

Citizens Looks to Attract Talent through PERL



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Universities in Indiana are nationally recognized for their top ranked programs and high quality graduates. However, many are of the opinion that more needs to be done to keep the Hoosier State competitive and help employers attract and retain in-state graduates with exciting, fulfilling and stable jobs.

Purdue University has stated that for the 2013-14 through 2015-16 academic years, 50 percent of its bachelors-level graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines from Indiana found employment after graduation outside of the state.

In order to encourage talent to remain in Indiana and perhaps attract graduates to the utility industry, Citizens Capital Program & Engineering Department (CP&E) created the Partnership for Excellence in Learning (PERL).

What is PERL?

The goals of the PERL initiative are as follows:

- Encourage graduating students to remain in Indiana and the Indianapolis area after graduation to fulfill the workforce needs of Citizens or its supporting businesses;
- Create more professional development opportunities for students to become future business leaders; and
- Create an improved exchange of industry and collegiate data that will better address research, technology and industry challenges, ultimately resulting in more valuable, efficient, and sustainable business and community solutions.

The PERL concept was identified by Citizens in 2013 to address the need for extraordinary talent that will support long-term business success. Citizens has occasionally partnered with some universities in the past for research or learning opportunities. However, PERL is a more expansive, proactive, collaborative, and strategic partnership effort.

With a large portion of Citizens workforce able to retire in the next 10 years, workforce planning is critical. PERL will aid with professional development of future business leaders and technical talent in the infrastructure industry. PERL will also create a larger network of technical talent amongst Citizens and premier universities in Indiana.

"Citizens' PERL initiative focuses on providing in-state college students with valuable real-world project

experiences, while encouraging them to consider career opportunities within Indiana, including Citizens, upon graduation," said **Mark Jacob**, Vice President, Capital Programs and Engineering. "PERL is a perfect platform to inform students about the exciting and compelling work environment Citizens offers, as well as our commitment to supporting professional and personal growth. I am so grateful to our employees who are supporting this meaningful initiative and making it successful."

Official University Partners

- IUPUI
- Purdue University
- University of Indianapolis
- Trine University
- Ball State University

PERL Partner Spotlight – Purdue University

Citizens is currently providing Purdue University's Civil Engineering senior design class an opportunity to work on a real world project. The assignment is focused on the conversion of an 88-acre, 230-foot deep limestone quarry into Citizens Reservoir to address future water supply needs with more than 3 billion gallons of storage. The project provides students with structural, environmental, geotechnical and hydraulic challenges. Activities include the evaluation of quarry stabilization, intake configuration and pump design. When completed in 2020, the new Citizens Reservoir in Hamilton County will be the first water supply reservoir created in Central Indiana in nearly 60 years.

"Interacting with Purdue's Civil Engineering seniors has been a great experience for me and fellow employees, **Ryan Taylor** and **Matt Thomas**," said **Steve Berube**, Manager, Water System Control and Planning. "Seeing the students learn and develop as engineers has been rewarding, and they have provided us with innovative, out-of-the-box ideas." The students also acquired some important environmental information from **Cheryl Carlson**, Manager, Environmental Compliance Programs. "We are optimistic that seeing such exciting and cutting edge projects in Indiana will help compel these graduating seniors to stay in Indiana long-term," said Carlson.