

CHG encourages students to become entrepreneurs

Becky Curtis, CHG

Junior Achievement and the Tri-Cities Enterprise Center, with funding from CH2M HILL Hanford Group, recently piloted a program aimed at showing high school students the benefits and challenges of owning their own business.

Twenty-five Kiona-Benton High School students visited the Tri-Cities Enterprise Center business incubator to speak with owners of a specialty foods company, a furniture maker, a public relations agency, and a geology and soil laboratory. They also learned by playing a game called "Who Wants to be an Entrepreneur?"

"Our objective was to hold the kids' attention and get them to think about entrepreneurship," said Bill Henderson, Tri-Cities Enterprise Center president and general manager. "We had our game show tested and approved by a panel of high school seniors before being used at this event because we wanted to be cool, not boring."



Kiona-Benton High School students observe an experiment at UFA Ventures geology and soil laboratory.

Kiona-Benton High School was selected to participate in this program because of the efforts of agriculture and economics instructor Jerry Longmeier and Junior Achievement education committee leader Gary Henderson, who is also the superintendent of the Kiona-Benton school district.

"We can only do so much in the classroom, but events like this are much more meaningful to kids and will be something they remember," said Longmeier. "In 29 years of teaching in public schools, I cannot remember a more well-planned and perfectly executed educational presentation. From the time the kids got off the bus until we left, they were learning."

The event was funded by a portion of a \$25,000 grant from CH2M HILL Hanford Group, which will be used to support similar activities in the future and assist Junior Achievement in expanding its business and economics programs in local schools.

"This event was a pilot test," said CHG's Community Relations director Richard Reisinger. "It was so successful that Junior Achievement is planning four more such events for next year." ♦