

**Main Street Montana – Manufacturing KIN**  
**Group A – Workforce Issues**  
**Conference Call**  
**January 26, 2015 – 10:00 a.m.**  
**Minutes**

**PARTICIPANTS:** Ken Green, Timberline Tool  
Bill Harp, General Mills  
Doug Hein, ATK Accessories – Plastics Center  
Susan Humble, President/Owner, Anderson Steel  
Bruce Jensen, Anderson Steel  
Mike Robins, President, SeaCast, Inc.  
Bryan Wood, Wood’s Powr-Grip Inc.

Tom Kaiserski (Main Street liaison) introduced the conference call participants followed by explaining the mission of today which is to identify what is one specific action(s) that should be taken, who needs to be involved, how should this action(s) be accomplished and when is it feasible to expect the action(s) will be completed. This will then be presented to the full Manufacturing KIN group at their next meeting. Mike Robins began the conference call with discussion of how the Job Corp was used in previous years.

**Tasks for Consideration:**

- Identify best training practices in Montana and other states.
- Identify action(s) that can be taken to coordinate and align the needs of employers with curriculum and programs in our K→20 system (including community and tribal colleges).
- Identify actions that can be taken to expose students in our middle and high schools to career opportunities in the manufacturing industry.

**Discussion:**

- Recognize the difference between apprenticeship programs compared to training programs
  - Apprenticeships mainly through unions.
  - When discussing job training, the KIN should use the term training rather than apprenticeship as training is a broader term of which apprenticeships are but one type.
  - Borrow ideas from unions on their apprenticeship programs and use their best practices for manufacturing.
- Look at federal programs (Job Corp) and tie into what the state has the ability to change.
- Do Montana manufacturers see successful high school training programs?
  - Current high school vo-tech programs are very introductory leaving a gap between what the schools teach vs. what manufacturers need
  - There is a need for more “career day” type events (held at schools or at manufacturing facilities) where students can talk with prospective employers
- Manufacturers need to convey to educators / schools that vo-tech training programs need to address industry needs better - some manufacturers are addressing their specific needs with

their area schools such as talking with high school welding instructors, which are good actions, but there also needs to be a coordinated statewide effort.

- Get the word out to manufacturers on existing State of Montana training resources:
  - Dept. of Labor & Industry:
    - [Registered Apprenticeship and Training Program](#)
    - Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program (TAACCT) and [\(SWAMMEI\)](#) Strengthening Workforce Alignment in Montana's Manufacturing and Energy Industries Grant Program
    - [Incumbent Worker Training \(IWT\)](#) program
  - Department of Commerce:
    - Training funding through the [Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund](#) and [Workforce Training Grant](#) Programs

The primary recommendation coming out of this call is:

1. Obtain better coordination across all levels to close gaps and align the workforce needs of the manufacturing industry. To accomplish this group A recommends the Governor convene meetings to include state agencies (Education, Commerce, Labor et.al.), manufacturing interests, appropriate federal agencies / programs, and **other workforce training** programs to coordinate a statewide approach to modifying /establishing training programs that will better meet the needs of industry.

Conclusion – Mike Robins asked for a member to volunteer to present these outcomes during the next full Manufacturing KIN meeting. Anyone interested can contact Tom Kaiserski.