PRISON REFORM:
ESCAPING RECIDIVISM
BY CLIMBING THE
MANUFACTURING SKILLS LADDER
tma news bulletin

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Technology & Manufacturing Association

Founded in 1925, the Technology & Manufacturing Association (TMA) represents and supports manufacturers in the Chicago metropolitan area and surrounding counties in northern Illinois, northern Indiana, and southern Wisconsin. TMA has almost 1,000 members representing over 32,000 employees and nearly 26 million square feet of manufacturing plant.

TMA is governed by a Board of Directors, composed of executives from member firms. A full-time professional staff works closely with the Board, its committees and trusts.

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We wish to thank the 2019 TMA PARTNERS who generously invest in the organization in order to further the services provided members.
TMA Members & Friends,

A little over four years ago TMA was approached by the SAFER Foundation about whether our Association would be willing to consider training ex-offenders. With the support of the TMA Board of Directors, Patrick Osborne, Vice President of Training and Education, developed a NIMS credentialed 16-week training course to meet the needs of the SAFER Foundation and their group of non-violent ex-offenders.

With some trepidation, we began our first class at our Buhrke Training center. We had a couple of hiccups with that first class (including one student making a “run for it” in an instructor’s car), but on balance it was a group of highly motivated young men committed to changing the path of their lives.

Ninety-some young people later, TMA graduated 85 of the 90 SAFER Foundation students, and most are reported as working in manufacturing in the Chicago area (privacy rules prevent the SAFER Foundation from sharing ex-offenders job locations). Before it became fashionable, your Association was on the front lines of innovation to help build tomorrow’s manufacturing workforce.

As the President of TMA, I realize there is much we can do better… But I am also intensely proud of the commitment of members and staff to embrace new ideas and accept new challenges. It is so easy in the Association world to say no, to avoid risk, to avoid additional work. At TMA, I am privileged to work with members and staff who are willing to do the extra work, to accept the risk to try and make things better. With the SAFER Foundation we hopefully helped change the trajectory of more than 85 lives. That should make us all proud.

Steve Rauschenberger
PRISON REFORM: ESCAPING RECIDIVISM BY CLIMBING THE MANUFACTURING SKILLS LADDER

Over the next decade millions of experienced manufacturing professionals will retire; further exacerbatating the skills gap crisis currently facing the industry. To address this looming emergency, businesses, government and organizations like TMA are ramping up efforts to engage high school students, veterans, and career changers in order to try and steer them into lucrative careers in manufacturing.

As those populations are being pursued, another potential source is getting more and more attention: the incarcerated. Without direction or preparation for careers outside of prison, 68 percent of the 1.5 million individuals in America’s prisons will be re-arrested within three years. An additional 9 percent will be back in prison within five years.

This reality is not only dispiriting for inmates, it negatively affects their families, communities, and society as a whole, with over-burdened taxpayers yearly footing billions of dollars to maintain prison systems that are over-crowded due to recidivism.

The good news is the system is changing.

Last month, the Indiana Department of Correction in Madison, IN celebrated 44 female prisoners earning certifications from the American Welding Society, the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council, or the National Institute for Metalworking Skills. Working

with a local community college, over 150 women prisoners have successfully obtained certification in computing, manufacturing and other areas in the past year.

“We have employers waiting” for students with those valued certifications, Warden Jan Davis told the Rushville Republican. “There is no stigma to having a criminal record … Skills are more important than a person’s past.”

One by one, other states are following Indiana’s example.

After instituting similar skills training programs for prisoners, Texas’ prison recidivism rate dropped dramatically.

“In Texas we’ve changed a lot of laws and closed eight prisons,” Brooke Rollins, president of the Texas Public Policy Foundation told The Hill news site. “And the crime rate is down 31 percent over the last 10 years at a time when our population has exploded.”

The Trump Administration took what was working in these states and included them in the First Step Act, which the President recently signed into law.

“Two-thirds of the 650,000 people released from prison each year are arrested again within three
years,” Trump said in January 2018. “We can help break this vicious cycle through job training, ... mentoring and drug addiction treatment. ... We’ll be very tough on crime, but we will provide a ladder of opportunity for the future.”

For the last 44 years, Chicago’s SAFER Foundation has been working to prepare inmates for life-changing career opportunities after serving prison sentences. Both SAFER Foundation and CARRE, the Council of Advisors to Reduce Recidivism through Employment, shared their findings in a white paper last fall:

- From 1978 to 2013, Illinois’ prison system grew by 330%

- In Fiscal Year 2017, Illinois taxpayers spent $1.4 billion on the Department of Corrections and $131 million on the Department of Juvenile Justice

- Annually, 30,000 inmates were released from the Illinois Department of Corrections and 70,000 discharged from the Cook County Jail.

- In Illinois, 4.1 million have arrest or conviction records that could diminish their employment opportunities.

They also found that stable employment drastically reduces an individual’s likelihood of returning to prison. The more prisoners are prepared with training and career opportunities, the more likely they will escape the downward spiral in which so many prisoners find themselves trapped.

During Fiscal Year 2016-2017, SAFER Foundation reports they were involved with 275 job placements among their clients – 113 of them in Chicago area manufacturing.

Those successes, SAFER Foundation says, provides basis for the state of Illinois to invest more in education services, employer engagement, entrepreneurship and apprenticeships for those once-incarcerated.

There is also a need to expand incentives for employers to hire former prisoners. Current state law grants $1,500 to employers that hire qualified persons recently released from prison. System reformers hope to see that credit rise to at least $2,400 for three years.

TMA’s Vice President of Education and Training Patrick Osborne says working with the SAFER Foundation has been beneficial for TMA and the people they’ve helped train over the years.

Prison reform and career training can be one part of resolving manufacturing’s skills gap challenge, Osborne said.

“Encouraging manufacturing as a career for those who’ve made poor choices in the past just doesn’t help provide badly-needed team members on manufacturers’ floors,” he said. “It can also set a new direction for a person’s life, as well as his or her family and community.”

And most importantly, as President Trump said, provide a ladder of opportunity for the future.
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WTMA SPARKS GIRLS SCOUTS’ INTEREST IN MANUFACTURING CAREERS

The Women of the Technology & Manufacturing Association Committee (WTMA) spent March 23 at GCNWI Friendship Center in Country Club Hills, Illinois sparking the next generation of girls’ interests in making things.

At the 8th annual STEMapalooza Science Expo, hundreds of Girl Scouts dived into exciting and fun hands-on STEM activities presented by representatives from 35 different organizations and museums in the Chicagoland – including the WTMA.

Julia Dunford of Continental Electrical Construction organized the WTMA’s booth activities this year.

“Microsoft did a study a few years ago that shows that 37% of girls don’t view jobs in STEM as being creative or making the world better,” Dunford told TMA News Bulletin. “With that in mind, the STEMapalooza sub-committee hatched a plan to re-use Rosie the Riveter cutouts to have the girls envision themselves as manufacturers and learn the history of women in manufacturing.”

The WTMA members demonstrated manufacturing on the spot when they took photos of the girls in the cutouts, printed them with inkless printers, stamped the photos onto 1.5” circles and inserted them on pins.

“While they were waiting to take their pictures, we showed the girls parts created by our WTMA member companies,” Dunford said. “Before they left, they and their parents received a packet of information about the Rosie character, the TMA and possible careers in manufacturing.”

While the daylong event is always exhausting, it is also exciting, Dunford said.

“We get to not only show girls what’s possible in the manufacturing field and teach them something, but we get to talk to the adults in their lives too,” she said.

Getting past negative stereotypes is especially challenging to overcome for manufacturing. Participating in STEMapalooza allows WTMA members the opportunity to show parents and girls the careers manufacturing offers.

“Jeri [Baran] was talking to parents and kids at the beginning of the line, and she mentioned that several parents were excited to see pictures of women working at our TMA member companies,” Dunford said.

Those WTMA members that helped at this year’s STEMapalooza were Julia Dunford, Rene De Coning, Samantha Dunford, Lauren Marder, Jeralyn Baran, and Katherine Wanatowicz.
Wade Keats’ father, Bert, and his uncle, Glenn Keats, started Keats Manufacturing in 1958. A key reason for starting the business was something Wade’s father repeated often: “I didn’t get in this business for the money, I got in it for the freedom.”

Today, the family continues to work together. Wade and his older son team with Wade’s cousin and brother to direct Keats Manufacturing’s three sites in Wheeling, Illinois, El Paso, Texas and Mexico.

When the Keats aren’t focused on their manufacturing business, they’re enjoying time with each other and their family passion, hockey. The sport was a big part of Wade Keats’ childhood, and has affected the way he does business.

Wade was raised in Chicago’s northern suburbs, where ice hockey was a neighborhood winter pastime. “I started playing hockey when I was seven years old,” he said. “Then I played for New Trier High School when my dad coached the school’s first hockey team.”

Though top-level college team scouts offered Keats opportunities to play for them, he chose to go to smaller Curry College in Massachusetts because the scouts told him he would play right away and not sit on the bench the first two years. That’s what Wade wanted. He loved the teamwork and competition college hockey provided.

“I loved the competition. When you’re on a team like that for four years, it taught me that you really have to get down to it,” Keats said. “The other team wants to beat you. Competitors in business are like that. It’s a fact. They want to take bread off your table. We have to compete hard for this – all that in hockey helped me in the business.”

Glancing up to the oil painting of the Chicago Blackhawks’ logo on the conference room wall, Keats said, “You’ve got to get everyone locked in on the same row to win.”

When Keats finished college, he returned to the family business. He was familiar with the shop where he spent time as a kid and worked as a teen during summers. He already had experience setting up machines, working in shipping, and learning the business from the shop floor up.

By age 24, Keats was the company salesman. While he was open to tool making, what he really wanted to do was promote the family business. Keats Manufacturing grew, moved from Chicago to Evanston to Wheeling, and grew more. Keats then assumed the role of CEO 22 years ago, when his father decided it was time to step down.

Family remains the company’s strength – something unique, Keats says.

Wade’s cousin Matt Eggemeyer as COO oversees Keats Manufacturing’s Human Resource department at the Wheeling facility. As CEO, Wade oversees the overall business. Wade’s brother Matt Keats oversees the Texas branch in El Paso. Wade’s son Brad is the sales arm of the company’s newest facility in central Mexico.

“What’s unique about Keats Manufacturing is that we have a lot of family here. We treat people like family,” he said. “We share their ups and downs and go to bat for them. We do a good job on compensation and benefits. For us, it’s not a job, it’s a career. We make it so people want to stay.”

Among its many services, Keats Manufacturing designs tools in order to run production for various industries, including automotive, electrical distribution and solar. The company combines advanced, state-of-the-art technologies, including CAD/CAM, EDM and CNC machines.

As the business evolves, Wade says keeping communications open and updating technology systems are two of the company’s biggest challenges. Add that to the universal need to find qualified and trained personnel to fulfill expanding orders.

“Others from other parts of the nation tell us all the time that we’re lucky to have TMA in the area to train new people,” he said. “TMA is the best training around. It’s not that easy to get.” Several members of the Keats team have been or currently are involved in TMA training.

Keats joined TMA’s Board of Directors last year and was surprised to learn all TMA offers.

“We’ve been members of TMA for years – I don’t know how long,” he said. “But when I became a director, I learned all that TMA has to offer. It’s amazing, and
I’ve been able to tell others – especially smaller companies – all that TMA has to help them. Smaller companies don’t have HR departments or 401k funds – TMA can help them. And the networking TMA offers is phenomenal. It’s very important we keep TMA moving forward.”

There’s no question manufacturing has dramatically changed from the days Wade’s father and uncle started their company, he said. But the rewards of providing a source of income for hundreds of families over the years haven’t changed at all.

Wade shares his dad’s thinking on the subject. “Dad would go to company events and say, ‘Look at all the people we support, and who support us,’” he recalled. “I think of that often.”

“Dad got into the business because he wanted freedom most of all – the money came later. I wanted to do what I wanted to do. I understood what Dad said. That’s the reward of starting a business that becomes successful.”

Wade says he plans to continue to stay involved in the business for years to come, although he hopes to be able to take more time in the near future to enjoy the family Florida condo and visit with his son’s young family in Mexico.

Likely, Wade’s finally pursuing for himself that same rewarding freedom his father sought.

More about Keats Manufacturing can be found at: www.keatsmfg.com.
CONGRESSMAN MIKE BOST VISITS TMA

Congressman Mike Bost (IL-12) visited TMA March 18th on his way back to D.C. TMA President Steve Rauschenberger, who served in the Illinois Senate when Bost served in the Illinois House, introduced the three-term federal lawmaker to TMA members.

Bost, who worked at his family’s trucking company before entering politics, said he’s really pleased with how well the Trump Administration understands business and willingly acts on promoting American industries.

“President Trump understands that we have over-regulated and over-taxed businesses so much that we were losing companies,” Bost said. “We now have the lowest unemployment in history – and the problem we have is filling those jobs. At the same time, we’re not making those jobs unsafe or detrimental to the environment.”

“Through tax policies we’ve said ‘Hands off, go to work and do what Americans are good at’,” Bost said. “It’s working.”

Bost said his district - which includes the Granite City steel plants as well as some of the nation’s biggest farms and livestock businesses - is struggling with the tariff situation.

“On one hand, the steel plants are re-starting that haven’t been fired up for years. On the other hand, pig farmers are taking a major hit. They’re telling me they understand what has to be done with China, but they’re counting on the process not taking too long,” Bost said.

After answering questions from TMA members, Bost toured the TMA training facility with President Rauschenberger and TMA Board Chairman Rich Hoster.

“It’s always good for Congress members to see for themselves what we’re doing here,” Rauschenberger said.

COOK COUNTY ASSESSOR SHARES REFORM PLANS

Cook County’s new assessor Fritz Kaegi toured TMA in Schaumburg March 27th before explaining his plans for reforming the county’s property tax assessment system.

“We made promises during the campaign that we would start reforming this office on day one,” said Kaegi. “We’ve kept that promise and took immediate action. The report is part of our effort to be fully transparent with taxpayers about our work.”

“The work of the assessor’s office impacts the businesses, homes and neighborhoods of the people of Cook County,” he said. “It affects where they live and how they live. Few things are more important. We want people to know that the work of restoring fairness to this office will continue in the months and years to come.”

In its first 50 days, Kaegi’s office:

• Completed an audit by the International Association of Assessing Officers to identify ways the office can adopt best practices in assessment methodologies and operations
• Adopted a new ethics order, including the public posting of a visitors log which will provide transparency about meetings held by executive leadership
• Relaunched the office’s social media channels on Facebook and Twitter to provide easier communication with the public
• Created an extra oversight and approval layer for Certificates of Corrections and assessor review
• Released the 2019 tax calendar, created with the Cook County Board of Review
• Improved quality control of valuation data processes

Kaegi’s office is now working on state legislation that would allow the assessor to collect more information from a
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sampling of property owners that they would use to more fairly distribute the county’s property tax burden.

The assessor’s office released its 2019 reassessed cap rates for an array of business categories, including industrial. The sampling focused on the Norwood Park region – the first area to be reassessed with Kaegi at the helm.

To determine 2019 cap rates:

- Surveys published from the following were used: Realty Rates, CBRE, The Boulder Group, PwC Real Estate Investor Survey, Cushman & Wakefield, Calkin Research, Trepp, and CoStar. In addition, cap rates were validated in interviews with appraisers, real estate bankers, and sales brokers.

- Each property type cap rate was determined independently from the other property types, but using a similar process throughout.

- The cap rates ranged from a low of 6% to a high of 9.58%, driven by the independent determination process for each property type.

- Each of the cap rates used were unloaded cap rates (capitalizes net income after a deduction for real estate taxes paid) which is the cap rate used with general real estate market analysis.

For more information on the system reform, check www.cookcountyassessor.com.
Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois General Assembly are looking for new revenue sources to balance the state’s red-inked budget. A measure they are considering would change Illinois’ 4.95 percent flat rate income tax to a system that raises the income tax rate as a taxpayer’s income rises.

Members of TMA polled in March 2019 are overwhelmingly opposed to the plan. In response to a flash survey question, “Do you support or oppose Illinois’ newly-proposed progressive income tax plan?” 90.7 percent opposed changing the system and 7.2 percent supported. The rest were undecided.

Under Pritzker’s plan, the current 4.95 percent flat rate would go down to 4.75 for the first $10,000 and 4.9 percent for income between $10,000 to $100,000. The rate would stay at 4.95 percent for incomes of $100,000 to $250,000. It would then jump to 7.75 percent for income between $250,000 and $500,000, and increase to 7.85 percent for income between $500,000 and $1 million. Those earning over 1 million would be taxed at 7.95 percent.

Not only will personal income tax rates change, small business owners will also pay more in the proposed plan, Illinois Policy Institute says.

Businesses with fewer than 50 employees created the vast majority of net new jobs in Illinois in 2017, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau. They accounted for 62 percent of Illinois jobs growth that year. Small business corporations have been the primary drivers of Illinois’ recovery from the Great Recession. They generated 119,000 new jobs in Illinois between 2010 and 2017.

“These small pass-through businesses – which include sole proprietorships, partnerships and small business corporations known as ‘S corporations’ – are exempt from paying the corporate income tax rate,” the Institute said. “The business owner instead pays both federal and state income taxes on his or her personal income, making them especially vulnerable to Pritzker’s progressive tax plan.”

Gov. Pritzker projects the rate changes would raise over $3.5 billion in revenue annually, but that is hard to verify and even more difficult to determine if the change will pull Illinois out of crippling debt. The state hasn’t kept up with its pension obligations over the years, and now its debt is in excess of $133.5 billion.

“Mostly due to a low pension funded ratio, which stood at just 40.2 percent in fiscal 2018, and a chronic structural budget deficit, Illinois has the worst credit ratings among the U.S. states at a notch or two above the junk level,” Reuters reported in December 2018.

The Illinois Constitution would need to be amended in order for the state to change to the so-called progressive rate system Governor Pritzker is proposing. The Illinois General Assembly would need to pass the amendment and the change would need to be accepted by a majority of Illinois voters in a general election. The soonest that could happen is November 2020.

The process of changing the state’s taxing system has already launched in the Illinois General Assembly, and is expected to be considered before the legislative session’s May 31, 2019 deadline.
MITSUBISHI PARTNERS WITH TMA FOR STATE-OF-THE-ART TRAINING

As technology advances, so does manufacturing equipment capabilities and demands for well-trained specialists to run those machines. The more advanced the machinery, the more a company’s financial investment and greater the challenge for small- and mid-sized manufacturers.

Seeing the urgent need, TMA’s Training & Education Vice-President Patrick Osborne contacted Joe Talarczyk, President of Innovate Technologies, about working together with a nearby machinery maker to provide in-demand training. Osborne found the door open.

“It made sense for TMA to partner up with the Mitsubishi facility near TMA’s Schaumburg headquarters,” Osborne said. “They offer access to specialized training many of our members want.”

“We know there’s going to be a shortage of operators on all the machine tools,” said Talarczyk, who represents Mitsubishi EDM and MC Machinery Systems in Elk Grove Village, IL. “If we can any way, shape or form – help someone get excited about manufacturing by training on state-of-the-art machines – we’re helping the industry, TMA and TMA members.”

Over the past few years, MC Machinery Systems set up training centers in New Jersey, California, New York, Michigan, Canada and Mexico. Their primary Mitsubishi EDM/Laser training facility is located in Elk Grove Village - just minutes away from TMA’s Schaumburg headquarters.

Mitsubishi pairs up with TMA

MC Machinery Systems - Mitsubishi EDM/Laser offered to set up a pilot training program for TMA students to learn on their newest EDM machine.

“These machines are non-traditional, the type of function they do is not the typical machine shop functions,” said Richard Caron, senior manager of customer support and service.

Mitsubishi’s EDM/Laser training pilot program instructor was Ryan Conroy. While working as an installer, Conroy learned more and more how to demonstrate their machines’ capabilities. He’s now teaching others how to operate them. He was pleased that the TMA pilot class students gave the training high ratings.

“I didn’t know this industry and career opportunity existed until my brother told me about it,” Conroy said. “Now I try to encourage others to consider the field.”

For the 27-year-old, training is a limitless field in which he’s always learning something new. “There are always opportunities to grow, and work through problems. That’s appealing to most people I talk to,” he said.

Manufacturing training demand nears crisis levels

Baby Boomer-aged machinists are retiring in droves every week, leaving crucial and high-demand shop floors empty. The video game generation starting in the 1990s was simply not attracted to manual machines that sat idle in high school vocational training departments, Caron, who supervises Mitsubishi’s training, said.

“The next generation expected more interaction than previous machinists did,” and the process had to be revamped, he said. “That’s when technology changed the whole way of training.”

continued on next page...
MITSUBISHI...

Mitsubishi’s state-of-the-art machinery is highly interactive and incorporates more and more artificial intelligence (AI) in programming — a development that multiplies production, increases accuracy and heightens attraction for the video game generation’s short attention span.

Further advancements are on their way, and manufacturers will be forced to adapt in order to remain competitive as the industry’s equipment develops. Mitsubishi’s training invitation is likely to remain open to TMA membership.

“I see future growth at this building – Wire EDM, Sinker EDM, Milling, possibly Laser, if it’s feasible for that type of training to work out,” Talarczyk said.

For more information about TMA Training & Education, contact Leigh at: LCoglianese@tmaillinois.org.
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