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APT TRAINING CENTER COMPLETES INAUGURAL FIRST YEAR

HICKSVILLE—APT Manufacturing Solutions completed its pilot year of the Manufacturing Training Center. There were a total of 12 students, 8 Seniors and 4 Juniors, that completed the course. The students were from both Hicksville and Fairview high schools.

Throughout the school year, they spent 2 hours per day 4 days per week at APT facilities, going through the manufacturing process of building a robot packaging machine that placed candy canes into cartons.

The curriculum for the year included the following courses: Tools of the Trade, Print Reading and Sketching, Concept Design, Machining, Welding, Assembly, Panel Wiring and Principles of Electricity, PLC Programming, and Robot Programming.

Out of the 8 seniors, 4 were hired full time at APT and will begin apprenticeship programs to further their education. The others have plans to attend college in the fall. Three students were hired part time for the summer.

Tony Nighswander, President at APT, says "This program is one of the first of its type, for High School students to come to a manufacturing plant every afternoon and learn from our engineers, tool makers and programmers, and is quite an opportunity. This training center caught the eyes of the state of Ohio and was underwritten by Northwest State Community College. It wouldn't have happened without the efforts of many people and organizations. The Defiance County CIC, Defiance County Commissioners, Hicksville School Foundation, Northwest State Community College, and Hicksville and Fairview administration all worked very hard together for this program."

There are 4 students returning in the 2016-17 school year and are developing an advanced class for them to continue. Seven new students will be entering the program following the first year track.

Nighswander goes on to say "We [employers] are relying too heavily on the school system to teach trade skills, and it's important that we come alongside the high schools, vocational schools, and colleges to give work experience while they are teaching. America is entering a period in history where more people are leaving the workforce than entering, and we will need to work together to turn out work-ready young people faster than we ever have. It's been fun to get involved in the education process and see the young people excited."

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APT has grown rapidly in recent years, more than doubling its workforce and building over the last 3 years. Nighswander says they are still hiring skilled trades and plan to for the foreseeable future, especially tool makers and machinists, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, robot programmers, and PLC programmers.

APT Manufacturing Solutions, founded in 1996, specializes in solving problems for manufacturers. It is among the largest machine shops in the area, as well as welding and fabrication. APT serves leading manufacturers with custom designed and built gauges, along with custom machines, packaging equipment, and full assembly lines. APT is an authorized FANUC robot integrator, the leading robot manufacturer in the world and serves a wide range of customers in the automotive, food, pharmaceutical, firearms, and aerospace, and furniture industries.

