

NORTH CENTRAL WORKFORCE ALLIANCE: **Partnering to Address Workforce Challenges in North Central Ohio**

Through the North Central Workforce Alliance of Ohio (NCWA), employers are coming together to share resources and ideas about how to attract, train and retain the workforce needed for area businesses to grow. The organization serves a wide range of industries, including manufacturing, in Ashland, Holmes and nearby counties.

Established in 2016 and based at the Ashland County - West Holmes Career Center, NCWA has organized a variety of programs that bring businesses, educators and local leaders together to spread the word about manufacturing careers. NCWA has spearheaded several summits that have brought together stakeholders to develop game plans to achieve established workforce goals. A recent event drew about 250 attendees with Youngstown State University President Jim Tressel presenting the keynote address. Key NCWA initiatives have included:

Girls With Goggles

This event brings together about 300 6th grade girls from several school districts to learn about nontraditional, often male-dominated careers ranging from manufacturing and robotics to auto tech, construction and more. Local NCWA members talk with the students about area jobs that require skills taught by Career Center programs. The participants also get a close-up look at the Career Center's programs, such as the Robotics and Advanced Manufacturing Technology program where students use the same techniques and equipment used by leading companies.

The event provides exhibits and hands-on activities such as running an electric drill, manipulating robots and robotic arms, building a network circuit, and many more. Asked what she learned from the event, one 6th grader said, "I learned I'm capable of much more than I thought." A local teacher commented, "It's a really great way for the girls to have some hands-on experience and get them excited about different jobs."

Teachers' Boot Camp

This two-day event brings together local teachers, school administrators and employers to learn more about what businesses need from potential employees. The educators visit a variety of local manufacturers to get a firsthand look at the opportunities available for students, as well as the skills needed for success.

Participants said the experience was invaluable in helping them connect the needs of employers with the day-to-day learning in the classroom. As one teacher noted, "I've just been astounded by the depth and breadth of the jobs that are available that do not require a college education to get a foot in the door."

These innovative approaches showcase how NCWA connects schools, businesses and the wider community to share what a career path in manufacturing is all about. For more information, visit <https://ncwaofohio.org/>



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