



BAWD Newsletter / Issue #10 / Winter 2020

BAY AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

What a Difference 15 Years Make!

Jim Golembeski

I just read an article in *I Tech*, the publication from NEW North IT Alliance, about a joint effort among Sheboygan Area School district, Lakeshore Technical College, and Lakeland University called “College Here and Now.” Wow! The program allows high school students to earn an associate degree in information technology while still in high school and finish a bachelor’s in computer science in two years. Wow!

In 2005, which seems like yesterday to someone my age, northeast Wisconsin was coming out of a recession that had transformed our manufacturing industry sector. Bay Area Workforce Development Board provides services to workers when they are laid off due to plant closings or large layoffs. From 2002-2005 our region lost a lot of the old low-skill, high-wage manufacturing jobs as the wave of new technology and the globalization of the workforce washed over us. As I like to say: I stood in front of roomfuls of middle-aged, gravitationally challenged men who had lost their \$20/hour jobs and whose reading and scores were at 4th grade level.

As we came out of that recession, I received a call from a lakeshore company telling me that they needed 100 welders ASAP. At that time, Lakeshore Technical College, which serves Manitowoc and Sheboygan counties, did not have a welding program! That was only 15 years ago! Since Bay Area WDB had a lot of funding to retrain displaced workers, we collaborated with LTC to develop a short-term welding training program that quickly developed into a state-of-the-art welding curriculum. It has been an amazing journey since then to meet the needs of Wisconsin’s businesses in the 21st century. The very next year we created the NEW Manufacturing Alliance and we have not looked back since.

“College Here and Now” is just one example of how far our NEW North region has come in such a short time. In fact, NEW North actually started in 2005. Partnerships among K-12 schools, technical colleges, and universities were almost unheard of. Adopting courses in new technologies such as we have in the IT field would have taken a long time to develop and implement. Now that kind of partnership and innovation is engrained in our culture. New initiatives emerge all the time.

Study says Northeast WI Manufacturers are Healthy, But Have Concerns

Ann Franz

The Northeast Wisconsin (NEW) Manufacturing Alliance announced its 10th annual “Northeast Wisconsin Manufacturing Vitality Index Study”, which serves as an indication of the strength and vitality of manufacturing employers in the New North. This year’s report showcases that manufacturers are bullish about 2020. They plan to invest in their businesses and expect strong sales growth. In addition, almost half are planning to hire in the first quarter of 2020. The biggest issue is that the skills shortage continues to be of great concern, especially in machinist occupations.

The Alliance has commissioned the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh’s Business Success Center to administer the study over the past 10 years. Presidents and CEOs of northeast Wisconsin manufacturing companies with at least \$3 million in revenue and 25 or more employees participated in the study. In total, 108 manufacturers participated in the survey conducted in October and November 2019, answering questions related to financial health, business growth expansion, plant modernization, 2020 hiring intentions and potential skills shortages.

Respondents said their companies are financially solid, with 98 percent projecting their firms’ financial health in the next 6 to 12 months will be “healthy” or “quite healthy.” Manufacturers’ strong plans for 2020 sales growth, capital investment and additional hiring indicate the industry’s vitality in the New North.

More than half of respondents reported sales increases in 2019 and over 66 percent expect increased sales in 2020. Manufacturers are also investing in their companies, with 32 percent indicating they plan to expand in the next 12-24 months. This is significantly higher than the 20 percent reporting plant expansions in 2011, the first year the study was conducted. Another area differing greatly from the original study is in plant modernization plans. This year, 68 percent of manufacturers said they plan plant modernization for their companies in the upcoming 12 to 24 months, compared to 48 percent in 2011.

“The first quarter of 2020 should be strong for hiring, with almost half of companies saying they plan on hiring in the first three months of next year. In subsequent quarters, one in three companies plan on hiring,” noted Ann Franz, the Alliance’s executive director. “However, three out of four manufacturers are concerned that they will not find the workforce they need in the new year. This is nearly three times the number of companies reporting such difficulty in 2011.”

Employees such as Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machinists, engineers, welders, industrial maintenance/electro-mechanical technicians, and assemblers remain difficult to locate and are in high demand. Entry level general labor and operator positions were noted as hardest to fill in this year’s survey. Employability skills are also heavily in demand, especially attendance, communication, math, industry experience and flexibility/acceptance of change.

Questions regarding the study can be directed to Ann Franz at 920-498-5587 or ann.franz@nwtc.edu.

An Executive Summary of the study can be found on the Alliance’s website: www.newmfgalliance.org.

Independent Living Grant - Contract Renewal



The Independent Living Program is a federal program administered through Department of Children and Families –Division of Safety and Permanence. The Bay Area Workforce Development Board received the 2020 Contract Renewal to continue to administer the program across a 17 county region.

This program works with youth/young adults that have aged out of the foster care system and offers assistance to guide them in achieving self-sufficiency while transitioning to adulthood. Our Career Services Specialists work diligently to ensure youth remain engaged and connected to their community and resources, while addressing their basic needs. Through the Independent Living Program, foster youth also have the opportunity to access the Brighter Star Scholarship which is available for any Post- Secondary degree, technical diploma, or certificate program.

We look forward to continuing to provide this program across Region 2!



Work Experience Testimonial

I have been working with Paul (not his real name) since 2015 and have seen him struggle with social situations and interacting with others. I have also seen his hard work at school and interest in the IT Computer Support program. Paul had never had a job and admitted that he was a little afraid of graduating because he was really unsure of what 'adulting' would look like for him.

Having this work experience was a game changer for him, I cannot imagine a more perfect placement for him. The worksite supervisor and team provided a mentoring environment which allowed him to learn and grow both his knowledge of IT and his employability skills. He now has confidence and is looking forward to graduating this semester and securing employment in the field.

WIOA Youth Career Services Specialist

Transitions To Success Program

Mentors needed!

Transitions to Success (TTS) is a collaboration of agencies that work with foster youth, young adults who were formerly in out-of-home placement, and other disengaged youth and young adults. (It is funded through a grant from Stand Together Foundation, Inc., a fund of the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation).

Mentors would help youth and young adults with goals pertaining to employment, education, personal connections and life skills. Some examples include filling out applications, budgeting, filing taxes, getting a driver's license, finding an apartment, exploring careers, and much more. Most importantly, being a role model and friend.

If interested, please call Dawn at Big Brothers Big Sisters at (920) 615-9307 and ask about

their information sessions for TTS guided mentoring.

For more information: <https://bbbsnew.org/be-a-big/>



Local Job Fairs

Brown County Job Center - February 16 from 1:00 - 3:00pm

Menasha Job Center - February 18 from 2:00 - 4:00pm

Brown County Job Center - February 20 from 1:00 - 3:00pm

Sheboygan County Job Center - February 6 from 1:00 - 3:00pm

Menasha Job Center - March 17 from 2:00 - 4:00pm

Brown County Job Center - March 19 from 1:00 - 3:00pm

DATES TO REMEMBER !

Martin Luther King Day - January 20

Fun at Work Day - January 31

February is American Heart Month

Groundhog Day - February 2

Valentines Day - February 14

National Random Acts of Kindness Day - February 17

Dr. Seuss Day - March 2

Daylight Savings Time Begins - March 8

St. Patrick's Day - March 17

Bay Area Workforce Development Board is an equal opportunity employer/program. If you need this information or printed material in an alternate format, or in different language, please contact us at (920) 431-4100. Deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired callers can or contact us through Wisconsin Relay Service at 7-1-1.

