

DNA center speaks up at chamber series

By Dave Greber, *Fairfield Echo*, May 6, 2004

Networking lunches feature outstanding local businesses

For the past 10 years, Fairfield-based DNA Diagnostics Center has quietly provided worldwide genetic testing, striving to stay out of the public eye.

The local company broke its decade-long practices this week at the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce Business Breakthrough Series, "Notable Neighbors," which features businesses that have made national or international news because of unique products and services. The first in a four-part series, the luncheon gave area businessmen and women an inside look at the company's makeup during lunch at Receptions Banquet and Conference Center.

Officials from DNA Diagnostics, 205 Corporate Court, said they wanted to establish themselves as a major player in the world of genetic, paternal and forensic testing before taking their show on the road, according to Lisa McDaniel, the company's communication director. But the mentality has changed.

"We're really geared toward shouting it from the mountaintops now," McDaniel said. "(Our president and chief operating executive) realized that there was a desire in the city to learn more about what we do and offer."

The 25-minute presentation highlighted DNA Diagnostics Center as the world's largest private DNA paternity testing laboratory. In July 2002, the business, in its 68,000-square-foot facility, was the first in the DNA industry to run every DNA test twice in July 2002. They also have a history of conducting all tests for most daytime talk shows that feature stories about paternity testing.

The purpose of the luncheon series, said Ginger Shawver, executive director of the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce, is for business owners to share stories of success and to take advantage of important networking opportunities.

More than 70 people showed up for the 11:30 a.m. event. To help break the ice, participants were all given name tags, representing one in a threesome of famous actors. For example, the person who had a Larry name was instructed to find Curly and Moe.

“People really seem to love it,” said Sherry Armstead, chamber member and owner of Art On Symmes. “We started doing this recently, and it forces people to interact.”

For Fairfield resident and First Financial Bank Regional Sales manager Lori Olding, Wednesday’s event was her first Chamber event. But because of its success, she said, it won’t be her last.

“I’m really looking forward to meeting people and networking with some of the businesses in Fairfield,” Olding said.

Throughout the series, which runs from May to November, each company will have an opportunity to present its story to an audience of residents and other business owners, discuss products and services and share tips that have kept them ahead of the economic curve. Each luncheon is expected to last 1 1/2 hours and be structured around a question and answer session, and most importantly, Shawver said, a chance to network with others in the Fairfield community. Others included in the round of discussions are Cincinnati Mills on July 7, Jungle Jim’s International Market on Sept. 1 and O’Gara, Hess, Eisenhardt Armoring Co. on Nov. 3.

Each luncheon will be held at 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Receptions Banquet and Conference Center, 5975 Boymel Drive. Cost is \$15 per lunch for Chamber members, \$25 for nonmembers. Call 881-5500 for more information.