

Chair Rep. Reardon's request:

Chair Representative Reardon and committee members. Thank you for inviting me to represent manufacturers on this issue. I appreciate your request to learn more from the manufacturer's side about this issue. We have been manufacturing composite component parts for nearly 55 years. In the last 10 years it has become increasingly more difficult to find and maintain a qualified workforce that will show up to work on time, has the desire to learn and the knowledge of using a tape measure and perform simple math.

I believe what has changed the most is the work ethic. Most youth do not have a job until they are 20 or 21 and I feel this is the main problem, along with the state's high rate of high school absenteeism. If they miss a lot of school most likely they will miss a lot of work. Most of the time, their first day of work for us is their first day of work ever and they are basically in shock!

The workforce needs of manufacturers have changed over time. Most manufacturing skills is specific to that industry so training needs are beginning to be done in-house. We have partnered with Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership to implement Smart Talent. An in-house specific training program that pays employees as they learn new skills. Gone are the old days where you just put your time in and you earn more. This program puts each employee on a career path that they are in charge of learning new skills. As they learn new skills they receive pay raises. This puts the employee in charge of their own career. This training is good for manufacturers as it allows more efficiency as the workforce is cross trained. These in-house custom training programs are becoming key to manufacturing and are also a big investment. So while finding skilled workers isn't as necessary, finding workers with the desire to learn and wanting to work is more important.

Businesses must be an active participant in their future workforce. In Clackamas County our company along with other manufacturers have come together to support a Charter School called Clackamas Academy of Industrial Science. We help support the school by sitting on the advisory board as well as financially and offer internships. We also support Sabin Skill Center and have established an endowment at Clackamas Community College in Manufacturing. When we hire students from these Technical Skills Schools, we have much better outcomes. They are ready to work and they know what to expect. I believe

exposing students to all kinds of careers is a benefit. This is where manufacturers should partner with schools and offer support and partnerships.

We are lucky to live in a State that has robust support for manufacturing in regards to training. Whether it be Community College Customize Training, Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership or Workforce Investment Boards they are all there to assist with training needs. We just need to get the workforce in the door and that needs to start with youth. Manufacturers and Academia need to work together to expose youth to the world of manufacturing. More manufacturers need to get involved with their local schools and schools need to welcome them.

I believe if students were exposed to the many types of jobs manufacturing has more students could decide if that is the career they would like to choose. Because most likely a percent of them will find their way to manufacturing eventually but for most they have wasted time and money finding that road.