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Manufacturing, a Mainstay of the UP Economy



Many people view the Upper Peninsula as a region with little to no manufacturing career opportunities or as a region with little to no economic contributions by manufacturers. That is a false image.

Manufacturing by small- and mid-sized companies is actually one of the mainstays of the Upper Peninsula economy.

The Upper Peninsula Regional Industrial Skills Alliance (UP-RIMSA) is a Michigan Regional Skills Alliance through the Department of Labor and Economic Growth. The mission of UP-RIMSA is to develop a highly qualified labor pool to meet the current and future needs of the U.P.'s industrial manufacturers and develop industry specific solutions through partnerships with education, legislators, other industries and current and future members of the workforce.

According to a survey done by the Upper Peninsula Regional Industrial Skills Alliance (UP-RIMSA), of 50 respondents out of 129 local manufacturers,

600 retirements are coming up over the next 5 years. These same 50 manufacturers anticipate over 2,100 openings for production and maintenance workers, and 22 firms plan expansions with over 362,000 sq/ft of production space and 20,000 sq/ft of office support space.

Firms with growth plans identified 53 areas of hiring needs over 11 different occupation areas where they anticipate hiring demand. Similarly, firms not projecting facility growth projected 36 areas of hiring needs over 10 different occupation areas.

UP-RIMSA has identified three primary strategies to address these needs for the future workforce: partnering with the three UP Michigan Works! Regions to recruit a qualified labor force; collaborating with universities, community colleges, and secondary schools to recruit workers; and working to identify annual hiring needs to provide real time occupational projections to ensure that an equilibrium of supply and demand exists in the labor force.

Currently, many manufacturers, especially in the Menominee and Dickinson County areas, are experiencing worker shortages. Without local labor, companies may eventually need to look elsewhere. In times of large shortages of qualified labor, companies may need to outsource not due to cheaper labor but because of lack of labor.

Area manufacturers also want the public to know that the nature of their work is not what many people think it is. Once upon a time, it meant putting wing nuts on widgets. Now, robots do that. The manu-

facturing worker must understand how the robot makes the widgets and be able to manage that process.

For a copy of the survey or more information on UP-RIMSA contact Holly Peoples at 906-789-0558 ext 215.



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May 15, 5:00-7:00 PM
TBA, Munising

June 14, 5:00-7:00 PM CT
Pine Mountain, Iron Mountain

September 26, 5:30-7:30 PM
Log Cabin Grille & Bistro, Escanaba

October 10, 5:00-7:00 PM
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Services Offered for employers:

- Profiling jobs to determine necessary skills and abilities
- Writing job descriptions and advertisements
- Posting job openings on the Talent Bank and campus websites
- Screening resumes and applicants
- Providing interview rooms and meeting facilities
- Training employees
- Helping with Human Resource administration issues
- Planning for business retention and expansion
- Offering Business Building Sessions on key issues

Services Offered for job seekers:

- Linking job seekers with local and regional
- Employment opportunities and job search web sites
- Testing ability and knowledge
- Offering employment and career skills workshops
- Helping with education financial aid forms
- Providing a resource library of links, videos and software for job seekers
- Offering internet access, word processing equipment, phone and fax services
- Supplying information on employment policies and legal issues