



WIN WIN

Industry and education packaged for success

Story by Elizabeth Whitchurch
Photos by Jeff Frey



After months on the drawing board, the contracts were signed recently and a new partnership forged between industry and education when Bosch Packaging Technology, Inc., and Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, both in New Richmond, began a joint apprenticeship venture.

“We’ve been working together on this project since last spring,” says Nancy Cerritos, WITC academic dean of trade and technology. “Bosch is very proactive and realizes it will lose a

significant portion of its skilled work force in New Richmond and Shell Lake over the next five to seven years. They wanted to create apprenticeships – which we have available and can develop – to create a better skilled workforce for the future.”

“We tried to hire local workers, but it’s not a densely populated area, and we have a

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Mark Hanson

Bosch Packaging Technology

need for highly skilled workers, so we had to come up with a new approach,” explains Mark Hanson, manager, continuous improvement coordination and technical functions at Bosch Packaging Technology. “By utilizing our strong relationship with WITC and the state, we were able to custom design a program that gives us the skilled workers we need.”

The program includes electro-mechanical technician and machinist apprentices. The electro-mechanic apprenticeship – the combination of an electrician and mechanic – is the first of its kind in the state and is now considered a new trade in Wisconsin.

Two WITC programs participate in this flagship effort: the automated packaging systems program and the machine tooling technics program, as these two WITC programs are best represented in the work at Bosch Packaging Technology.

The opportunity to become an apprentice was opened to Bosch employees, and four stepped up. Machinist apprentices are Josh Marquand and Brant Couch. Electro mechanical technician apprentices enrolled

in the automated packaging systems program are Philip Taylor and Paul Petty. These four apprentices will complete their respective program over a respective program over a four- or five-year time span, while also working at Bosch.

What makes the program unique is what the participant receives at the completion



of the apprenticeship – five years for an electro-mechanical technician and four years for a machinist – an associate degree in technical studies, a technical diploma and a State of Wisconsin Certificate of Apprenticeship, commonly known as a journeyman card. A traditional apprenticeship usually results in only the journeyman card.

Upon acceptance in the program, the apprentice signs a contract with the State of Wisconsin that they will meet the obligations required for a journeyman card. During the apprenticeship, Bosch is responsible for ensuring the apprentices meet the minimum requirements, as well as assigning a shop-floor trainer and mentor to each apprentice.

The apprenticeship program works very closely with Wisconsin’s Workforce Development Department through Travis Ludvigson, Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards, who produced the contract the apprentices signed. At WITC, Randy Deli,

divisional dean of trade and technology, coordinates the college’s apprenticeship opportunities.

Once accepted in the program, apprentices receive a salary and benefits for their 40-hour-a-week schedule, during which they split time between on-the-job-training and classroom work. In addition, the

program covers the cost for tuition and tools needed for coursework. Outside of the program, the normal curriculum requires classroom attendance for 30 hours a week, leaving little time for job training.

“This was a great opportunity for me,” says Taylor, one of the new apprentices. “It’s a perfect scenario. I get to continue working at Bosch, and in five years I’ll have a degree, diploma and journeyman card that will benefit my career and family.” ■

To learn more about WITC’s apprenticeship opportunities, visit witic.edu/programs/apprenticeship. For more information on WITC’s automated packaging systems technician and machine tooling technics programs, visit witic.edu/programs.