The Pierceton Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce Whitko Community Schools as their recipient for May’s Business of the Month! “Big enough to deliver, small enough to care” has long been the motto of the school spanning 2 counties (Kosciusko and Whitley Counties), but the message is becoming increasingly more relevant in an area where schools openly compete to give families the best education and experience for their students.

“We believe what’s good for the community is good for the schools and visa-versa,” said Superintendent Steve Clason. “The relationships between the schools and their communities often pave the way for commerce in the local towns, and we’ve been fortunate to experience tremendous support from our local businesses in Pierceton, Larwill, South Whitley, and Sidney.”

At Pierceton Elementary alone, during a school carnival hosted by the PTO, over 20 local Pierceton businesses volunteered and sponsored the event! The amount of time spent on such important gatherings have supplied fresh opportunities for area businesses to develop new fruitful relationships and have also paved the way for Whitko to share successes.

While the school has always been an advocate of the communities through creating new jobs and attracting and harvesting talented local professionals; this year, boosting enrollment at Whitko has also become an important part of the their culture. Their goal was simple: to deliver a focussed and clear message through their communication strategies. If successful, they believed they could help inform their current students and families about events happening at the school and at the same time attract new families to join the Whitko communities.

Using social media, photography, videography, and their website, Whitko began the important task of connecting with families where they most often can be found, at large school events and of course online at Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Facebook has become their primary format for delivering quick videos or updates to parents, meanwhile students seem more interested in using Instagram. As a result, the school has seen growth in their base of followers online through both platforms.

On any given day, a single facebook posts by the school can hit 3000 to 5000 newsfeeds, but several videos created by the school reached well beyond 30,000 newsfeeds, which is exciting considering they spend no money on advertising. Because of their intentionality in choosing to be hyper-focused in the area of communication, Whitko has been able to celebrate on a large scale with their students, staff and families regularly the many successes that would otherwise have possibly only have been heard by a few.

This school year alone, Whitko can boast: the 2016 World Archery Tournament Champion, Bands and Choirs receiving Gold ratings at ISSMA competitions, Girls volleyball sectional winners, a #1 state ranked girls basketball team, an art department with awards locally, nationally and globally, A-Rated Schools, and a prestigious awards like the APTIP Award granted for Whitko’s devotion to continued successes in Advanced Placement courses.

“Whitko’s student successes in academics and athletics are the direct result of a staff who care and the communities who believe in us everyday. Thank you so much for recognizing our hard work as a team,” shared Clason.

Coming up in July, Whitko’s strategy will focus on renovating their current website at whitko.org by creating updates which continue to reflect their commitment to excellence, improving student enrollment, and strengthening their ability to attract top talent.



**PES students stand proudly with their 4th grade teacher Dana Clutter in front of the PES building.**



**In the greenhouse at WMS students, staff, and retired staff alumni work together in the CWA (Clean World Association) Club.**



**Student rides horseback with Cowboy Carl of Magical Meadows.**



**Students root on the WHS Baseball Team at Tincaps Stadium.**



**Students at play on the PES playground.**



**SWE student Kolt Kyler at the Fort Wayne Tincaps baseball game after reaching his reading goals!**



**Photo to be used for the Pierceton Chamber of Commerce Facebook Page.**