

BUSINESS

Career paths: Marathon Petroleum hosts field day for area students

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Key Points

About 14 schools attended the second annual career event.

Marathon, an energy company headquartered in Findlay, operates the nation's largest petroleum refining system.

The event was part of the Stark Education Partnership's career initiative.

CANTON – Students gathered around an engineering booth filled with clear jars of elements, such as sulfur, at Marathon Petroleum Corporation's career field day on Wednesday.

They heard how the sulfur byproduct from oil refining is then used in products like fertilizer and even toothpaste. About 14 schools attended the second annual career event, which attracted 74 students last year and about three times as many this year, at Canton's terminal on Gambrinus Avenue SW.

Nova Day, a ninth-grader at Fairless High School, said she was interested in marketing but found the lab and research work intriguing.

"I just found it really interesting because I didn't think I'd like it," she said. "But after listening to it, I found it really interesting, and it might be something I want to do."

A day inside Marathon Petroleum's Canton site

Marathon, an energy company headquartered in Findlay, operates the nation's largest petroleum refining system. The Canton facility produces gasoline, diesel, jet fuel and distributes those and other products throughout Northeast Ohio and Pennsylvania.

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Whitney Reinhart, Canton terminal operations manager, said they load up to 407 trucks a day with fuel for the regional market. Wednesday's event, organized in collaboration with the Stark Education Partnership, was to expose high school students to the variety of careers at Marathon.

"We do really well with recruiting, going into more of the college degrees," she said, listing fields such as engineering, safety and environmental. "We could be doing a lot better reaching out to the students who don't want to go to college. We have great entry-level positions in the Stark County area."

The Canton terminal is one of the few Marathon facilities with local operations that include everything from pipeline and transportation jobs to mechanics, who work on the fleet trucks in an East Canton garage. Like the level of training required for each job, wages vary, Reinhart said.

The company's website, marathonpetroleum.com/jobs, provides more information on job openings and benefits.

Stark Career Pathway Initiative

Christine Taylor, vice president of programs and partnerships at the [Stark Education Partnership](#), said the local group worked with Marathon on the event and identified students who would have the greatest interest based on a career assessment. It's part of the partnership's Stark Career Pathway Initiative, with 12 school districts participating in the county to increase awareness of area jobs.

"We have career champions in each of our buildings, so that's an adult who will talk to kids and counsel them," she said.

This year, the event expanded from one to two days and participants included the Stark County Sheriff's Office, the [Gorman-Rupp](#) pump company, and the [KWEST Group](#) construction and environmental services company.

[Buckeye Career Center](#) students Kayden Cox and Clayton Harmon, both in 11th grade, said they could see themselves working in energy operations and operating heavy equipment. Kayden said he talked with the KWEST Group about their apprenticeship program and learned more about the goings-on at Marathon.

"I feel like they offer a lot of opportunities for a lot of different people," he said.

Gary Trompower, whose father works at Marathon, and Mac Elson – both juniors at Perry High School in the media and video production program – said they found the demonstrations interesting. One in particular involved using an infrared camera to detect gas leaks.

"That was almost the coolest thing I think I've seen all day," Elson said.

Marathon and Stark Education Partnership organizers said they intend to host the event again next year.

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