

Press Clippings 1/26/2022

Plastics Today

Hoffer Plastics Schools Educators on Careers in Manufacturing --- 1/25/2022

By Norbert Sparrow

The custom injection-molder holds open house for school counselors to raise awareness of career opportunities for young people in plastics processing and manufacturing.

Manufacturing today typically offers well-compensated, high-tech jobs that can lead to fulfilling careers. Unfortunately, that's news to many educators and young people. Custom injection-molder Hoffer Plastics Corp. is doing its part to raise awareness among school counselors in its neck of the woods by inviting them to tour its facility in South Elgin, IL, and learn about career opportunities available to young people in the plastics industry and manufacturing in general.

On Jan. 28, Hoffer will welcome [Elgin Area School District U-46](#) and western Kane County suburban school counselors to its plant in an effort to educate them and, in turn, students about the benefits and career opportunities that are available. This effort aligns with its [Break The Mold](#) initiative to hire, train, and retain employees, and offer young people alternative career path options.

During the visit, counselors will be able to walk through a guided tour of the facility, learn about custom injection molding and manufacturing, and hear more about career opportunities that exist for students at Hoffer Plastics.

“A career in manufacturing doesn't seem to be on the radar for many soon-to-be graduating students and young people,” Charlotte Canning, Chief Culture Officer at Hoffer Plastics, told *PlasticsToday*. “The trend in counseling seems to skew toward college-oriented education tracks and career paths.” The misconceptions surrounding manufacturing — assembly line drudgery, skanky work environments — continue to shape the thinking of many educators, noted Canning. “That couldn't be further from the truth. Today's manufacturing requires high-tech skills and creativity, and is conducted in safe, clean, state-of-the-art facilities.” The open house, it's hoped, will open some minds.

Like many companies in manufacturing and other sectors, Hoffer Plastics has encountered challenges in recruitment, hiring, and retention over the past couple of years. “We're working to communicate more effectively and consistently about the opportunities we and other manufacturers have to offer, but these remain challenging times,” acknowledged Canning.

The open house is one small step the company is taking to turn the tide as part of its larger Break the Mold campaign.

“We’ll continue to focus on expanding our Break the Mold hiring campaign and sharpen and optimize our targeting and learning as we go,” said Canning. “We also plan to focus on building our partnerships and participation with local school districts, job fairs, veterans’ and employment agencies, along with testing new media channels and messaging.”

An integral part of that messaging is raising awareness that there are non-college degree tracks and alternatives that offer career opportunities and professional fulfillment without the financial burden of student loans. “Hoffer offers career planning/coaching, support, and development at all work levels and tuition reimbursement for those who do want to pursue a degree, along with other opportunities supporting professional development,” explained Canning.

Sounds like a plan to me, and one that more companies should pursue.

The Examiner of Bartlett

Pacts approved, renewed by District U-46 board ---

1/26/2022

By Seth Hancock; Note – this story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood

The **Board of Education in School District U-46** voted 6-0 for a procurement contract for natural gas as well as \$296,709 on two contract renewals at its meeting on Monday, Jan. 10. Board member John Devereux was absent.

The district’s current natural gas contract, entered into three years ago at 27 cents per therm, will end in April.

However, prices are much higher now at about 38 cents per therm. This approval will allow the district to sign a contract with either Constellation Energy or Mansfield Power and Gas with hopes of locking in a good price at the right time.

“Although administration cannot lock in a rate until a contract is signed, we are hopeful that by completing the initial vetting process and submitting this to the Board of Education for review early, we will garner ample time to monitor the market and secure the best possible rate. After securing a rate, administration will return to present that rate to the Board of Education,” the proposal states.

The contract renewals include \$256,459 (education fund) with Renaissance-MyON and \$40,250 (education fund) with Panorama Education.

MyON’s “an online book database that provides each student, PreK-12, with a personalized digital library,” the proposal states.

The Panorama contract is for an “equity and inclusion” survey.

“Conducting this survey of our students helps us to address feedback provided by the Board of Education to ensure we are capturing student voice in our equity work,” the proposal states. “Panorama presents the results through a flexible reporting dashboard, allowing us to disaggregate by school, grade, gender, race/ethnicity, income status, and program participation to identify important patterns in our data. The proposal also includes two interactive ‘data inquiry workshops’ led by Panorama staff that have been valuable opportunities for our teams in previous years.”

Also approved 6-0 was \$15.6 million in itemized bills.

The Examiner of Bartlett

District U-46 Board plans for 39 summer capital projects --- 1/26/2022

By Seth Hancock; Note – this story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood

School District U-46 is planning on 39 capital projects totaling \$29 million this summer according to the list of projects presented to the Board of Education at its Monday, Jan. 10 meeting.

The highest price tag project is \$6.7 million for the first phase of Streamwood High School’s pathways academy. Track replacement and drainage repair (\$1.1 million), bleacher replacement and gym floor refinishing (\$791,000) and elevator replacement at Millennium Field (\$150,000) are planned at the school.

A \$2.1 million project for air cooled chiller replacements at nine sites is also planned.

Sue Kerr, the board’s president, asked if all the projects will be finished. Supply chain issues have caused problems nationwide.

“That is always the goal,” said Sheila Downs, director of plant operations. “However, we’ve been in conversations with our architects and engineering firms just to make sure that if there are any COVID delays or material delays that may impact our timelines and the fall start, that we have that information. As of now, all of the proposed projects can be completed by the start of the school year.”

Several other sites have multiple projects including Streamwood’s Tefft Middle School (ceiling abatement, drop ceiling and light installation and insulation, fire alarm; \$3.5 million), Elgin’s Kimball Middle School (parking lot resurfacing and sidewalk creation,

bathroom renovation, office carpet; \$1.8 million), Elgin's Larkin High School (tennis court reconstruction and light installation, commons/office hallway roof, auxiliary building renovation; \$1.2 million), Elgin High School (tennis court and light replacement, concrete stairs replacement; \$1 million), Wayne Elementary School (fire alarm, boiler; \$755,000), Elgin's Ron O'Neal Elementary School (ceiling, boiler; \$650,000), Elgin's Larsen Middle School (cafeteria lighting and drop ceiling, parking lot resurfacing/drive creation; \$445,649) and Elgin's Channing Elementary School (bathroom renovation, multipurpose room lighting/ceiling painting; \$325,000).

Other higher-price projects are central office renovations (\$1.5 million), bubbler removal and drinking fountain installations at 14 sites (\$1.4 million), window replacement at Elgin's Ellis Middle School (\$1.2 million) and parking lot and sidewalk replacement at Elgin's Otter Creek Elementary School (\$1 million).

Board member Dawn Martin asked about school closures effecting summer programs. Downs said Tefft would be closed while "sections" of other buildings would be affected.

Daily Herald

Boys' Basketball: Larkin pulls away from Fenton in second half --- 1/26/2022

By Jared Birchfield, Daily Herald Correspondent

It took three quarters for **Larkin** to tame Fenton for a 66-36 Upstate Eight Conference victory Tuesday night in Elgin.

The Bison hung with the Royals during the first two quarters, trailing only by six at halftime, 28-22. Fenton outscored Larkin 12-11 in the second quarter.

The Royals regrouped at intermission and opened the second half with a 12-2 run to take control of the game. Larkin led 45-31 at the end of the third quarter and put the game on ice in the fourth.

With the win, Larkin tightens its grip on first place in the Upstate Eight. The Royals are now 12-0 in conference play and 20-2 overall.

"Fenton was playing hard. I think there were a couple of bounces that they took advantage of (in the first half)," said Larkin coach Deryn Carter. "We got our hands on balls that turned into jump shots for them. Two or three possessions and I think the score would have looked a little different."

"I thought we did some good things in the first half, even though we were turning the ball over a little bit too much, we were able to handle their pressure," Fenton interim coach Tim

O'Connell said. "It got away from us in the second half, but I'm proud of the way the kids fought."

Fenton (8-14, 4-7) coach Chaz Taft is on a leave of absence.

Larkin did not make any adjustments at halftime. Carter was pleased with his team's efforts and thought the game would eventually turn their way.

"It was a six-point game, but we felt like we were in control and the second half showed that," Carter said. "We were happy with the way the guys were playing and we told them to stick to it. It was a good team win."

"I think we started playing how should play on defense in the second half," said Larkin senior Dontrell Maxie. "In the first half, we got back-doored a lot."

Maxie scored 11 points and pulled down eight rebounds.

Larkin did adjust to Fenton's 1-1-3 zone in the second half of the game.

"We were able to get some deflections and generate some points with our defense in the first half," O'Connell said. "But they are a really good team. In the second half, they were able to penetrate and knock out some shots on us."

Fenton's offense took a blow when Xavier Gonzalez had to leave the game early in the third quarter. The sophomore led all scorers with 14 points.

"He took a hard foul under the rim. He's a big part of what we do on both ends," O'Connell said. "He's our main ballhandler so that hurt us a little bit."

Jamarion Stubbs led Larkin scoring with 13 points, including three 3-pointers. Damari Wheeler-Thomas tallied 12 points.

Larkin will take a break from conference play Saturday when it competes in the Orr Breast Cancer Shootout.

"We get to play Thornton. They are very, very good," said Carter. "Their record is good, but they are even better than their record because they lost some games when guys were out."

Daily Herald

Girls' Basketball: South Elgin's pressure rattles Glenbard

South --- 1/26/2022

By Craig Brueske, Daily Herald Correspondent

South Elgin girls' basketball coach Dan Mandernack said his players like to refer to themselves as hyenas -- "they're fast, they're aggressive and they trap great."

And they are no laughing matter for opponents to deal with, either.

Relying on relentless, ball-hawking pressure defense, the Storm (19-5) collected 23 steals during Tuesday night's 58-29 Upstate Eight Conference victory over visiting Glenbard South (11-11, 8-5).

Senior guard Ella Winterhalder poured in a game-high 19 points with 5 rebounds and 5 steals, while junior guard Caitlyn Tolentino added 14 points, 5 rebounds and 9 steals as South Elgin improved its conference record to 13-0.

"We all have high intensity," said Tolentino. "We all know we're always going to have a target on our backs because we're undefeated in conference, so we always have to keep up our intensity."

Maintaining intensity wasn't a problem for Tolentino, who scored 10 of her points during South Elgin's 19-4 second quarter surge that opened a 36-18 halftime advantage.

Tolentino had 3 steals and layups as well as a pair of driving layups during her team's 14-2 run over the final 6 minutes of the opening half.

"Caitlyn really took over the game for a couple minutes or so there," said Mandernack. "She plays the viper on our presses so she either plays the ball, goes to trap, or waits at halfcourt.

"She's so incredibly fast. She's so incredibly coordinated and athletic, and she wants it. Tonight, she scored a lot of points. That hasn't been the main part of her role."

Senior guard Caroline Croft added 10 points, 8 assists, 4 rebounds and 3 steals for the Storm, which led 17-14 after one quarter.

"We have to be the smallest (4A) big school in the state," Mandernack said of his team's starting lineup that included nobody taller than 5-foot-7. "We can't get stuck in the halfcourt, and to their (Raiders) credit, they caught us there early."

Despite getting outrebounded 38-28, South Elgin forced 37 Glenbard South turnovers.

"We have five different presses, and we use at least four every game," said the coach. "We work on them every day because that's the team we've got. We have to be able to do that because we are not going to get free throws and we're not going to get offensive rebounds and putbacks."

Tolentino enjoys playing her team's pressure defense.

"It really fits who I am as a player," said Tolentino. "I have a lot of athleticism. I have a lot of speed, so I like to use it to my advantage on the court."

Senior Brittany Miller led the Raiders with 11 points, including three 3-pointers, and 9 rebounds, while freshman Brooklynn Moore added 10 points.

The Examiner of Streamwood

District U-46 Blue Stars win regional, advance to state ---

1/26/2022

By Seth Hancock

The **School District U-46 Blue Stars A Team** won its regional basketball tournament for Special Olympics of Illinois receiving the gold medal and a first-place trophy. The regional competition was held at Unity Junior High School in Cicero on Sunday, Jan. 16, where the Blue Stars defeated Oak Park River Forest High School 41-35 and then the SD308 Wildcats Orange squad 32-21.

As a result of the regional title, the Blue Stars advanced and will next compete at the state level at Illinois State University, the weekend of March 11 to 13

The Examiner of Bartlett

Storm stay UEC perfect, top Sabres and Royals --- 1/26/2022

By Seth Hancock; Note – this story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin

The **South Elgin** girls' basketball team remains undefeated, 12-0, in the Upstate Eight Conference with wins over **Streamwood** and **Larkin**.

Against Streamwood, the Storm jumped out to a 21- 0 lead after one quarter and didn't look back in a 71- 17 win on Tuesday, Jan. 18 at "Rosner Arena."

South Elgin had a balanced effort with 15 points from Ella Winterhalder, 10 points from Caroline Croft, nine points each from Chloe Kmiec and Raina Yang and eight points each from Loreal Wilson, Kiara Andrewin and Zoie Lewis.

"We're a pressing team but didn't press," said South Elgin coach Dan Mandernack. "We got great play from the second unit who played most of the game with the starters playing about a quarter and a half only."

The Storm went on to win a 56-49 battle against Larkin on Friday, Jan. 21 at South Elgin.

Larkin led most of the first half with a 30-26 lead at the break, and it built a 34-26 lead early in the third quarter. The Storm then went on a 13-2 run to take a 39-36 lead into the fourth and maintained it as Croft scored 11 of her 21 points in the final frame.

“At half, coach just said we’ve got to come out, win the first three minutes, get back to what we do, play defense, get our steals and that will turn into offense,” Croft said. “I think we started to do much better on the press, and that really turned the game around.”

Winterhalder hit five three-pointers for 15 points and Yang added eight points. The Storm, who were without Lewis, had defeated Larkin 60-18 earlier this season.

“We’re the hunted,” Mandernack said. “We’re undefeated in the conference. Just because we beat Larkin by a pretty large margin the first time, we’ve got to be prepared. It was a good learning experience to open their eyes.”

South Elgin, now 18-5 overall, did drop a pair of nonconference games including a 56-49 loss to Prospect at the Batavia MLK shootout on Monday, Jan. 17 and a 44-33 loss at Burlington Central on Saturday, Jan. 22.

Yang (15 points), Winterhalder (nine points) and Croft (seven points) led against Prospect. Croft had 13 points and Winterhalder nine against Burlington Central.

The Examiner of Streamwood

Streamwood defeated by South Elgin, Rams --- 1/26/2022

By Seth Hancock

A shorthanded **Streamwood** girls’ basketball team struggled to keep up with Upstate Eight Conference leader **South Elgin** in a 71-17 loss on Tuesday, Jan. 18 at “Rosner Arena.”

The Sabres fell behind 21-0 after one quarter and trailed the rest of the game.

Despite the loss, Sabres coach George Rosner was happy with his team’s effort after learning last minute a few players would be unable to play.

“We were as prepared as we could be following a pretty good practice on Monday,” Rosner said. “But right after school was over, I found out two key starters would be out following COVID protocol. This completely changed our game and we did not adjust well.”

Rosner added: “South Elgin got off on us early and the game was over for the most part in the first quarter. I credit our girls, especially senior guard Sayuri Ishikawa, for never giving up and playing hard for the entire game. South Elgin is an outstanding team with completely unselfish play.”

Ishikawa led Streamwood with nine points.

The Sabres went on to drop a 45-25 UEC game against Glenbard East on Saturday, Jan. 22 at “Rosner Arena.”

Streamwood is now 1-19 overall, 1- 11 in the UEC, as the Sabres hope to have a full team for the final push of the season.

“My number one goal is to get everyone back and being able to finish the season strong,” Rosner said. “This has without a doubt been the most challenging season I can ever remember, as the talent is there to win, but we just have not had any consistency.”