



Russ Weimer, Associate Manager of Human Resources for Cargill Meat Solutions, was named Mountain Plains Adult Education Association Lay Leader of the Year on April 27 at the Adams Mark Hotel in Denver. The award honors a person in a profession outside education who has proven to be a close “friend” to adult education and lifelong learning. Weimer, accompanied by his wife Susan, graciously accepted the award and acknowledged the people he works with that make the Cargill/Morgan Community College Workplace Education Program a success. “Our program has been educating our employees for thirteen years now and it would not be where it is today without the collaboration that we have in Fort Morgan,” said Weimer who was nominated for the honor by Shirley Penn, MCC Coordinator of Workplace Education.

In her nomination, Penn explained that Weimer began his involvement with adult literacy in 1990 as an advisory board member of the Adult Basic Education Program of Morgan Community College. Two years later he was involved in writing a grant to start an on-site program with Cargill Meat Solutions (at that time Excel Beef), one of northeastern Colorado’s largest employers. After the grant was awarded, Weimer was actively involved in the development and continuation of the program that is one of the state’s longest running programs.

Weimer has promoted Workplace Education at the national level. He also served on the Business Commission of Adult Learning under Colorado Governor Roy Romer, is past

chairman of the Eastern Workforce Board, and is currently serving on the State Rural Consortium.

“We started with a dream 13 years ago to have a program that would help our employees improve their English skills and/or their reading, writing and math skills. We have done that and we hope we can continue to do this in the future.” Weimer continued, “Cargill Meat Solutions is proud to be associated with this program which helps our employees and sometimes their family members to start or continue with their educational opportunities.” Weimer also acknowledged the support of Mike Chabot, Vice President and General Manager of CMS in Fort Morgan, as well as Dr. Michele Haney, President of MCC, and Program Coordinator Shirley Penn who like Weimer has been with the program since its inception.

Another example of Weimer’s leadership at the plant was cited on his nomination. The Cargill employees were encouraged to participate in a special project for Make a Difference Day, usually designated as the last Saturday of October each year. A bone marrow drive was launched among the largely Hispanic workforce. The excitement grew as employees were educated about the project and how they could donate. Weimer worked right along side everyone else stuffing envelopes or whatever else needed doing to move the project forward. The success of their efforts was celebrated as one of the largest drives in the area and the company received a state award from the Make a Difference Foundation. Penn explained that this is only one of many experiences that exemplifies Weimer’s enthusiasm and support for his employees and making the company a good place to work.