

Leadership Ohio Class of 2009, June 2009 Appalachian Culture and History in Marietta

Leadership Ohio 2009 met for its third session in Marietta to learn about Appalachian Culture and History. Events began with a reception at the Campus Martius Museum. "Rufus Putnam" introduced the class to the museum and Marietta's place as the site of the first organized American settlement in the Northwest Territory. Also included was a guided walk through the moored W.P. Snyder Jr., one of the last stern-wheeled, steam-powered towboats in existence. Poles next to the boat marked the water height of major floods in the region. This was the beginning of learning about the golden age of the steamboat and the relationship between residents and the river(s).

Friday morning the class visited two diverse manufacturing plants. Thermo Fisher Scientific grew from a 600-square foot shop in 1950 to a 241,000 square foot industrial complex on 80 acres today. It manufactures over 300 types of scientific products using advanced processes and employee empowered teams. Sewah Studios manufactures cast aluminum historical markers seen in every State in the USA as well as in other parts of the world. The processes used are historic: each cast hand dipped, and each raised letter hand scraped and individually painted.

Next stop was Washington State Community College where the class heard about its Workforce Development. This program advances workforce skills in a region where skepticism in higher education is high. It provides training solutions for organizational performance issues to companies and individuals, using the combining resources of the community college with local business professionals. The program has assisted 58 companies and over 2,000 students.

Then on to Marietta College-McDonough Center for Leadership and Business where leadership concepts, local and international internship opportunities, and personal growth development make up a curriculum that is the first comprehensive undergraduate leadership program, based on a liberal-arts curriculum, in the country. Dr. R. Glen Ray, founder of RayCom Learning, author of several books on leadership and a native of the area, later lead the class through a brief and entertaining introduction to facilitative leadership techniques.

Lunch was enjoyed at the Levee House, overlooking the waterfront downtown where economic issues resulting from flooding were discussed. Then, treated to a cruise on the Valley Gem II River Boat – a modern day steam wheeler - built, owned and operated by a local family. A tour of Front Street and a walk through some local artist galleries completed the first day.

On day two, while traveling in a modified streetcar, Mr. Noland – architect, businessman and city leader - provided a comprehensive architectural and historical tour of the area. While on tour, the class dropped-off food items for two local food pantries.

The class visited the Ely Chapman Center where Alice Chapman hosted an inspiring tour of the learning center she developed with passion and dedication. It offers enrichment, mentoring, tutoring, a youth theatre program, karate instruction, summer camps, garden club and more for young persons to ensure no child in Marietta is without mentoring, life long learning skills and enrichment opportunities. An artifact museum from an African collection also is housed in the center.

The last stop of the day was Hartline Valley Farms. Once a 130 acre traditional farm with three cows, some chickens, pigs and a large garden, the third-generation family farm now occupies 750 acres with several hundred dairy cows, crops and marketable farm products. This site demonstrated how agricultural businesses have changed and advanced dramatically over the years meeting economic challenges yet remaining a family operation.

Submitted by Marilyn Baker