

A Snapshot of the Banner Center's Year 2 Activities

By Edward Allen

The Banner Center is well on its way to becoming a self-sustaining, statewide resource "Center of Choice" for the evolving training, education, and support needs of Florida's high-performance manufacturing workforce. "The Banner Center and its partners submitted late last year an award-winning renewal proposal to Workforce Florida," Dr. Carlos Soto, campus president for Hillsborough Community College at Brandon, said. "Together with the Year 2 contract and an invested manufacturing community, I believe that the Center will prove itself to be the linchpin for strengthening the state's manufacturing workforce development system."

The Center will indeed prove itself worthy of such kudos by pursuing a variety of contract-based activities. Key among the Year 2 activities that will continue to provide increasing value to the state's manufacturers include the:

- Development, beta test and delivery to its first cohort of students the *Manufacturing Essentials* training curriculum, a 60-contact hour skills refresher and MSSC certification preparation course for the incumbent production technician.
- Development and beta test of the *Basic Instructor Training* curriculum, a three-day professional development course that will certify corporate trainers and high school faculty to teach Banner Center curricula.
- Hosting of regional focus groups to explore the development of curricula for advanced level manufacturing occupations and related industry certifications.
- Promotion of the Center's Certification Awareness and—through a partnership with the Manufacturers Association of Florida (MAF) and the Florida Advanced Technological Education (FLATE) Center—"Made in Florida" campaigns to increase the awareness of the state's manufacturers of the value of the MSSC certification and FLATE's unified educational pathway.
- Dedication of resources for marketing and outreach via a dynamic Banner Center website that focuses on the training, educational, and support needs of the state's educational-manufacturing community.

In This Issue:

- Page 1: A Snapshot of the Banner Center's Year 2 Activities
Manufacturing Essentials Beta Testing Underway
- Page 2: From the Principal Investigator
MSSC Assessment Pilot Test Provides a
Cultural Boost
- Page 3: Does Florida Really Need an MSSC Certified
Workforce?
Treasure Coast High School Becomes Florida's
Newest MSSC Assessment Center
Florida's MSSC Assessment Center Locations

Manufacturing Essentials Curriculum Beta Testing Underway

By Edward Allen

When the Center beta tested its first curriculum, "Manufacturing Fundamentals," they used a limited approach because time constraints precluded a test of the entire curriculum at any single location. Instead, the Center conducted a brief test of individual curriculum units at its five community college-partner locations. Although the test analysis determined there was minimal need for substantive changes to the curriculum, subsequent development and review of the draft "Manufacturing Essentials" curriculum indicated the need for a more thorough beta test effort.

Building on that model, and wanting to expand the influence that an inclusive test at a single site could have on the curriculum, PGT Industries, headquartered in Nokomis, FL, and the Center entered into a mutually beneficial agreement. The staff at PGT Industries would beta test the entire "Manufacturing Essentials" curriculum, providing periodic assessments of the instructional materials. "A key part of our strategic plan is to implement a comprehensive people development curriculum," Liz Evers, training and development manager for the Nokomis-based facility and Banner Center Advisory Council member, said. "The content covered in 'Manufacturing Essentials' is right in line with that goal. It helps fill a critical skills gap felt by employers in the manufacturing industry nationwide, including PGT."

With more than 25 years of consistent growth and innovation,



PGT Industries is the nation's leading manufacturer and supplier of residential impact-resistant windows and doors, with a full line of products that meet the toughest wind-borne debris requirements in the nation-Florida's Miami-Dade County codes. They received the Corporate Award at the May 2007, 21st Annual Governor's

Hurricane Conference. The company was honored for its contributions to advance hurricane preparedness and mitigation techniques. PGT Industries also was recently presented with the 2007 Executive Director's Award by the Fenestration Manufacturers Association (FMA) for its advisory role to various building code committees and work groups.

Recognizing the tremendous benefit to beta testing the entire curriculum at PGT, Dr. Idelia Phillips, director of Career and Technical Education at Manatee Community College, made an in-kind contribution to help offset the administrative costs and instructor salary requisite to a successful beta test. "Manatee Community College is a staunch supporter of the Banner Center," Dr. Phillips said. "And, like the Manufacturing Fundamentals beta test, this effort will provide the Banner Center valuable insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the program."



Dr. Idelia Phillips

"About 30 of our production technicians and leaders have already gone through half of the Manufacturing Essentials training," Jennifer Rains, training specialist at PGT Industries and Banner Center Advisory Council member, remarked. (continued on page 3)



From the Principal Investigator

I am sure that you will agree with me, as you read this edition of *Manufacturing Connections*, that these are exciting times for Florida and its educational-manufacturing community. The recent reinvestment in the Banner Center for Manufacturing by Workforce Florida has provided us the core funding to pursue our baseline Year-2 initiatives. While I am happy to announce this award, I am thrilled to let you know that we are getting even closer to creating the unified educational system in Florida required to meet the workforce capacity for our strong and diverse manufacturing sector. It was evident after my delivering the keynote address at the Performance Institute's "Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Summit" that our efforts to create this system of education for manufacturing, which engages secondary and post-secondary education and Incumbent Workforce Training in alignment with a national certification, is serving as a model of choice for the rest of the country. Key elements of this model include:

- The state beginning implementation of the Florida Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act,
- MSSC presenting us with the extraordinary opportunity to participate in their January through February 2008, nationwide pilot test of their newly revised Production Technician certification assessments,
- Our educational partner Center, FLATE, successfully reforming the community college degree programs to create the new Engineering Technology (ET) A.S./A.A.S. degree, which uses the MSSC certification competencies to inform its core curriculum and create statewide articulation pathways, and
- The Banner Center's "Manufacturing Fundamentals" and "Manufacturing Essentials" curricula are being used to provide training to entry-level and incumbent workers throughout the state.

Of course, none of these initiatives overshadows the other. They all align with our original premise of establishing and implementing a unified educational pathway for the state's manufacturing workforce. The CAPE Act (Senate Bill 1232), was created to provide a statewide planning partnership between business and education communities, to expand and retain a high-value

industry, and sustain a vibrant state economy. Career and professional academies will enable students to matriculate easily to both post-secondary education and the workforce. Key to our operational premise is that participating public high schools are required to offer a rigorous and relevant curriculum that leads to:

- Industry-recognized certification in high-demand occupations,
- The award of a standard high school diploma, and
- Opportunities for high school students to simultaneously earn college credit.

To learn more about the CAPE legislation and how to implement it in your community, contact the Banner Center for Secondary Career Academies at www.bannersecondary.com.

Similarly, the MSSC pilot test will give Florida's manufacturing community a chance to help reform and validate the national certification. Our continued partnering as a dynamic workforce development team will have a predictable, beneficial effect. In that regard, I encourage all of the state's manufacturers to participate in the MSSC pilot test. An opportunity like this does not come along very often. The door is now open to the manufacturing community, allowing each of you to continue to demonstrate your leadership and dedication to being part of the solution to the critical manufacturing workforce development issues. Your participation in the test will help drive the engine of change needed to redefine the term "high performance workforce."

FLATE has also engaged the entire Florida community college manufacturing education system to reform the manufacturing related degrees offered and create the new 60 credit hour ET degree. The degree's premise is a "one-plus-one" approach comprising year-one general education courses and a technical core curriculum aligned with the MSSC certification. Year-two offers several specialization tracks. Embedding the MSSC competencies into the degree's core provides an industry-relevant articulation pathway from educational programs that address these same industry competencies. It also provides a pathway for incumbent workers to gain college credit by experience through certification.

With stakeholders' assistance, we are creating a workforce education and training system to meet the needs of advanced manufacturing. I welcome the chance for us to work together to shape the future of the state's manufacturing workforce and the companies they work for. Thank you.

Eric A. Roe, Ph.D.

MSSC Assessment Pilot Test Provides a Cultural Boost

By Frances Robinson

The April 2007 edition of *Manufacturing Connections* mentioned how the Banner Center was building a cohesive, statewide Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) certification-based culture throughout the educational-manufacturing community. Although in 2007 the Center made noble strides (e.g., helping establish 11 MSSC Assessment Centers in Florida) in that effort, the Center received an unexpected cultural boost when MSSC announced their January 14-February 18, 2008, assessment pilot test.

Near 2007's end, MSSC launched a nationwide call for participants to pilot test the four assessments of the newly updated "Production Technician Certification" examination. The test represents the culmination of an effort in 2007 by MSSC to update its industry-led standards and revise its assessments to align with those standards.

Initially limited to 100 pilot test-takers per MSSC assessment, a subsequent agreement between MSSC and the Banner

Center changed that approach.

"Now that MSSC has raised the limit, allowing all interested parties to participate (for a small administrative fee of \$5.00 per assessment) in the pilot test, they have presented Florida's manufacturing community with a groundbreaking opportunity," Dr. Eric Roe, principal investigator for the Banner Center, remarked. "By participating in the pilot, we can further our goal to build a strong MSSC certification-based culture among the state's manufacturers and help shape the future for 'all' MSSC certified production technicians in Florida and the nation."

Recognizing the importance of the pilot test and the benefit of participation, the Center launched, in mid-December, a statewide coordinated outreach campaign to Florida's manufacturing community.

"Our aim is to try to enlist at least 30 participants at each of Florida's MSSC Assessment Centers," Dr. Roe said.

MSSC will accept participant registrations throughout the pilot test period. If you are interested in participating, please contact me, Fran Robinson, Sr. Staff Assistant for the Banner Center, at (813) 253-7000 ext 5518 or email fr Robinson5@hccfl.edu.

Does Florida Really Need an MSSC Certified Workforce?

By Don Gugliuzza — Sr. Manager of Organizational Development, Tropicana-Division of PepsiCo



Don Gugliuzza

Even though the MSSC Production Technician certification has been in force for over a year, there is still a level of doubt among Florida’s manufacturers about its value, prompting the question, “Do we really need an MSSC certified workforce?”

One should not immediately cast doubt upon the value of a new certification, especially since many of the state’s manufacturers remain unfamiliar with MSSC and its certification system. Like any new initiative, one can expect a manufacturer to pose an abundance of questions about a new certification. For example, “I’ve never heard of MSSC. If I buy into their certification, what will it do for me? And what about my ROI?”

A closer look at some of the facts about certification will help dispel their doubts and answer their questions. First, MSSC certification will provide an employer with:

- A flexible, trainable, and motivated knowledge-based workforce, and
- Decreased recruitment costs due to an available credentialed workforce pool.

Moreover, in 2006, the Banner Center conducted five regional industry focus groups. Seeking to gain information about the manufacturing community’s current and future entry-level and incumbent technician knowledge and skills requirements, the Center also asked the groups’ 157 manufacturing representatives about the value they put on an industry-recognized production workforce certification. After compiling the focus groups’ results, the aggregate findings were presented—via an online survey—for validation to the state’s manufacturers. Results to the question proved quite favorable.

- 66% of the respondents indicated that “Certification automatically raises the bar for employees compared to non-certified employees”
- 65% of the respondents indicated that “Certification would reduce the time needed to train new employees”
- 54% of the respondents indicated that “Certification equates to work readiness”

The focus group participants also revealed that among their greatest concerns about certification were training costs and ROI (return on investment). Overall, they presented a valid scenario. “Okay, so let’s say I spend \$1,500.00 to send a technician to your certification prep course. That’s going to cost me more than just the course tuition, since I’d have to take that technician off the production line for four hours a week for, let’s say, 15 weeks. Now, let’s say I send five technicians. The costs are going to off the charts. How do I recoup my investment?”

Manufacturers can recoup their investment by recognizing that they now have incumbent and/or entry-level technicians with a certified body of portable production knowledge and skills and putting a plan in place to make the best use of that new resource. For a new technician, having a nationally recognized certification is an immediate indicator of a qualified, work ready employee.

MSSC certified technicians represent a high-level of professionalism and productivity compared with the non-certified employee. The newly certified technician spent the time to gain the knowledge and skills needed to pass the certification exam.

Even more important, that person has been exposed to a body of knowledge and skills that can be readily applied to all of manufacturing’s 14 sub-industries.

Increased productivity is also a factor. Enduring the rigor of preparing for and passing the examination represent quality traits that will directly transfer to the challenges and demands of a company’s production line.

Certified technicians distinguish themselves from the rest of the production workforce as high-performance achievers interested in their careers, producing quality products with minimal production delays, rework, and scrap, and being on the team of professionals that want to make a difference to their customers.

At Tropicana, our need for dependable skilled workers is vital, and we believe manufacturing certification is the answer. The Banner Center links the curricula with the business need, and an MSSC certification prepares prospective and current employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to contribute immediately to the workplace.

Manufacturing Essentials Curriculum Beta Testing Underway (continued from page 1)

“They’re very engaged and have clearly embraced the program. They want to earn that certification. These employees are a highly motivated group that recognizes that having a certification helps them become more productive and may give them a better chance at promotion.”

“The delivery of the Manufacturing Essentials training has been an unexpected but wonderful opportunity,” Ms. Evers remarked. “We see this as a great way to advance the productivity of our workforce and increase the satisfaction of our customers.”



Beta test students prepare to take a Safety Module exercise

Treasure Coast High School Becomes Florida’s Newest MSSC Assessment Center

At the November 5-6, 2007, 4th Annual Manufacturers’ Summit, in Lake Mary, FL, Kathie Schmidt, director of Career & Technical Education at St. Lucie County Public Schools, was happy to announce that the district’s Treasure Coast High School had, in 2007, the distinction of being the first high school to become a registered MSSC Assessment Center. Treasure Coast joins Florida’s family of MSSC Assessment Centers.

Florida’s MSSC Assessment Center Locations

- Hillsborough Community College
- Florida Community College at Jacksonville
- Manatee Community College and Manatee Technical Institute
- Pasco-Hernando Community College
- Pinellas Technical Education Center
- Polk Community College
- Central Florida Community College
- Broward Community College
- Mid Florida Tech, Orange County Public Schools
- Treasure Coast High School, St. Lucie County Public Schools

Founding Partners:

Hillsborough Community College

Bay Area Manufacturers Association
Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance

Florida Community College at Jacksonville

First Coast Manufacturers Association
WorkSource

Manatee Community College

Sarasota-Manatee Area Mfrs. Assoc.
Suncoast Workforce Board

Pasco-Hernando Community College

Pasco County EDC
Hernando County EDC
Pasco-Hernando Jobs and Education
Regional Partnership Board

Polk Community College

Polk Manufacturing Council
Polk Works

Workforce Florida, Inc.

MANUFACTURING CONNECTIONS

is an Employ Florida Banner Center for Manufacturing publication. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Workforce Florida.

Employ Florida Banner Center For Manufacturing

Hillsborough Community College
10414 East Columbus Drive
Tampa, FL 33619-7856

Eric A. Roe, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator
T: 813-259-6579
F: 813-259-6576
eroe@hccfl.edu



Visit the Employ Florida Banner Center for Manufacturing at:
www.banner-mfg.org

Manufacturing Connections

Hillsborough Community College

EMPLOY FLORIDA
BANNER Center
Manufacturing

P.O. Box 31127
Tampa, Florida 33631-3127

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Tampa, Florida
Permit No. 773