

LABOR FORCE AVAILABILITY

The Highlands Business Park is located within one mile of Interstate 81, and within 40 miles of Interstate 77 and 45 miles of Interstate 26. The immediate labor market area for the industrial park is Smyth County, Washington County, and the City of Bristol which comprises a labor force of almost 50,000 persons of which approximately seven (7) percent are registered as unemployed. This labor market does not include additional labor located in parts of Sullivan County, Tennessee and other adjoining Virginia counties, which are well within commuting distance of the park. (The Tri-Cities Metropolitan Area of Bristol, Johnson City, and Kingsport has a population of almost 463,000 persons).

The Highlands Business Park is positioned well with respect to labor force with the type of experience and skills necessary for competing into today's global market. The immediate area has suffered numerous plant closings and downsizings over the last four years, resulting in high numbers of unemployed and underemployed workers readily available, as shown by the following chart:

<i>Company</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Jobs Lost</i>	<i>Year</i>
Lea Industries	Youth Furniture	170	2001
American Furniture	Hotel/Motel Furniture	430	2002
Virginia House	Furniture	275	2002
Natalie Knitting	Apparel	350	2001
Spring Ford Knitting	Apparel	120	2002
US Gypsum	Wallboard	200	2000
Dana Corporation	Automotive assembly	200	2002
TOTAL		1,745	

The Dana Corporation was closed in 2002 due to internal downsizing company wide resulting in the closure of 30 facilities worldwide. *Sue Henderson* is the former Human Resource Manager at Dana and will gladly tout Dana's experience with the local workforce. In the fifteen years that Dana was located in Smyth County, their turnover rates have been less than one (1) percent. Their workforce was dedicated, hardworking, and well educated. Dana required a high school diploma as a pre-requisite to employment, and the company provided tuition reimbursements for education, so that many workers completed associate's or bachelor's degrees while employed with Dana. The Dana plant in Atkins received national and state awards for productivity, including the Malcolm Baldrige award.

Because of the availability of workers in assembly and wood-related production, the Virginia Employment Commission reports the following number of job registrants by occupation for the Smyth, Washington, Bristol area:

- General Assemblers: 2,688
- Production Machine Tenders: 601
- Woodworking shop hand with experience: 540

Note: This does not include workers whose unemployment insurance benefits have expired, so the total number of workers available will be larger.

In terms of *new entrants* into the labor force every year, the Smyth-Washington-Bristol area also graduates about 1,000 high school students per year including adult diploma and GED programs. The Virginia Highlands Community College also graduates about 250 annually from its degree and certificate programs.

Our existing industries offer the best evidence of the quality of the workforce in our area. Here is a quote from one of the current plant managers in Smyth County:

“WE FEEL THAT OUR WORKFORCE IS OUR MOST SIGNIFICANT STRENGTH. OUR PEOPLE HAVE PROVEN TIME AND AGAIN THAT THEIR DEDICATION AND WORK ETHIC IS SECOND TO NONE. THROUGH OUR TEAM MEMBERS’ COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WE KNOW THAT THE BEST IS YET TO COME!”

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

In establishing a manufacturing facility in the Washington/Smyth County Industrial Park, you will have access to support related to recruiting, hiring and developing a skilled workforce. The Virginia Department of Business assistance will commit a dedicated liaison to your company to coordinate all of the resources available to help with your recruiting and training needs. Your one point of contact with the state will work with you to gain a precise understanding of your needs and will coordinate the resources to ensure your success. Among the partners at of the Regional Workforce Development Team are:

- Virginia Department of Business Assistance
- Virginia Community College System
- Virginia Employment Commission
- Virginia Department of Social Services
- WIA/WIB One-Stop Workforce Development Centers
- Four Year College/Universities
- Local High Schools
- Local Vocational Technical Schools
- Local Economic Development Professionals
- Regional, State and Local Employment Service Providers
- Manufacturing Technology Centers

REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS:

Among the resources available for training are the Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) and the Manufacturing Technology Center (MTC). Location and contact information, as well as a brief description of the organizations are below.

Virginia Highlands Community College

Rt. 372, off Rt. 140
Abingdon, Virginia 24210.
Contact: Dr. David Wilkin
(276) 739-2421

Virginia Highlands Community College serves a population of over 100,000 residents in an 800 square mile area. The service area includes the western portion of Smyth County, Washington County and the City of Bristol. Through the college's **Center for Business and Industry**, a range of programs including job training and re-training courses as well as pre-employment services and training are offered. CBI offers twenty-three Career Studies Certificates for short-term training to upgrade skills in such areas as:

- Basic Computer Numerical Control Operation
- Industrial Maintenance
- Quality Improvement

The Occupational/Technical program is designed to meet the increasing demands for technicians, paraprofessional workers, and skilled craft workers for employment in industry, business, the professions, and government. VHCC offers the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree in five areas (Agriculture Technology, Business Technology, Engineering and Industrial Technology, Health Technology, and Public Service Technology) with majors in 12 curricular areas, as well as a number of related two-year diploma and one-year certificate options.

Description of Facilities:

The college has a 100-acre campus adjacent to Interstate 81 in Abingdon, about sixteen miles from the Virginia-Tennessee border. Six buildings offer 128,989 square feet of space for instruction and support. The most recent construction was the completion of the Occupational Technology Center in 1993. The earliest buildings were constructed in 1969 and are undergoing extensive renovations during the spring and summer of 2004.

Materials testing and metallurgical labs allow engineering faculty to provide test services to industrial clients. The CAD lab was renovated with new computers and flat screen monitors in December 2003. They are equipped with AutoCad 2002 and 2004 software. First year students in Machine Technology Programs are taught set-up and operation on manual machines such as the Engine Lathe, Milling Machine, Drill Press, Saw, Surface-Grinder, and Cylindrical Grinder. Second year students study Computer Numerical Control Machining. Programming, set-up and operation are taught on the CNC Lathe and CNC Vertical Machining Centers. Some programming methods are G Code, Conversational and Computer Aided Machining (CAM).

Seven computer classrooms are equipped with 132 computer stations for Computer Based Instruction. Each lab has T3 access to the internet and LCD projection systems. One classroom with 20 desks/computer stations is dedicated exclusively for employer training through the Center for Business and Industry. CBI also has 20 portable wireless laptop computers that can be networked and linked to an overhead projector. Through a partnership with the Manufacturing Technology Center, CBI can offer instruction in a Mobile Learning Unit, a classroom in a custom designed semi-trailer. Other facilities include an auditorium with seating for 230, a learning

laboratory with 50 computer stations for one-on-one assessment administration and instruction, and a small conference room available for job interviews and meetings.



Manufacturing Technology Center

Main Location in Wytheville

Satellite Location on VHCC campus

Contact: Dr. Jay Tice

(276) 223-4805

Engineers with the Manufacturing Technology Center provide exceptional engineering and management consulting services, to include Lean Manufacturing, Workflow Design, CAD/CAM, ISO Quality Systems Certification and Implementation, Environmental Compliance and Regulatory Assistance, Health/Safety Assistance, and Computer Integrated Manufacturing. The MTC engineers are certified to deliver eight workshops developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The workshops are 8 to 16 hours each in the following topics: Lean 101 Workshops, Value Stream Mapping, 5 S System, Set-Up Reduction, Cellular/Flow Manufacturing, Pull Systems/Kanban, Total Productive Maintenance and Kaizen Blitz. Through the Mobile Learning Unit, a classroom in a custom designed semi-trailer, the MTC can provide on-site training and advanced technology demonstrations at any location. The mobile classroom is equipped with state-of-the-art computer hardware and software. All equipment can be removed from the mobile lab and custom configured to meet any company-specific needs.

EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Scholle Corporation: Mr. Lynn Veasey, Plant Manager at the Chilhowie Scholle Corporation plant, partnered with Virginia Highlands, Center for Business and Industry to implement the WorkKeys System. This vision linked the WorkKeys System to a plan for a “Pay-for-Knowledge” wage incentive program for the plant’s hourly employees in manufacturing and maintenance. The goal was to design a multi-skills based assessment system and cross-training program. Job Profiles were completed for Packers, Machine Operators, Quality Inspectors and Maintenance. Over 100 employees completed the WorkKeys skill assessments, received their results and elected to participate in an individualized training plan. This system has allowed Scholle to continuously meet and exceed the plant’s manufacturing output targets, as well as achieve continuous improvement in safety and attendance goals.

Boise Cascade: The Center for Business and Industry (CBI) of Virginia Highlands Community College was contracted to perform Call Center Operations pre-employment training for Boise Cascade Office Products Company during a two and a half year period. The college delivered 103 pre-employment classes for 1500 potential employees. Courses were held on campus and on-site at Boise Cascade and were held during the evenings and weekends. Participants received one semester college credit for participating in the pre-employment program.

Bristol Compressors: As the technology for manufacturing compressors for air conditioners and heat pumps has become more complex for Bristol Compressors, the company has used WorkKeys job profiling and employee skill assessments to identify specific areas of training needed for machinists and maintenance technicians. VHCC has administered assessments in Applied Math, Observation, Applied Technology, Reading for Information, Locating Information, and Teamwork to approximately 200 Maintenance and Computer Numerical Control Operators. KeyTrain software is provided for the employees to use on an individual basis to upgrade skills where a gap is identified.

Kennametal, Incorporated: Customized training in safety and hazardous materials has been

conducted for Kennametal, Incorporated, located in Chilhowie, Virginia. The CBI conducted training in Confined Space, Hazwoper (Hazardous Materials), First Aid/CPR, and Blue Print Reading for Kennametal Inc. Instructors met with supervisors to insure that the training was customized for the equipment being used at Kennametal. All training took place on-site.

DANA Corporation: Through a partnership with the Manufacturing Technology Center (MTC), Virginia Highlands Community College custom designed a training program for Employee Improvement Teams at DANA Corporation. The goal of the training was to prepare team leaders to lead, support, and guide EI Teams in three basic areas. The first area involved reviewing the foundations of team involvement in problem solving which included a variety of interpersonal skills and approaches to effective team relations and activities. The second area focused on a variety of quality and problem solving techniques including root cause analysis, goal setting, data collection, and documentation techniques. The third area focused on areas related to understanding and applying plant business procedures at DANA Corporation.

Summary:

The Regional Workforce Development Team supporting Washington and Smyth Counties is committed to helping your company find the most qualified workers and to assisting you in developing your employees into a globally competitive workforce. Thank you for giving us the opportunity for consideration. We are eager to add you to our list of successful business partners.