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Fewer seeking machinist training

Educators say parents steering students away from manufacturing careers.

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By Thomas Gnau, Staff Writer

2:07 PM Saturday, October 30, 2010

DAYTON Employers in precision machining need more skilled candidates, but not many students step forward for training in machining even though jobs are there.

One difficulty may be parents who believe manufacturing jobs are a thing of the past, said Dale Frost, who oversees apprenticeships in the Miami Valley Career Technology Center's construction trades program.

—Our parents ... don't think there are (manufacturing) careers anymore," Frost said.

But according to the U.S. Department of Labor, while employment in manufacturing stayed flat in September and has been essentially flat since May the industry did add 134,000 jobs nationally in the first five months of 2010.

Starting wages for machinists range from \$10 to \$12 an hour, with a journeyman making perhaps \$16 after about five years, Jackson said. But wages can range higher for the right employees.

Chris Harkless, who graduated from the CTC in 2009, makes \$23 an hour as a civilian employee working for a Wright-Patterson Air Force Base model shop as a precision machinist and CNC operator.

Harkless, who just turned 20, was working for Dayton job shop Dysinger Inc. and taking further training at Sinclair Community College with Dysinger's help when his work caught the eye of another base employee. That led to the Air Force job.

But Harkless said he has won every machining job for which he has applied. Today, the Union resident is confident he is on his way to becoming a toolmaker.

—The truth of that matter is, you've really got to bust your butt," Harkless said. —There are jobs out there for people who want the jobs."

Most employers are smart enough to look for the person —who is worth a chance," Click said.

—I've said for years, give me someone who is willing, and we can get the job done," he said.

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can get the job done," he said.

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