



APT MANUFACTURING Solutions Establishes On-Site Training Center for Area High School Students

APT Manufacturing Solutions (APT) in Hicksville, Ohio has established an onsite advanced manufacturing training center directed at high school juniors and seniors. With the widening skills gap and the retiring workforce many manufactures are being forced to think outside the box on how to train and attract new talent. That is exactly what Anthony Nighswander, President of APT Manufacturing Solutions, decided he had to do. Founded in 1996 APT is one of the largest automation integrators and machine shops in NW Ohio. APT is organized into four divisions: Machining (which handles manual and CNC production runs), Automation, Fixture Gage, and fabrication.

Mr. Nighswander partnered with Hicksville and Central Local School districts in order to make this innovative idea a reality. He converted their existing employee lunch room into a class room with new tables, chairs, Smart Board, and other necessary equipment. The students were given an opportunity to apply to be a part of this program. APT felt they had enough room and equipment for twelve students. However, after meeting the fourteen applicants they decided they had to make room for all interested students. The students are attending their home high schools in the morning and then attend class onsite at APT in the afternoon. The courses they are taking on site are not only counting for credit towards graduation, they are also providing college credit through Northwest State Community College in Archbold, Ohio. Curriculum for the program is machining, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and automation programming. The APT program has plans to offer industry recognized credentials such as FANUC robot programming, OSHA 10 hour General Industry and Lean/Six Sigma Basics training in addition to the college courses.

"The ability of the two local high school districts to modify their daily schedule affords these students an opportunity to get college credit and work in the advanced automation field. APT's engineering and machine building expertise will give the students valuable work experience. The commitment of APT ownership to the local communities has been the key ingredient to move this initiative forward." Jim Drewes, Director Workforce Development, Northwest State Community College.

"We hope to show young people what types of great careers are available in manufacturing, and allow them to stay close to their family and earn a great income. Northwest Ohio is a wonderful place to live, and manufacturing has become a clean, highly technical career choice. Hopefully, our training center can expose more students to the opportunity available in their backyard." Anthony Nighswander, President, APT Manufacturing Solutions.

Mr. Nighswander used his community and local educational resources by partnering with Northwest State Community College, the Ohio MEP, the Defiance County Commissioners, and Defiance County Economic Development. APT also received tremendous backing from state legislature, in both the house and senate, and Governor's Office. While the brunt of the funding came directly from APT and the Nighswander family, they did receive financial grant assistance from various county and school foundations to purchase equipment for use in the new training center.