

# Skilled Workforce: Our Industry's Greatest Challenge

Interview with Mike Duffin, Executive Director of PMPA

“The greatest challenge facing the precision machining industry is the lack of skilled workers,” said Mike Duffin, Executive Director of the Precision Machined Products Association. “It is a national issue with serious implications for our economy, national security, industry and communities.”

As executive director of PMPA, Mr. Duffin spends much of his time on the road visiting members across the country. “With the exception of the economic meltdown in 2008, I have never before seen such unanimous agreement about this threat to our success and survival. The lack of skilled workers is a real problem for shops in New England, the Midwest, the West Coast and all across the U.S. and Canada. They all have immediate openings for skilled machinists and cannot find interested and qualified candidates, workers and technicians.”

A number of PMPA shops are leading the way with training programs and partnerships to address this urgent need. Northwest Swiss-Matic in Minneapolis, partnered with North Hennepin Community College to train employees.

G.W. Lisk, in Clifton Springs, N.Y., partnered with a local community college and used PMPA Educational Foundation grants to train two machinists. G.W. Lisk provided a workshop at a PMPA national meeting last year to show other members how they can provide similar training in their companies.

National Technologies in Oak Creek, Wis. and Milwaukee Area Technical College, both PMPA members, teamed up to provide 40 hours of machinist training on site at the National Technologies plant.

C and M Industries in Bristol, Conn. used state Step-Up Grants to provide CNC and quality training in its shop. E.J. Basler Co. in Schiller Park, Ill. keeps a local focus on training by supporting the NIMS-certified Metals Program at Leyden High Schools. The NIMS credentials that their students earn assure employability in high-tech manufacturing.

Sorenson Engineering and Metric Machining, both in California, use Technical Employment Training, which specializes in machining and CAD training, to boost the skills available to their shops. Graduates of TET are running complex production machines at both companies.



While PMPA members address the need for skilled workers individually in their communities, PMPA is getting involved in some nationwide efforts to help meet this challenge. With baby boomers retiring at a 10,000-per-day pace over the next 19 years, developing a pipeline of talent for the industry is the number one strategic goal.

“PMPA is proud to announce its partnership with The Manufacturing Institute to expand the Right Skills Now Training program and the NIMS Manufacturing Skills Certification System that is endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers,” Mr. Duffin said.

The Right Skills Now program, the brainchild of PMPA First Vice President Darlene Miller of Permac Industries, uses the newly reinvigorated NIMS metalworking curriculum and local community college partners to deliver just-in-time training to qualified candidates. In 16 weeks, plus an eight-week internship in a machining company, the Right Skills Now program delivers college credit, nationally portable industry recognized credentials and NIMS content to create workers that can add value their first day on the job.

“PMPA is working together with The Manufacturing Institute to help address the nationwide skills gap that affects manufacturers – our shops, and also our customers and our suppliers. Today’s market for precision machined components is highly competitive and our shops must sustain their technical capabilities if we are to be sustainable,” Mr. Duffin explained. “The single most

CONTINUES ON PAGE 6

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

## SKILLED WORKFORCE

important factor in our shops ability to continue to deliver is our educated and skilled workforce.”

PMPA continues to provide specific training and content selected by members at national and local meetings. The programs address shop operations, regulatory compliance and general management topics. The partnership with The Manufacturing Institute is designed to provide a

nationwide solution to address the current skills gap and create a pipeline of talent for manufacturers.

Learn more by reading the PMPA press release at **PMPAManufacturingInstitute.notlong.com**; visiting the PMPA careers page at **pmpa.org/careers**; or visit Right Skills Now at **rightskillsnow.org** or **nims-skills.org**.

## RECENT PMPA LISTSERVE TOPICS

PMPA members support one another through email Listserves, where they can solve problems, share advice, sell excess material and equipment, and learn about new developments and opportunities. Here is a list of topics that were recently discussed:

- Subcontractors needed for a Swiss part
- Manufacturing software vendors
- Preventive maintenance software
- SPC & Excel
- Salt tank repair
- Pucking/briquette
- Storm water pollution prevention plan
- 8-40 threads
- AN-MS screws
- Ball screws
- Single point threading
- Pre-plate roll tap
- Close tolerance brass
- Material 12L14 stl 5/64" Rd
- Tribaloy T-400
- Yield strength 160-260 MPa
- C35PB EN 10277-2
- 1215 material tearing
- Looking for electroless nickel source
- Grinding wheels for a Giovanni drill grinder
- Centerless grinding equipment
- Tumbling nylon 6/6 parts
- Broaching results
- Broken tool detectors

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## PMPA CALENDAR

Below is the calendar of upcoming conferences and events scheduled for the 2012-2013 program year. For the latest district/chapter meeting information, please view the Calendar of Events at **pmpa.org/calendar/**.

If you have questions about PMPA conferences or regional meetings, please contact Rob Kiener, Director of Government Affairs & Communications: 440-526-0300 or **rkiener@pmpa.org**.

### PMPA Management Update Conference

February 15-17, 2013

Glendale Renaissance, Glendale (Phoenix), Ariz.

### Precision Machining Technology Show

April 16-18, 2013

Greater Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, Ohio

### PMPA 2013 Annual Meeting

October 18-22, 2013

The Hotel Del Coronado, Coronado (San Diego), Calif.



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