



**Economic
Development and
Growing the
Economy**

**UW
Extension**

Profiles of Best Practices

Growing and Expanding Existing Area Businesses— Machine Tool Grant Program

Community, County

City of Antigo, Langlade County

Area of Project Impact

City of Antigo and Surrounding Areas

Population Affected

20,740

Situation

The City of Antigo and Langlade County have two major employers that focus on bearing manufacturing and machining -- Merit Gear and Waukesha Bearing. Both companies look to the Langlade County area for their workforce. Computer Numeric Control (CNC) has become an essential skill that machinists are expected to have upon entering this workforce. The community recognized the need to provide appropriate training to youth and adults so that existing area businesses could obtain qualified workers.

Economic Development Strategies

Waukesha Bearing contacted North Central Technical College for assistance approximately 4 years ago. The primary goal was to maximize worker development by preparing machinists to be proficient in the use of Computer Numeric Control. Since the industry was looking to hire locally, the Machine Tool Grant Program provided a means to prepare local workers with specialist skills in the machining industry.

Implementation

Northcentral Technical College, Waukesha Bearing, and the Antigo School District partnered to create a machining program for high school students. Curriculum and training were established in such a way that students could receive hands-on training before they graduated from high school. Waukesha Bearing was actively involved in the creation of the program, by suggesting the kind of machining equipment to have in the classroom as well as the specific items to manufacture. As a result, Northern Wisconsin youth and adults now have the opportunity to receive a Technical Certificate for Machine Tool Automation and Machine Tool Operation in Wausau, which prepares them for a number of potential occupations: Machine Tool Operator, CNC Programmer, CNC Operator, Production Machinist, Machine Setup Operator, Lathe Operator, Milling Machine Operator, and Surface Grinder Operator.

Northcentral Technical College applied for a state building and capacity grant. The three-year grant totaling \$705,000 was used to purchase state of the art equipment with an emphasis in Computer Numeric Control. In the first year of the grant the following items were purchased: a three-axis vertical machining center and a computer numerically controlled lathe. In the second year, the following additional items were purchased: a three-axis vertical milling machine and a precision surface grinder. Both the City of Antigo and Langlade County's Economic Development Committees saw the importance of this program, each donating \$ 2,500.

Partners and Leadership

Waukesha Bearing, Merit Gear, Northcentral Technical College, Antigo School District, Elcho School District, City of Antigo, and Langlade County have worked together on the project for more than five years. This partnership has remained strong with industry assisting in the purchase of equipment and local units of government providing financial support.

Outcomes

The Machine Tool Grant Program has been very successful with 12 students completing the certificate program in the spring of 2002. It is anticipated that 8 students will complete the program in the spring of 2003. To date, a total of 9 students have secured employment after completing the program.

Contact

Larry Kind, Director
Mike Berry, Machine Tool Instructor
Northcentral Technical College
312 Forrest Ave.
Antigo, WI 54409
715-623-7601
Kind@northcentral.tec.wi.us
berrym@ntc.edu