

JCCF, Erler's break new ground

A New Partnership

Barbara King

Thursday, Jan. 18, employees of Erler Industries wholeheartedly embraced the work of the Jennings County Community Foundation with the announcement that 89 percent of its employees will now contribute weekly to the non-profit's work.

It is nothing less than a milestone in the 23-year history of the Jennings County Community Foundation.

Employees at the local factory overwhelmingly signed up to support the non-profit via payroll deduction, whereby one chooses to have a donation to the JCCF taken right out of their paycheck. This is a fund-raising method which the United Way has used for years here in Jennings.

According to Bob Bowers, who has worked at Erler's 22 years, his fellow workers are tuned in to helping their community and liked what the Foundation had to say. "There are a lot of things in the community we wanted to address," he explained, and this seemed like a perfect fit.

Bowers also liked the fact Erler's is the first local company to embrace this new JCCF initiative.

"We're trendsetters!" he exclaimed with a laugh.

Employees also had the opportunity to direct where their donations would go, selecting the Muscatatuck Park for their largesse. Their money will help pay for seating at the park's new "splash deck" which is in the works. Other choices were to purchase benches at North Vernon's new Tripton Park or adding a toddler element(s) at the county park's playground.

Mary Jo Vanosdol said her co-workers "really liked seeing where their money will be going. They really want to help out."

To organize the initiative, an Erler Foundation Committee was formed with two representatives from each



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Employees of the Erler Foundation Committee celebrate their achievement with the awarding of an \$8000 "check" to the Foundation. Members of the Committee are, front row, left to right, Tony Herr and Lloyd Suthard; Foundation Director Barb Shaw and Assistant Director Joanie Van Horn; Erler committee members Deanna Dunn, Mary Jo Vanosdol, and Mike Estes. Back Row, left to right are Erler Foundation Committee members Mark Bott, Teri Doran, Bob Bowers, Stacie Price, Jason Sanders, Justin Kuntz and Scott Burton.



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Erler Industries' Teri Doran writes out the symbolic "check" for \$8000 to the JCCF as Director Barb Shaw, center, and Assistant Director Joanie VanHorn happily watch.—Staff Photos by Barbara King

department and from the company's four shifts volunteering.

It was the committee members that discussed the JCCF's new payroll deduction program with each of their co-workers. When all sign-ups were completed, the Committee turned in a whopping 89 percent participation rate.

Donations ranged from five cents per pay check to \$5 with "a lot of \$1 donations," noted Jason Sanders, a vice president of the firm.

No matter what anyone gave, it all added up, noted a thrilled Barb Shaw, JCCF Director, who warmly thanked the Committee for their commitment.

In fact, over the course of the year, the employees' payroll deduction adds up to \$4000, which the company pledged to match for a grand total of \$8000.

"I know it took a lot of work on your part," Shaw told the Committee as they represented a symbolic check last week.

"Thank you. It's put us on a whole new level. We're hoping others will follow suit."