

By Andrew Schaick

You call them water fountains, we call them 'bubblers'

Three New North companies win Bubbler Awards for young professional promotions

A TRIO OF NEW NORTH companies were rated tops among millennials in the workforce when NEWaukee announced its 2016 Bubbler Awards: Wisconsin's Best Places to Work for Young Professionals.

West Corporation of Appleton, along with Society Insurance and Wisnet of Fond du Lac, received the honor this year. The companies were nominated by employees and evaluated and selected by a group of young professional leaders from across the state.

"The Bubbler Awards shine a light on the companies who have made great strides to accommodate the interests and needs of a new and shifting workforce," says Angela Damiana, CEO of NEWaukee.

The companies were recognized during the kickoff event of YPWeek Wisconsin, April 23, at the Platinum Flight Center of Appleton International Airport.

For Wisnet, the award is a showcase for the company's efforts to bring in and keep young professionals.

"It is a big honor for us to get the award because we really focus on empowering our young leaders and we are very involved within the community," says Gina Popp, president

of Wisnet. "It is important for us to recruit young talent because it is in our environment since technology is constantly changing and we look toward our younger demographic to help push that forward."

Society Insurance was the other Fond du Lac business honored for promoting and recruiting young professionals.



"Young professionals bring a new and fresh perspective with new ideas and can look at things differently," says Amy Collett, vice president of human resources for Society Insurance. "We have taken great strides in recruiting young professionals by providing an attractive career field and an attractive benefits package to

make young professionals want to come here."

Collett also says that having young professionals within a company creates a form of camaraderie among the staff, which helps retain and attract employees.

Having two winners from Fond du Lac has bolstered organizers in the area, who say new efforts to help young professionals are being recognized by both the employees and the companies they work for.

"Our main mission is to engage and empower current and future leaders in the Fond du Lac area through professional development, networking and social opportunities," says Jen Feuerhammer, director of communications for Fond du Lac Area Association of Commerce. "Our number of members has doubled within the last year, so we are growing steadily."

Young Professionals of Fond du Lac is a program made up of professionals who are living and/or working in the Fond du Lac area and are typically between the ages of 21 to 40.

Feuerhammer says the program encourages young professionals to join in hopes of exposing them to professional development

opportunities and to gain networking skills.

“One of our goals is to create exposure of opportunities here in Fond du Lac,” says Joe Truesdale, president of Young Professionals of Fond du Lac. “One fortunate thing we see is a lot of executive level business leaders and their commitment to involvement. They want to be involved and want their employees to also be involved.”

Age is just a number

A response can come with mixed reviews after hearing someone say, “Age is just a number.”

Fond du Lac’s young professionals group stands by this statement by focusing on and including people who are young at heart.

“We have found success in the young-at-heart model,” Feuerhammer says. “It’s not an age, but a state of mind, so if someone is older than 40 and wants to join, they are more than welcome to.”

At Wisnet, the same belief holds true when recruiting talent.

“Age is just a number and oftentimes, it’s the personality that can classify someone as being a young professional,” Popp says. “We have team members who have 15-plus years of experience behind them, but they show eagerness in trying new things and push for new technology. It is the young-at-heart aspect that truly helps us succeed.”

As of last year, the program had corporate sponsorships from several of the community’s larger organizations in which they pay a fee based on how many employees they have, and their employees can join for free.

“We have made big strides in developing corporate memberships and sponsorships over the years to get people from companies such as Agnesian, Mercury Marine and Grande Cheese involved,” Feuerhammer says. **1**

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

UPFRONT

» **INTERSTATE 41 CORRIDOR**
Brown, Calumet, Outagamie,
Winnebago, Fond du Lac Counties

Titletown development begins to take shape

The final pieces of land are in place and the first shovels of dirt have been turned over in the construction of the Green Bay Packers Titletown District.

Earlier this spring, the Packers secured 4.78 acres from the state Department of Transportation for \$1.5 million. The land includes Lombardi Access Road and the land between it and Lombardi Avenue. In April, Lodge Kohler, a four-diamond, 144-room, five-story hotel, became the first of the announced anchor tenants to begin construction.

The other anchors are Hinterland Brewery and a Bellin Health sports medicine clinic.

The Titletown District is a 34-plus-acre development adjacent to Lambeau Field, bordered by Lombardi Avenue, South Ridge Road, Marlee Lane and Brookwood Drive. Phase 1 consists of 21 acres, including six acres of a planned 10-acre public park and plaza.

The district also will have 180,000 square feet of commercial space along Lombardi Avenue and Marlee Lane, and as many as 70 townhouses along Brookwood Drive.

Associated Bank buys Milwaukee office tower

Associated Bank has purchased the Milwaukee Center office building in downtown Milwaukee. The purchase price was not disclosed, but the Milwaukee media reported it was \$60.5 million.

Chicago-based Hub Milwaukee

Development in the New North

By Sean P. Johnson

For links to economic development groups in the New North, visit www.thenewnorth.com/partners.

River Center Properties sold the 28-story downtown building to Milwaukee Center Management LLC, a Green Bay-based affiliate of Associated. Associated will occupy between one-fourth and one-third of the building when the lease on its current regional office expires in 2022.

Around 320 Associated employees currently occupy 97,000 square feet of the Plaza East towers at 330 East Kilbourn Ave.

“Our purchase of this iconic, city-center building aligns with our efforts to become the city’s hometown bank,” says Philip Flynn, president and CEO of Associated Bank, which is based in Green Bay.

The Class A property was built in 1988 and is 426 feet tall, with a total size of 373,000 square feet. It was 81.7 percent leased at the time of sale.

Moraine Park launches new technology degrees

Moraine Park Technical College will offer two new information technology associate degree programs beginning this fall.

The new degree programs will be IT-Web Development and Design Specialist and the IT-Mobile Applications Developer.

“There’s a growing need for IT professionals, and these opportunities will provide students the necessary skills needed to compete in the IT field. These programs were developed with local business and industry support to help bridge the skills gap in this area,” said Lisa Pollard, Moraine Park’s associate dean of business and IT.

Because these two programs are similar in content, students can achieve both associate [continued] »