether they go to college or not.

Some local legislators attended the event also.

"It's awesome, it's going to be a great partnership," Shelby County Council member Scott Asher said. "It's good for our young people and good for manufacturers."

The city and the county spent a combined total of \$186,000 on the project.

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Stu Kaplan of Makuta Technics in Shelbyville speaks to the crowd at a ceremony Thursday marking the kickoff of a partnership between Shelbyville, Shelby County and Terre Haute's Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. Supporters of the program, IMPaCT 2016, hope it will attract and keep talent, especially engineering talent, to Shelby County and the surrounding area to support local manufacturing. Nick Cusack photo