WZCC NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL MEETING – HOUSTON
Thursday, April 27, 2017

PLANT VISIT – 10:00 am to 12:30 pm

WZCC North American Regional Meeting on April 27, 2017, started with a tour of Coating Industries, Inc. and J.R. Manufacturing, L.P. owned by our local fellow Zarathushtis and WZCC members, Mrs. Aban Rustomji and her son Mr. Arish Rustomji. Over 50 participants from across USA and Canada were present.

Mrs. Aban Rustomji welcomed the attendees and made an inspiring presentation on how her late husband Mr. Purvez Rustomji founded the business in 1982. Starting with a small farm house and 9 acres of open land, the Coating Industries, Inc. is now spread out into several large buildings capable of treating huge industrial components. Their main business of corrosion protection coating service caters to industries like oil & gas, subsea, wastewater treatment, shipbuilding, pipelines, etc. Mr. Arish Rustomji’s presentation covered the growth and expansion of their business over the last few years. It was heartwarming to see the next generation entrepreneur raise the company to a new height.

The J. R. Manufacturing, L.P., with 45,000 sq. - ft. plant is located across the Coating Industries, Inc. It has been serving the onshore and offshore oil & gas industry since 2006. They provide their customers with turnkey fabrication and packaging services that include structural and pipe fabrication, assembly, paint, etc.
At the end of the exhausting tour of the two facilities, thanks to Aban & Arish Rustomji, everybody was treated with a sumptuous lunch.
GENERAL SESSION – 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm
Venue: Zarathushti Heritage & Cultural Center – Houston

1. PANEL DISCUSSION:
   **FINANCIAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO NEW AND EXISTING BUSINESSES**

Afternoon session started with short welcome speeches by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston Chair, Mr. Aderbad Tamboli and the WZCC Global President, Mr. Edul Daver. The moderator Mr. Pradeep Anand was introduced by Mr. Rustom Engineer. Mr. Anand has been a keynote speaker at many business workshops and conferences in North America, UK, Continental Europe and India. His consulting business Seeta Resources, helps clients accelerate their firm’s revenue and growth margins.

The first panelist, Ms. Deborah Mansfield is a Director of a business accelerator in Houston and she spoke on Flavors of Crowd Funding for Innovation. She described different avenues of acquiring crowd funding such as donations, rewards, debt, and equity. She also described the pitfalls of Crowd Funding, such as businesses acquiring crowd funding based on a good idea, but not being able to transform the idea into a successful venture due to lack of a sound business model. Ms. Mansfield also provided several contacts and resources related to Crowd Funding.
The second panelist, Mr. Tim Jeffcoat, is a District Director of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and he elaborated on How to Secure Funding from the SBA. He described various services provided by the SBA, and provided tips on how to obtain SBA loans. He also shared statistics such as the SBA providing 7 loans per day in the Houston area in 2016, which illustrated the high level of loan activity for the Houston office. Several business owners in the audience also shared their past experiences with the SBA.

The third panelist, Mr. Hossam Elbadway, is the President and CEO of O&G Technology, a Houston based technology incubator focused on the oil and gas industry. He conducted a very informative session on Venture Capital (VC) Funding. He stressed the importance of alignment between a business owner and the VCs. For instance, a VC firm may be looking for specific business entry and exit points, whereas a business owner may have a long-term vision for the company. He also discussed the importance of selecting the right VC firm that is a value-add investor, and provides not only the capital but creates differentiation by introducing new networks, additional sale channels, etc.

The session was very stimulating and educational. Based on the never-ending questions and comments from the audience, it was a great success.

The session ended with Q&A followed by presentation of trophies by past and present WZCC office bearers.

2. KEYNOTE SPEECH by EDUL DAVER – WZCC Global President

After a short tea-break (courtesy Nazneen & Kershaw Khumbatta), the next session started with a benediction lead by WZCC founding member Mr. Kaemrizer Dotiwalla. Mr. Jehangir Mistry introduced Mr. Daver, who presented WZCC goals with 8 areas of high priority. They were, Chapter Growth and Sustainability; Worldwide Communication; Focus on Fiscal Discipline; Website Development; Iran Business Exploratory Expedition; Socio Business Project (Solar Energy and Clean Water); WZCC Business Venture Fund and Expand Reach (working closely with local Zarathushti Associations, Youth Organizations and the newly created WZCC youth group).

He announced the creation of the WZCC Business Advisory Group consisting of Yazdi Tantra, Phil Kharas, Percy Master, Sam Balsara and himself. The group is looking at Equity Financing in which individuals would place their individual investments in start-up for a short duration of 3-5 years. An experienced part time professional would help to monitor the entire process, starting with search for the right business opportunity to exit with profit and then reinvest in other companies.

Mr. Daver emphasized the need to involve more youth at all levels in WZCC. He concluded the presentation by reminding everybody that Not Failure but Low Aim is Crime.

Since the successful completion of the WZCC Regional Meeting on April 27, 2017, we have been receiving many comments encouraging us to pursue the goals we have set for WZCC.

(Photographs: Courtesy Yezdi Engineer)