

## NDIA Business Event Brings Army, Its Suppliers Together

The NDIA's Fall Business Event brought together the local industrial and defense supplier base with U.S. Army contracting and purchasing agents – all to help suppliers understand what it takes to gain new government contracts even as the budgeting sands are shifting.

That was the general theme as the big defense and military trade show drew several hundred supplier staff, eager to learn how Pentagon cutbacks, Middle East war drawdowns and the like will impact their chances to land new contracts all the same.

One key bit of advice was put forward by keynote speaker Terri Vaillancourt, who is a group chief in the R&D/Services/Chem Bio Contracting Division at Army Contracting Command – Warren.

Vaillancourt is a local woman who has made good through her professional career at TACOM.

She graduated from Wayne State University in 1983 and has been working for the Army in Warren for 28 years, with 23 of those years in services.

From 1989 to 2004, she was a senior buyer on the Supply and Services Team responsible for purchasing a wide variety of supplies and services, so she's a contracting veteran who knows whereof she speaks when it comes to supplier interaction with the federal government.

Her general advice was for the suppliers to make better use of the Army Contracting Command's Small Business Center in Warren.

The Center has been developed over the years with the small business provider in mind.

Not everybody has to be the size of BAE Systems or General Dynamics, she suggested, just to do procurement business with the Army.

Vaillancourt also encouraged continuing feedback from the



Terri Vaillancourt

supplier base to the ACC-Warren procurement offices.

"We were very happy with the results of the market survey – your response to the market survey helps us lay out the strategy for where S3 (purchasing) goes," she said.

"Many times, contractors complain and criticize, but they never take the time to fill out the market survey.

"That's why we do a market survey – we want to know what you want and what you think, and what will help us together. Because if you're happy, we're happy.

"We don't want to put something out there if you can't meet our needs.

"And thank you to the contractors who took the time to fill out the market survey. It was very helpful.

"We are laying out our strategy, we have a couple different strategies in case one doesn't get blessed.

"You're going to see us moving faster (meeting suppliers' requests and needs)."

Otherwise, the NDIA (National Defense Industrial Association –



The Royce & Jenn Band sang Motown cover songs.



A Stryker vehicle from General Dynamics Land Systems was on display at the NDIA Fall Business Event.

Michigan Chapter) Fall Business Event was busy on several fronts.

General Dynamics Land Systems had a Stryker vehicle parked out front for the atten-

dees to peruse and, on the fun side, there was a cover band performing Motown hits from the 1960s and 1970s to entertain the audience after hours.

## \$500 Lunch Tip from BRTRC Buys Local Server's Life

Here's a story that should make everybody smile.

A local waitress, Ashley Perez, who works as a server at the Buffalo Wild Wings restaurant at 12 Mile and Mound in Warren, was recently overwhelmed by a \$500 tip on a luncheon bill given by a local firm.

That is to say, local communications firm BRTRC, which represents TARDEC and other major corporate entities, gifted Perez, a 21-year-old single mother and waitress, with the tip she'll never forget – \$500 in cash for a regular sub-\$50 lunch bill.

"It was organic, she was chosen at random (as their waitress at Buffalo Wild Wings that day)," said John Wray, business manager at BRTRC.

The inspiration for the generosity came from Aaron's Last Wish, a website run by the family of the late Aaron Collins, 30, who died unexpectedly but left a proviso in his will that his family should tip a waiter or waitress with the last \$500 of his personal wealth at a local pizza joint.

The notion caught on beyond Kentucky – there are Youtube videos about Aaron's last wish and his family's website says that over \$60,000 in similar donations have been gifted in \$500 increments nationwide.

Wray said most of the money for the BRTRC gift was generated

from several months worth of pop bottle turnbacks at his office, plus other donations to the cause.

He got permission from his own management to move forward with a donation at a Warren restaurant because the local office of BRTRC is Warren-based on Mound near 11 Mile Road.

For Perez, the unexpected gift was overwhelming and impacted her life greatly. As it happened, she said she didn't have enough money on hand to buy formula for her 6-month-old daughter, Aubrey, that same day, so fortune sure turned in her favor.

"It was a slow Tuesday morning and this specific group of people was my last table of the day," Perez recalled. "I took care of them and did my job like I normally would.

"After I dropped off the checks, John Wray stopped me and asked me if I'd ever heard of Aaron Collins. I apologized and said that I hadn't.

"He started to explain Aaron's generous story of gifting a server his last \$500. I was still a little confused, but I eagerly listened, wondering if maybe it was a contest," she continued.

Then he said, "We are going to give you the \$500 tip today and I blurted out (the catchphrase), 'shut up!'"

"I was so overwhelmed with

happiness and thankfulness that I couldn't help saying the first thing that came to mind.

"I just started to hug every single one of the people that were sitting at the table. I stood there, in shock, that there were people this incredibly nice out there."

So the story has a happy ending. BRTRC was able to do something sincere and generous as an office – to have a significant impact, that is to say, and the recipient remains eternally grateful for the consideration.

Nice bump for a local single mom who is now able to support her child more comfortably.

So, check out Aaron's Last



BWW waitress Ashley Perez with BRTRC's John Wray.

## Fox & Sox Hop At Community Ctr.

WARREN – Dr. Seuss is the theme for this year's "Fox and Sox" sock hop sponsored by the Warren Civic Theatre on Saturday, Oct. 13, in the gymnasium and cafeteria at the Warren Community Center, located at 5460 Arden in Warren.

"Music, dancing, costume contest, games, pizza and prizes are all part of the evening activities starting at 6 p.m.," said Warren resident and chairperson Cheryl Montgomery of the Warren Civic Theatre fundraising event.

"There are even Amazing Mazie's tattoo or face painting and Miss Gertrude McFuzz's tail feather craft among other activities," she added.

Added artistic director Greg Trzaskoma, "The sock hop is to help raise money for the many costumes needed in Warren Civic Theatre's Youth and Teen production, 'Seussical, Jr.,' running the weekend of Nov. 3rd.

Warren Civic Theatre was started by Trzaskoma in the summer of 1990 as a children's theatre workshop.

The "Fox and Sox" sock hop has the doors opening at 5:40 p.m. for VIP ticket holders.

## GM Volunteers Gave 16,500 Hrs. Civic Service in Past 1-1/2 Years

DETROIT – Some 4,250 General Motors employees nationwide took on 110 community service projects – from building houses to cleaning up rivers to bagging and distributing groceries – as part of the first teamGM Cares volunteer week Sept. 10-15.

The participation in community service projects across America is expected to become an annual event to reinforce GM's commitment to employee volunteerism and to highlight the importance of service. Employees are doing most of the volunteering during normal working hours.

"This is the first of many opportunities we will create to demonstrate our commitment to giving back and to showing our communities that we care," GM Chairman and CEO Dan Akerson told employees recently.

"We're going to make it as easy as possible for our teamGM Cares volunteers to help those in need."

Volunteers from across General Motors' various business functions and locations participated in a variety of projects during the week, and will continue throughout the month, including:

- Building new houses and cleaning up neighborhoods with Habitat for Humanity in Detroit and Warren, Mich.
- Cleaning up the banks of Wild Cat Creek in Kokomo, Ind.
- Collecting canned goods for City Harvest food bank in New York City.
- Collecting school supplies for high schools in Toledo, Ohio.
- Bagging and distributing groceries to residents in low-income housing within Ventura County, Calif., and its surrounding communities.
- Constructing a demo home for Food for the Poor in South Florida.
- Painting a building at Wyandotte County Park in Kansas City, Kan.
- Cleaning up a boulevard as part of the Adopt-A-Highway program in Bedford, Ind.