

Tailored training program provides hands-on experience for unemployed

M.O.S.T.® Program Streamlines Recruitment and Manufacturing Training

N. VENICE, Fla., June 15, 2011—The Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Florida MEP), in conjunction with PGT Industries, the nation's leading manufacturer and supplier of residential impact-resistant windows and doors, is currently providing specialized training as part of the Mobile Outreach Skills Training (M.O.S.T.®) program, for 10 individuals in Southwest Florida seeking manufacturing jobs.

The Mobile Outreach Skills Training (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 production jobs in less time than traditional programs. Training is being conducted in a state-of-the-art mobile training facility stationed by Florida MEP on PGT's property and will continue for a period of two weeks.

The Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County and Suncoast Workforce assisted Florida MEP in identifying 10 candidates to participate in the M.O.S.T.® training. Following successful completion of the program, the graduates will all receive full-time employment with PGT Industries. This training is part of a statewide program financed with a \$500,000 Workforce Florida Inc. grant with a goal to leverage federal, local and private-sector funding.

"One of the challenges we face is finding the right candidates for our entry-level assembly, glass operations and supply chain positions. A candidate may meet the minimum criteria for the job, but until they have hands-on experience we don't know if they are a good fit for the job," said Alicia Adams, Senior HR Manager for PGT Industries. "We are excited to be working with the M.O.S.T.® program to better align individuals with specific jobs and prepare them for what they will encounter on the manufacturing floor."

The M.O.S.T.® program provides quick-start job training for small and mid-sized manufacturers seeking entry-level workers. The program's mobile training unit is outfitted with state-of-the-art training equipment that allows participants an opportunity to upgrade or learn new manufacturing skills. Because of its mobility, the program is able to move to areas where jobs and potential employees are located. The unit is generally situated onsite at an employer's facility or other location convenient for trainees and the company. Training, which is often customized to suit the needs of the participating employer, helps reduce the time typically required for new employees to become fully productive.

"Programs like M.O.S.T.® are vitally important to our communities and to manufacturing companies searching for skilled talent," said Dr. Claudia Follet, Director of Grants and Partnership Development for Time Wise Management Systems. "The M.O.S.T.® program 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 percent. It is a tremendous program that has been successfully implemented in Florida, Mississippi, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut and Rhode Island."