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Skilled worker shortage being addressed



A shortage of skilled workers for area manufacturers is impacting the operations of companies in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. Planned retirements of older workers at these companies will only increase the impact of this issue.

A number of organizations around the region have initiated efforts to begin to address this situation. One such effort took place in October, during National Manufacturing Month. The effort involved organizations from four counties in the region that included Erie, Huron, Ottawa, and Sandusky counties.

Over 42 local businesses and manufacturers opened their doors to students, high school and middle school guidance counselors, and educators for the 4-County Career Showcase. Each county planned unique events that put workforce development, career preparation, and skilled-trade opportunities front and center.

The day-long career showcase events not only featured work skill sets that included CNC, mechanical maintenance, molding, and robotics (among

others), but company representatives shared with participants how basic workplace skills such as interviewing will help students succeed.

According to organizers, previous showcase events have been positively received by participants as being an “exceptional” and “delightful” way of changing their perspectives of the business world and the manufacturing sector and better connecting with students about their future careers.

In Sandusky County, five local manufacturers opened their doors to high school and middle school guidance counselors and principals. Sandusky County’s event was organized by Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) with sponsorship from AEP-Ohio and The Bellevue Hospital.

Guidance counselors and principals were escorted by a charter bus to six locations. They had the opportunity to meet with employees, directors, managers, and HR representatives to discuss a range of employment opportunities for which companies are recruiting. They also gained a first hand understanding of how manufacturing has evolved into a cutting-edge industry starved for the right people. The bus tour included stops in Bellevue (Mitsubishi Chemical Performance Polymers, Inc.), Clyde (Revere Plastics System, LLC. and Whirlpool – Clyde Division) and Fremont (Freeman Company and Green Bay Packaging Inc.).