

Local Manufacturing Companies Address Skills Shortage

Mobile Training Program Delivers Practical Application, Employment to Tampa Bay

TAMPA, Fla., June 8, 2011 – In this time of economic uncertainty, there is a myth that there are no manufacturing jobs to be found. The reality is that our shortage is in the lack of skilled people, not jobs. Five Tampa manufacturing companies, with assistance from the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Florida MEP), are working to address this shortage. Sixteen individuals, half being veterans, are currently receiving specialized training as part of the Mobile Outreach Skills Training (M.O.S.T.®) program.

“The M.O.S.T.® program is a fast-track, intensive skills training, recruitment, assessment and placement program that prepares unemployed and underemployed individuals, including returning veterans and minorities for entry level production jobs in a fraction of the time of traditional programs,” said Dr. Claudia Follet, Director of Grants and Partnership Development for Time Wise Management Systems. “Programs like M.O.S.T.® are vitally important to our communities and to manufacturing companies searching for skilled talent.”

The two-week training program is being conducted in a state-of-the-art mobile training facility stationed by Florida MEP at Tampa Bay Downs. Following the completion of the training, the graduates will all receive permanent employment with the participating employers – Brycoat Inc, iCosi Manufacturing, QTM, Southern Manufacturing Technologies and Tampa Brass & Aluminum Corporation.

The Florida MEP identifies jobs prior to training, trains hard-to-serve populations for high wage jobs with benefits, fills the existing skills gap, and has a job retention rate of 87%. Recognizing the shortage of skilled workers in the manufacturing community, the Upper Tampa Bay Chamber of Commerce saw a benefit to bringing the M.O.S.T.® program to the area. This represents the first time the M.O.S.T.® program will be in Tampa Bay.

“We are proud to partner with the Florida MEP and bring the specialized resources of the M.O.S.T.® program to Tampa Bay,” said Jerry Custin, president and CEO of Upper Tampa Bay Chamber of Commerce. “Through the networking capabilities offered through the Upper Tampa Bay Manufacturers Association, we have identified several employers interested in participating in the program.”

The Upper Tampa Bay Manufacturers Association along with WorkNet Pinellas, Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance and Pinellas County Economic Development Center were very instrumental in the recruitment of the two county class. The M.O.S.T.® program is part of a statewide training program financed with a \$100,000 U.S. Department of Labor grant and a \$500,000 Workforce Florida Inc. grant with a goal to leverage an equal amount of state, local and private-sector funding.

With the unique advantage of mobility, the M.O.S.T.® program is able to take its services to the parts of the state where jobs and potential employees are located. The unit can be situated right at the doorstep of an employer’s facility or at a location convenient for trainees. Additionally, the M.O.S.T.® program can be customized to suit the needs of participating employers, which helps reduce the time it typically takes for a trainee to become a productive employee. The program has been successfully implemented in Mississippi, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island and in Florida.