

## Leaders tackle gap in skills

By Hannah Camille Bealer  
Staff writer

FREMONT — Treasurer of Ohio Josh Mandel traveled to Fremont on Monday to sit down with Sandusky County officials and discuss their concerns about the economic state of the area.

The executive director of Sandusky County's Economic Development Corporation, Kay Reiter, spoke on retirement rates and the lack of young people able to take jobs left behind by the older generation.

Reiter said, over the next five years, 30 percent of Whirlpool's workforce will be retiring.

"I'm working more with manufacturers in the county," she said. "They are just not able to find people with the skill sets they need to do the jobs."

In order to combat this trend, Reiter said they have been working closely with guidance counselors to inform them about the opportunities available to students outside of seeking a bachelor's degree.

Mandel said he has not heard of other Ohio counties taking time to reach out to guidance counselors, and he was impressed by the extra step the corporation was taking.

"We can't sit on our hands," Reiter said. "If we do, we're just going to get left in the dust when it's all said and done."

In her time with middle school and high school counselors, Reiter said she was amazed at what they did not know about the career opportunities available to youth in the community.

Mandel said 48 percent of college graduates are working in jobs that do not require college degrees.

"I think that's one of the main issues facing our state," he said. "You have this whole generation of young people, many of

## Mandel

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whom have thousands of dollars in college debt with a four year liberal arts degree, and they're serving coffee at Starbucks or working retail at the mall. A lot of them, I believe, would be better off with some sort of two year technical degree."

Jobs and education

were not the only topics of conversation. Jerri Miller, the executive director of the Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau, mentioned Sandusky County's appeal as a tourist attraction and asked for Mandel to consider increasing their funding.

"Why are you giving us a cap when we're doing such a great job?" she asked. "Let us continue to grow and to make Ohio a

tourist destination."

With The Rutherford B. Hayes Center and close proximity to the Ohio Turnpike, Miller said Sandusky County has a great advantage.

"We are in a wonderful location," she said. "It would be wonderful if the state could jump on board with that."

Mandel said he would take everything mentioned in the meeting under consideration.

"I hope that, moving forward, people who actually put a lot of time into their communities will be recognized by the government for what they've done," he said.