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February Highlights . . . A Look Ahead

It is hard to believe we are already to the end of February. The KCEO students successfully organized and hosted an outstanding gala for 200 attendees at the Willmar Conference Center on February 8th. Thank you to everyone who supported the students with their time, talents, and resources. It is a moment in their lives that they will not forget.

Currently, the students are working on their final class project, creating their own small business. Students are creating the business plan and building financial projections.

Save the date for Friday, May 10 from 7:30 - 9:30am for the annual KCEO Trade Show where you will be able to view all their small businesses. It will be held in the auditorium located in the Life-Science Innovations building on the MinnWest Technology Campus. We look forward to seeing you there.

Central Counties Cooperative: Supporting Area Farmers & Residential Customers



Big thank you to Justin Schroeder at Central Counties Cooperative for hosting the KCEO class. The students learned what a co-op is and how a co-op serves our local agricultural communities.

Advice Justin had for the class today:

- Keep all your options open; there are a variety of avenues in the agricultural industry.
- Communicate with your peers & colleagues.
- Put in your time; opportunities will come your way.
- Find ways to gain experience.

A special bonus on today's tour, we were able to meet a KCEO alumnus from the very first class, Jase Peterson. Jase works at Central Counties Cooperative as a mechanic. He shared his appreciation for KCEO and the opportunity to learn about so many local businesses.

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Crow River Construction: Fulfilling Construction, Ready-Mix & Aggregate Needs

The KCEO class had the opportunity to visit [Crow River Construction](#) in New London. The students heard the history of Crow River Construction and how, owner, Kraig Hanson and his employees have worked hard to grow the business these past 11 years.

Devon Lein, long time employee, shared advice that he lives by & the values of Kraig:

- +Be willing to work hard. As a business owner you need to have drive and determination. Being a business owner is one of the most rewarding things in life, but you have to be willing to work hard and make sacrifices.
- +As the boss, always be willing to jump in and help your employees no matter what the task is.
- +You need to be a critical thinker and problem solver.
- +Continue to work on your business. Find ways to make it more efficient.
- +Treat your employees well. Without good employees it is hard to run a successful business.

Thank you for the opportunity to tour and learn more about your business, Kraig.
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Cheers to 10 Years!

2024 KCEO Gala

What an incredible evening! The 2024 KCEO Gala was outstanding. These students did an amazing job planning, organizing, and hosting the event.

Thank you to everyone who have been supporting these wonderful students this year. [#CheersToTenYears](#) [#KCEOGala2024](#)

Baker Hospitality: Focus on the Customer & Employee



Thank you to Mr. Dave Baker, owner of Baker Hospitality, for visiting our class recently.

Dave shared with the students his journey in the hospitality industry, and becoming an owner of various restaurants and hotels in our communities.

One message Dave shared that has been a key component in any business he has owned is, "Employees are the most important part of my business. It is key they feel valued and heard."

Thank you, Dave, for sharing your time and experiences with the KCEO class.

#WPS

Chamber Connection at WIG

Networking and learning at Chamber Connection was a great start to this beautiful Friday! Big thank you to [@willmarindoor](#) for hosting Chamber Connection today.



Students were able to highlight their upcoming KCEO Gala, which is Thursday, February 8, 5:30pm at the Willmar Event Center, and try out one of the new golf simulators.

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Upcoming Tours/Guest Speakers

March 1: Anderson, Larson, Saunders, Klaassen, Dahlager, & Leitch

March 5: Bremer Bank - Willmar

March 7: Conway, Deuth, & Schmiesing, PLLP

March 14: Guest Speaker: Jean Geselius; Ten Oaks Design Studio

KCEO Class of 2024



Front: Paulina, Jaycie, Lexi, & Rebecca
Middle: Lauren, Taylor, Michaela, Marie, Amyra, Saul, & Drake,
Back: Henry, Aiden, Max, Adam, Austin, Chi, Deiken, & Maynor



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