

TRAINING SOLUTIONS

TRAINING COLLABORATION TO ASSIST IN MEETING NEED FOR ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY WORKERS

In August of last year, the Texas Workforce Commission, in conjunction with the Office of the Governor, announced the South Plains Manufacturing Skill Standards Council Initiative (MSSC) would receive \$499,000 in grant funds from the Governor's Meeting Industries' Critical Workforce Needs grant program. Only four projects in Texas were selected to receive a portion of the \$2 million dollar grant program. The MSSC consists of a partnership between WorkForce Solutions, West Texas Manufacturing Association, Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center, South Plains College, Vertical Turbine Systems Inc., Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center, Lubbock ISD, Frenship ISD and Lubbock Economic Development Alliance.

WorkForce Solutions CEO Martin Aguirre said the initiative was developed to address the critical shortage of skilled workers in the South Plains manufacturing sector, which represents approximately 5% of total employment in the region.

"Despite the impact productivity has had on manufacturing employment, the shortage of skilled workers threatens the sector's future success. If we do nothing, that gap will only widen in the coming years as aging baby boomers retire. The U.S. Dept. of Labor estimates that the nation will face a skilled worker shortage of eight million people by 2010, with that number growing to fourteen million in 2020," Mr. Aguirre added.

Thirty-four sophomores, juniors, and seniors from Lubbock's four high schools originally enrolled in this four-module certification program at the Byron Martin ATC. Currently, 23 students have completed the first module (Safety), 7 have completed the second module (Quality), 3 have completed the third module (Process & Production) and 1 has completed the fourth and final module (Maintenance). The goal of the project is to have 90% of the students complete the program. These students are helping to recruit future students by recommending the program to their friends.



MSSC Program Instructor Henry Anderson assists Christopher Curtis and Theodore Thomas with the occupational safety certification module. Theodore (far right), a junior at Lubbock Monterey High School, is the first program participant to receive certification in all four program modules.

"This is huge, not only to LISD but also to the Lubbock manufacturing community," said Rick Stewart, Director of the Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center. "The success of the program is spreading to area manufacturing companies, neighboring community colleges, and ISD's throughout the state."

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