

January 2009
Issue 1

NW Indiana's
Leading
Industries

Industry
Expert
Insight

Porter County
Awareness
Campaign

**This Month's
Industry Expert**
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IN-demand career beat

highlighting careers in manufacturing and logistics

Making it and Moving it: Northwest Indiana's Leading Industries

Manufacturing and logistics are leading industries in Northwest Indiana, but many are unaware of the excellent careers that are available. Part of this is natural. The economic recession has hit the news with a barrage of layoff announcements and plant closings. Unfortunately, these headline-grabbing stories hurt the industry and contribute to the Brain Drain. The truth is that manufacturing and logistics offer plenty of great opportunities for exciting and rewarding careers.

Our youth need good jobs if they are going to stay in the Region.

Manufacturers and logistics businesses can provide them with great careers. Some of the most in-demand careers in Northwest Indiana include engineers, managers, and dispatchers. Even during the current economic recession, local businesses have held on to these workers. The number of industrial and mechanical engineers in particular have shown positive growth over the past few years according to Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. These jobs provide above-average wages and often require higher education with a focus on technology, math, and science.

The purpose of **IN-demand career beat** is to highlight these and other exciting careers for youth, parents, and educators. Our goal is to get Northwest Indiana excited about manufacturing and logistics again. These industries are vital to our past, present, and future. We look forward to providing you with insight and information you can use to help your children prepare for these exceptional opportunities.

"Manufacturing today is not what it was just 5-10 years ago."

Local Industry Experts Provide Insight – Q & A

- Q. What advice would you give a middle or high school parent if their child were considering a career in manufacturing?**
- A. *Here are ways parents can help their son or daughter prepare for their future careers:*
- *Attend workshops on resume preparation and interviewing.*
 - *Attend summer or weekend classes related to the desired career field at local universities.*
 - *Contact the student's school about arranging a "Job shadow" visit to a local company to learn more about the desired career field. Internships may also be a possibility.*
 - *Have the student help with repairs and other jobs at home. This can help strengthen their understanding of how things work and improve their problem solving skills.*
- Q. How many workers does your business expect to hire over the next 5-10 years and what level of education will these workers need?**
- A. *We anticipate hiring about 20 people each year over the next 5-10 years. Required education depends on the specific job. A high school diploma is required, plus additional technical/trade schooling or a college degree.*
- Q. What are some of the jobs that your business has the hardest time trying to fill?**
- A. *Engineers, computer programmers, and plastic/rubber molding operators.*
- Q. What kind of classes or extra-curricular activities should you participate in if they want to prepare for a career in your industry?**
- A. *Any activity that helps build skills and understanding of the anticipated career field. E.g., Math Club, Science Club, Robotics Team, machine trades, etc.*
- Q. What are important traits or characteristics you look for in a prospective worker?**
- A. *Hardworking, self-motivated, and punctual. It's also important that they have good communication skills and present themselves well during the interview.*

IN-demand career beat

highlighting careers in logistics and manufacturing

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IN-demand career beat is a publication of the Center of Workforce Innovations of Valparaiso, Indiana and supported by the Porter County Economic Development Alliance. This newsletter and the get-IN website (www.get-in-careers.com) are designed to encourage youth, parents, and educators to learn about careers in the leading industries of Northwest Indiana. Research is conclusive; the more youth know about careers and industries, the more likely they are to make informed decisions. Our goal is to provide the knowledge, understanding, and resources that parents, educators, and youth need in order to make informed career decisions. With these tools, we believe that we can stem the brain drain and improve the economy of Northwest Indiana.

For more information or to join the e-mail distribution list, contact David Blumenthal at 219-462-2940, ext. 40 or dblumenthal@innovativeworkforce.com.

What Youth Need to Know About Manufacturing and Logistics

The Manufacturing and Logistics Industries have changed significantly over the last decade. Advances in technology have altered the way companies operate. For youth interested in pursuing careers in these high-tech fields, keep in mind the following key points:

- *Manufacturing encompasses much more than assembling a product.* Manufacturing begins with design and development. It's an area where ideas can be tested, where one person's inspiration can lead to a major product breakthrough. Careers in the design and development area include designers, model makers, and nanotechnologists (Nanotechnology is the study and design of systems at the nanometer size - one billionth of a meter).
- *Truck Transportation and Warehousing is the largest sector of the U.S. logistics industry and will need large numbers of new employees over the next 10 years.* Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics (TDL) includes the planning, management, and movement of people, materials, and goods. These goods are transported by road, pipeline, air, rail and water. Multi-modal logistics spans the entire world and provides careers in professional and technical support. This includes transportation planning and management, logistics services, mobile equipment and facility maintenance.
- *In order to succeed in Manufacturing and Logistics, you must have a background in math, science, computer programming, and communications.* Metal Fabricators use trigonometry on a daily basis. Industrial and Environmental Engineers use science as part of their job, and Logistics Consultants need excellent written and oral communication skills to be successful in their profession.

Most importantly, youth need to know there are many high-tech/high-wage careers in Manufacturing and Logistics.

The Porter County Career Awareness Campaign

A few years ago, business owners began to speak up about a trend that could harm their businesses and impact the competitiveness of the entire economy. An aging population and years of bad press limited the number of youth interested in many of their most important positions. In particular, certain jobs in manufacturing and logistics were going unfilled, even during an economic recession. The most recent recession has certainly slowed these vital industries, but the facts remain: the youth of Northwest Indiana need to know about the opportunities available to them.

The National Association of Manufacturing and the Center of Workforce Innovations have both found that youth are unaware of careers in manufacturing and logistics. Without this awareness, many are turned off to careers with high wages, rewarding challenges, and plenty of openings. Many of the

most common sources of information – newspapers, parents, and even some educators – have been telling youth that jobs in manufacturing and logistics are low-paying, dirty, and dangerous. The reality today is much different. Many manufacturers in Northwest Indiana provide high-paying jobs; boast outstanding safety records; and operate in facilities cleaner than most hospitals.

The Porter County Economic Development Alliance has supported the Center of Workforce Innovations in getting the word out. There are plenty of opportunities for youth interested in careers in manufacturing and logistics. For more information, visit www.get-in-careers.com and check out Career Web or stop by a local WorkOne today. For a complete listing of Northwest Indiana WorkOne sites visit www.gotoworkonenw.com.

A Porter County Economic Development Alliance Initiative

We're on the Web!
www.get-in-careers.com