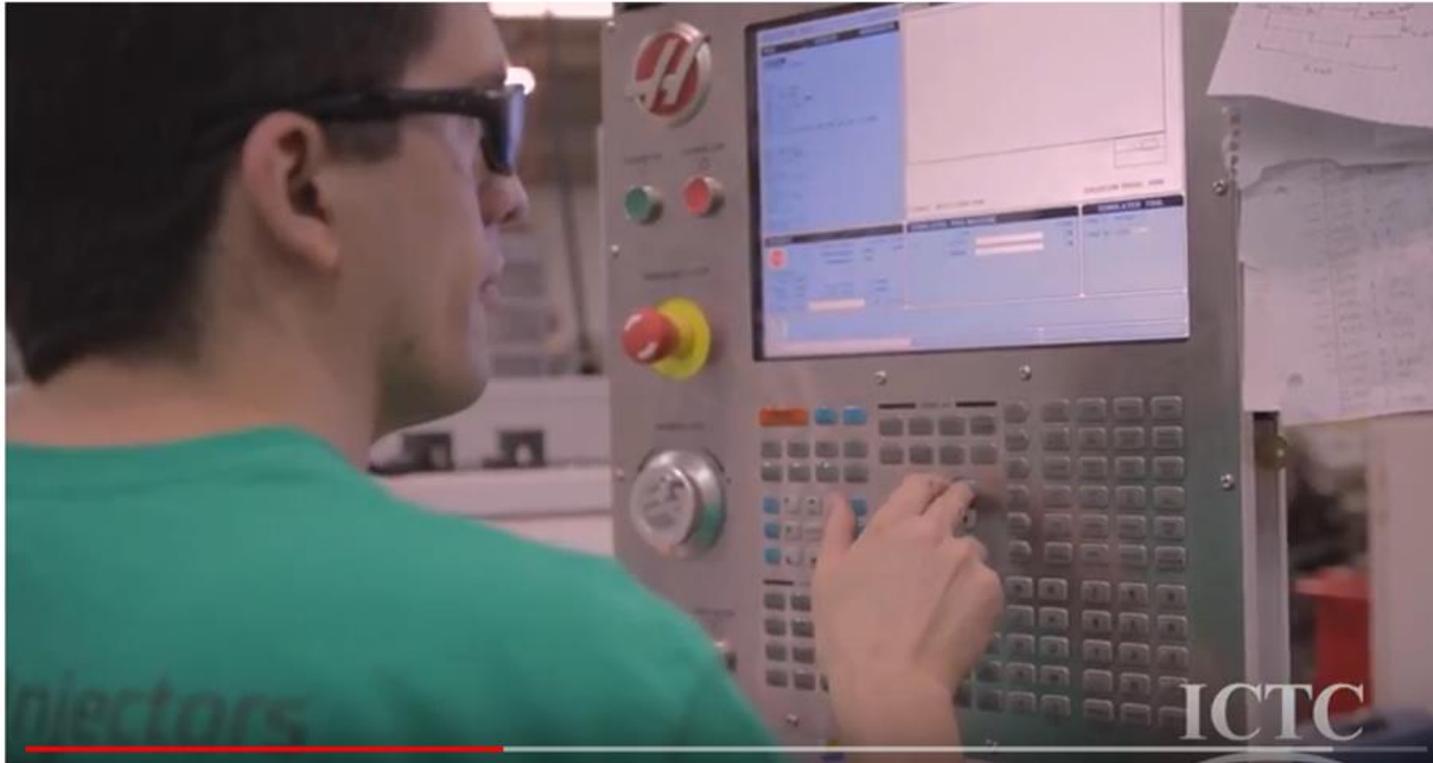


PRESS RELEASE:

ICTC BIS Machining Program Changes Lives, Meets Industry Needs



Pictured: Louis Webb, ICTC BIS machining program participant

From moving from retail to manufacturing, receiving promotions and higher pay, to broadening their marketability with national credentials and increased skills, the men recently graduating from ICTC's Business & Industry Services machining program can now fulfill their professional goals and meet the Muskogee area's need for well-trained machinists.

The 250-hour training program—free to participants—was funded by a Training for Industry Growth (TIG) grant received from the Oklahoma Department of CareerTech.

Instructor David Acuff worked with a variety of skill levels from those with little to no machining experience and others who needed to hone their skills for

promotion. Program areas included manual milling, lathe machining, and CNC setup, operation and programming, and offered certification from NIMS, the National Institution for Metalworking Skills.

“We screened the applicants thoroughly, but skill level wasn’t a determining factor,” says Jerry Hooper, ICTC BIS Industrial Coordinator. “We looked for grit and determination, for people who wanted to improve their situations, had an interest in advancing their manufacturing careers and would work hard to do so.”

The TIG grant funded 15 slots, providing tuition, books and materials, with the majority of those slots offered to Muskogee-area manufacturers interested in upskilling current employees. The remainder were used for the unemployed or underemployed. Of the initial 15, nine completed, with several others leaving the program for full-time employment before finishing the 250 hours.

“David is an excellent instructor and explained very technical information in a way that I was able to understand and retain,” said Charles Hughes, whose company has moved him from assembly to machining. “I learned new techniques in manual machining along with setting up CNC machinery, operating and G-code programming. It’s been a very good move for me.”

Others definitely feel the same. Travis Beard now works in a full-job machine shop, expanding his skill portfolio and earning him more than \$20 an hour plus benefits. Andrew Orange (lawn care) and Cody Honeycutt (vapor shop) left retail behind and now work much higher paying jobs in manufacturing as CNC operators and programmers.

“I went from knowing very little about the machining trade to being able to set up and operate a variety of machines,” said Brendan Crotty, a 16-year-old who now has a summer internship with HE Anderson’s manufacturing department. “It wasn’t always easy, but I’m glad I went through it.”

Hooper says ICTC BIS hopes to receive another TIG grant before the end of 2018 to fund a similar training program. For more information, interested companies and individuals should sign up for ICTC Business & Industry News (April.Murelio@ictctech.com) and watch for announcements and calls for applications.