

CBI NEWS



Utility Trailer

Communication and Workforce Development Keys to Success

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Contact the Center for Business and Industry at Virginia Highlands Community College for customized training.

276-739-2430

In November 2005, Utility Trailer, Glade Spring, Virginia operated with the highest level of efficiency since beginning production in 2000. How did they do it? Plant Manager, Jack Washburn, attributes it to the high performance standards of the facilities nearly 400 employees. "We have great people who have a strong work ethic, are energetic, well disciplined and understand that the company is here to make money. We have an outstanding team, everyone pulls together," said Washburn. "We believe in open communication and we hold each other accountable for reaching our goals. We're also committed to making sure our employees are well trained for their jobs."

The Center for Business and Industry has partnered with Utility Trailer for the last several years to help them make sure their employees are well trained, providing CPR and First Aid certification, supervisory training, customer service and OSHA training. "We value our relationship with CBI and VHCC," said Washburn. "The college is a valuable supplier to business and industry in this area." Application and equipment specific training is handled in-house by Utility Trailer personnel.

Weekly employee meetings were implemented in 2001 to help ensure clear communication.

"We get the employees together for about 15 minutes before lunch one day each week," said Tim McVey, Human Resource Manager. "Jack usually addresses the the group and shares business conditions, sales trends, operations issues and addresses any concerns of the group. We hold these for each shift to make sure everyone is on the same page. It has helped with building team morale and has reduced miscommunication and rumors," said McVey.



Jack Washburn and Utility Trailer have also played an integral part in the Smyth-Washington Regional Industrial Facilities Authority (SWIFA) and the acquisition of the \$900,000 Virginia Works Grant designed to promote economic development in rural communities by assisting existing industries, creating new industry, and strengthening the areas hit hardest by changing economies.

Washburn said he believed strongly in the three goals outlined in SWIFA's Grant proposal. "This grant was awarded to this area because of the plan put together by government, education and industry to advertise the available jobs, train the people and work with industry to meet new and ever-changing manufacturing needs," Washburn said. "In the long term, if we can supply manufacturing with the right people, other industry will be encouraged to locate here. Utility Trailer located here 17 years ago because of the local workforce. We need to prove our workforce is still viable today."

Utility Trailer Manufacturing Company is America's oldest, privately owned, family-operated trailer manufacturer. Founded in 1914, the company designs and manufactures dry freight vans, flatbeds, refrigerated vans, and Tautliners®, curtain sided trailers. Utility Trailer is the largest producer of refrigerated vans and the third-largest trailer manufacturer in the United States.

Utility currently operates five trailer factories across the United States: two for refrigerated trailers located in Marion, Virginia, and Clearfield, Utah, two for dry vans located in Glade Spring, Virginia, and Paragould, Arkansas, and a flatbed and Tautliner® factory in Enterprise, Alabama. They also feature an extensive dealer network with 80 locations throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Smyth County/Washington County Business to Benefit from \$900,000 Grant

A \$900,000 Virginia Works grant recently announced by Gov. Mark Warner and matching local funds will be used to coordinate efforts between those charged with training the region's workforce and those who provide manufacturing jobs in Smyth and Washington counties.

Local industries will join government leaders and educational partners in the two-county region to create a Regional Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence. The alliance will ensure training programs are available to generate a qualified workforce for local manufacturing industries and launch a marketing campaign to boost the image of manufacturing jobs.

Recent surveys of local employers indicated many were unable to find qualified employees to fill vacant positions. Industrial leaders said the available workforce needs training in "soft skills" - values like promptness, reliability, and flexibility – and technical skills like welding, machining, and electro-mechanical maintenance.

To address the concerns, Smyth and Washington County leaders earlier this year formed the Smyth-Washington Regional Workforce Consortia comprised of government, industry and educational partners. The \$900,000 awarded to the consortia will provide funding for three major goals:

- 1) Establish **The Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence**. The Alliance will hire a project coordinator to identify workforce training needs and to work with educational partners to deliver training programs.
- 2) Launch a **marketing campaign** aimed at promoting careers in manufacturing technology.
- 3) **Make needed training programs available**. The consortia's educational partners – Virginia Highlands Community College, Wytheville Community College, Washington County Skill Center, Smyth County Schools, and Washington County Schools – will provide this training.

"Southwest Virginia is a great place to live and to work," said Jack Washburn, plant manager of Utility Trailer. "Good paying manufacturing jobs are presently available. We must insure that these available jobs can be manned with qualified individuals. Manufacturing must have employees that have skills and a good work ethic."

Industrial partners Merillat, Royal Mouldings, Marion Mold and Tool, General Dynamics, Kennametal, TRW, AFG Industries, Bristol Compressors, Columbus McKinnon, General Engineering, HAPCO, Steel Fab Inc., Utility Trailer- Glade Plant, and Utility Trailer – Atkins Plant already have joined the effort and others are being encouraged to participate.

Is an Apprenticeship Program Right for Your Employees?

In Virginia, apprenticeship training has proven to be a cost-effective system for training employees in **over 300 occupations**. These occupations involve the use of manual, mechanical or technical skills and knowledge. There are over **3,000 Virginia businesses** in all sectors of our economy..... manufacturing, construction, services..... that currently use the registered apprenticeship program to meet their skill and industrial training needs. Each year some 1,300 registered apprentices complete their training and receive apprenticeship certificates which are recognized throughout the country.

Apprenticeship is a method of training employees in a skilled occupation through a combination of on-the-job work experience and related classroom instruction. *To be registered, an apprentice must be working for a Virginia based employer who has agreed to be a sponsor.* Both the apprentice and the employer sign a document provided by the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry which details their commitment to related instruction, and the on-the-job-work experiences. Apprentices who successfully complete the prescribed number of hours of training and instruction

in an apprenticeship program become certified journey level workers.

Registered apprenticeships are based upon a written training agreement between the apprentice and the employer. The training agreement specifies the on-the-job work experience, and related instruction required to meet the standards for the specific occupation. Apprentices are issued certificates as journey-level workers once they meet the terms of the agreement and demonstrate mastery of the trade or craft. Employers participate in the apprenticeship program by:

- meeting with an apprenticeship field representative to develop a registered training program *customized* for their company
- reviewing, with input from an apprenticeship related instruction coordinator, the classroom instruction program required to meet the trade standards and the needs of the business
- identifying the employee(s) who will provide the on-the-job training and supervision and
- identifying the employee(s) who will be apprentices

For more information on the apprenticeship program administered through VHCC, please contact Roger Halsey, Regional Apprenticeship Coordinator at (276)223-4725 or via email at WCHALSR@wcc.vccs.edu.

Introducing WEBCE — Continuing Education Solution for Insurance Professionals

CBI is pleased to announce a partnership with WebCE, the premier insurance continuing education provider in North America. For as little as \$5.95, insurance professionals can now complete coursework on-line to apply towards continuing education credit.

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Check out our website for more information:

www.vhcc.webce.com

The Extraordinary Leader

by Trenton Hightower, VCCS Assistant Vice Chancellor for Workforce Development

I enjoy leadership development books the way some people plow through the Harry Potter series. Wizards, dementors, and dragons aside, it's information about how ordinary people go from good to great in the workplace that I find endlessly fascinating.

The book I read most recently on this topic is *The Extraordinary Leader: Going From Good to Great* by a pair of trailblazing authors in this subject area—Jack Zenger, and Joseph Folkman. Unlike some thinkers who believe extraordinary leaders are born, Zenger and Folkman believe that anyone can learn to be a great leader.

This book builds on a concept introduced by Jim Collins in his classic business development book *From Good to Great*. What Collins identified for organizations and companies Zenger and Folkman approach from an individual level.

Zenger and Folkman agree with the conventional wisdom: when you're a leader, knowledge is power. Accurate, effective decision-making depends on how much you know—about yourself, your staff, your vendors, your customers and the organization as a whole.

The Extraordinary Leader begins by defining 16 core competencies of high performing leaders. The authors began by collecting quantitative data from a scientific analysis of over 25,000 real leaders. They concluded that leaders who move from “good” to “a little bit better” don't make much of a difference. It's not until one becomes a great leader that there will be any significant impact.

Extraordinary leaders, say Zenger and Folkman, surround themselves with partners and associates who complement them, whose skill sets are strong in areas where theirs are weak. Making these kinds of connections and accommodations, they contend, is the foundation on which great leadership rests.

If you're currently in charge of a company or a business owner, chances are you're a good leader. Picking up a book like *The Extraordinary Leader*, however, just might be your passport from good to great.

Upcoming Classes:

Leadership Workshops

- **Hallmarks of Supervisory Success**
This 8 hour workshop helps participants develop strategies to effectively assume the important supervisory role.
February 2 8:30—5:30 \$150
- **Connection with Others: Listening & Speaking**
Participants will learn how to listen effectively and speak with confidence regardless of audience size.
February 9 8:30—5:30 \$150
- **Problem Solving Results: Solutions, Improvements and Innovations**
Learn the skills and strategies required to find appropriate problem solutions and the energy to implement them
February 22 & 23 8:30—5:30 \$300

Computer and Technology

- **Computers for True Beginners**
January 24—February 14 (VHCC) 5:30 —9:30 FREE
February 8 — March 1 (Chilhowie) 5:00 —5:00 FREE
- **Microsoft Word Basic**
January 20 9:00—4:00 \$65
- **Microsoft Word Advanced**
January 27 9:00—4:00 \$65
- **Microsoft Excel Basic**
February 3 9:00—4:00 \$65
- **Microsoft Excel Advanced**
February 17 9:00—4:00 \$65

Call the Center for Business & Industry to register(276) 739-2430 or (276) 739-2533