

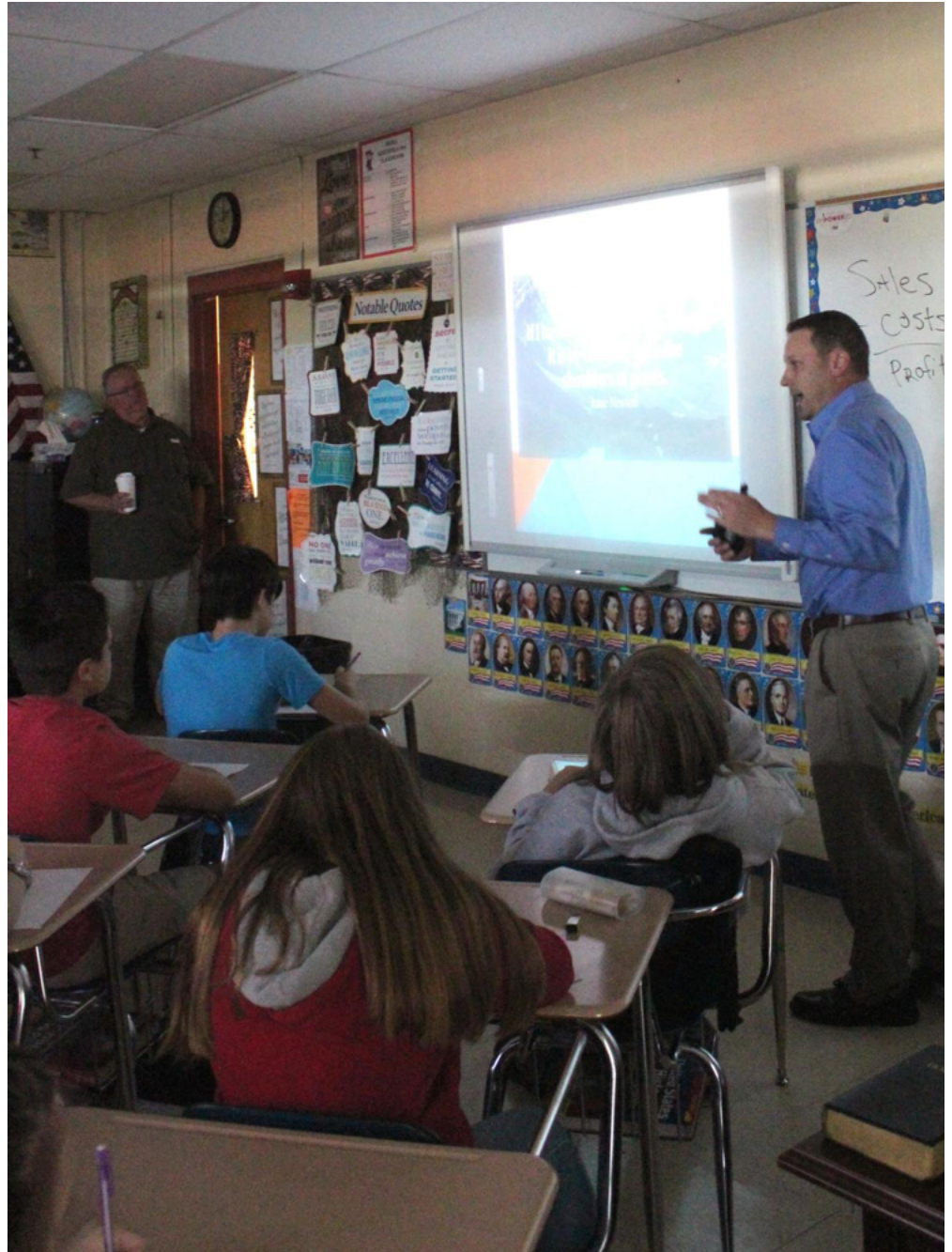
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MONDAY'S MAN

Financial planner invests in community's future

ANDREW CRITCHELOW The News-Enterprise Sep 30, 2019 Updated 2 hrs ago

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Elizabethtown financial planner Brent Ditto gives a presentation on investing to an eighth-grade Schooln.

ANDREW CRITCHELOW/The News-Enterprise

At East Hardin Middle School, Elizabethtown financial planner Brent Ditto stood before a class of eighth-grade students last week and gave a presentation on investments.

Although concepts such as investment selection and mutual funds can be difficult to grasp, Ditto made the talk engaging by showing videos about biotechnology company Intrexon, a company that has had its hands in everything from pet cloning to genetically modifying mosquitoes.

Ditto tied this into his lesson by showing a video of investor and fund manager Bill Miller discussing the company in 2016.

“As an investor, we are trying to find companies that are going to make more money in the future,” Ditto told the class.

Ditto began volunteering at East Hardin in 2010, teaching economics with East Hardin teacher Todd Haydon, who has since retired. Ditto now teaches students in social studies teacher Ellen Douglas’ classes, instructing throughout the course of six weeks.

Through the program, Ditto covers finance, economics, investing, retirement planning and career opportunities.

Although financial literacy courses will become mandatory for upcoming Kentucky public high schools students based on legislation passed by the General Assembly, Haydon said he and Ditto always believed teaching financial concepts early-on is important.

“We were ahead of the curve on that,” he said.

The fact Ditto teaches these ideas at East Hardin is pertinent, as he once was a student in Haydon’s class himself.

A Hardin County native, Ditto went on to graduate from Central Hardin High School in 1998.

“I think the neatest thing about it is that he went to school here,” Douglas said of Ditto’s teaching. “He had a vision that this could happen.”

Giving back to the institutions that shaped him is a major goal in Ditto’s life. That’s why he also contributes heavily to Western Kentucky University’s alumni programs.

In July, Ditto was selected to serve on the WKU Alumni Association Board of Directors. He is serving a three-year term with the board and be part of its finance committee.

Ditto graduated from WKU in 2002 with a degree in business economics. Heavily involved in athletics in high school, he said he initially enrolled at WKU with the intention of pursuing sports broadcasting. However, after taking an economics class, Ditto soon discovered a passion for finance.

Following graduation, Ditto worked with Aegon Financial Partners, Morgan Stanley and Hilliard Lyons in Louisville. He joined Hilliard Lyons’ Elizabethtown branch in 2008 and established his own Elizabethtown business, Ditto Wealth Management, in 2014.

Ditto also earned a masters of business administration from the University of Louisville in 2007, balancing his career with night classes.

Ditto said it is a unique joy to serve his home community.

“I like it here because it’s the people I know and care about,” he said. “I get a lot of satisfaction out of the great people I help.”

Since 2008, Ditto actively has served with the Heartland Chapter of the WKU Alumni Association. He said he is heavily involved with organizing the chapter’s Jared Salvia Memorial Golf Scramble, an annual fundraiser which helps provide for WKU scholarship opportunities among local students.

In 2011, Ditto was selected as recipient of WKU’s Young Alumnus of the Year award.

Outside of alumni activities, Ditto also serves on the Junior Achievement Hardin County board and on the board of directors for Elizabethtown Community and Technical College’s business school.

Ditto said he sees his role in financial advising and teaching as a way of investing in Hardin County’s future.

“If they’re financially sound, 30 years from now, Hardin County will still be a great place to live,” he said.

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