



Workforce Training & Talent Acquisition

Today's workforce training and talent acquisition is a multi-faceted effort that brings targeted skills to students, and new workers to locations they'll be happy to live in.

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Today's big-ticket economic development projects have similar prerequisites when it comes to an available workforce. They want a vibrant, tech-savvy and diverse talent pool, preferably homegrown, who have been prepared by top-rated institutions of higher education and who have developed industry-specific tech skills while studying a curricula that was jointly specified by that industry in coordination with the location's universities and community colleges. Got it?

Today's new workers, the recent graduates who have been meticulously groomed academically with the precise skills (usually STEM-oriented) to fill critical tech slots in emerging growth sectors—they've got their own prerequisites (usually attributed to millennials although the generation that followed them is on the cusp of joining the workforce as well). According to the cognoscenti of the economic development scene, today's new workers aren't going wherever the jobs are; they're taking the jobs in places they really want to live. Quality of life is now a benchmark to which attention must be paid.

So today's most successful workforce development programs are much more than government-subsidized training initiatives. The top programs take an all-encompassing approach to workforce training and talent acquisition, reaching into universities and even high schools to begin the process, and making sure that the skilled workers who emerge will want to put down roots in the locations that need them. Here's our annual look at who's ahead of the curve.

BUILDING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE IN THE BLUEGRASS STATE

Kentucky is working to establish a pipeline of talent for businesses across the state, and it starts with Kentucky Work Ready Communities. The certification program, one of several overseen by the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) and the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, assures

employers that a local workforce has the talent and skills necessary to staff existing jobs and to master the innovative technologies new jobs will require.



Founded in Louisville, KY in 1913, Whayne Supply Company is one of the oldest and largest Caterpillar dealers in the United States.

Each county that earns certification meets criteria that includes high school graduation rates, career readiness certificates, demonstrated community commitment, educational attainment, life-skills development, broadband availability and matching workforce supply and demand. Nearly three-fourths of Kentucky's 120 counties are already either certified Work Ready or Work Ready in Progress, and every county has begun the certification process.

"The Kentucky Work Ready Communities initiative has become an essential component for communities to improve workforce and education quality," said Hugh Haydon, chair of KWIB. "Work Ready is an excellent framework to bring community partners together to help them achieve higher levels of economic competitiveness and increasing opportunities for both individuals and employers."

The commonwealth also has taken steps to ensure it has the resources necessary to train the workforce of the future. In 2018, \$100 million in legislatively approved bond funding was earmarked for the Work Ready Skills Initiative (WRSI) to expand and upgrade equipment at 40 education and technical training facilities statewide. The program brings together private employers; higher-education institutions; high schools; technical schools; and community, regional and state development organizations on projects that will train and enhance their region's workforce in five core sectors: advanced manufacturing, healthcare, IT/business services, construction trades and transportation/logistics. The state's \$100 million leveraged another \$111.7

million in matching funds from local communities, determined to provide top notch training for their citizens.

Also in 2018, the Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship was launched. The program covers tuition for Kentucky students and adults enrolling in more than 350 programs in the five aforementioned high-demand sectors. The scholarship is open to high school or GED graduates who have not earned an associate degree or higher.

Another leg of the Bluegrass State's workforce development table is a commitment to supporting apprenticeship programs and to expanding their application into new industry sectors. In June 2018, Kentucky received a \$1.09 million Apprenticeship USA Expansion Grant to establish and grow "intermediaries," or third-party organizations to better connect apprentices with employers; engage employers new to the state or new to registered apprenticeships; compensate businesses for expenses related to required training instruction; and to diversify the pool of apprentices in Kentucky. Program sponsors pay most of the training costs while also progressively increasing wages to their apprentices as they gain skills. For each year, the apprentice receives about 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and a required minimum of 144 hours of classroom instruction. Upon completion, participants receive nationally recognized and portable certificates of completion.

Workforce development efforts are already well under way in 2019. During the first week of January, in fact, Gov. Matt Bevin, in partnership with the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet (EWDC) and the KWIB, had signed an executive order establishing the KentuckyWorks Collaborative to guide the commonwealth's workforce efforts through statewide implementation of KWIB's strategic plan, *Kentucky Work Ready: An Urgent Call to Action*.

"As Kentucky's economy continues its record growth, we must ensure that our workforce programs do not operate in silos," Gov. Bevin said. "Today's businesses demand highly skilled, highly trained workers, and this new collaborative will help to develop a comprehensive workforce system that aligns federal, state and local resources to provide exciting new job opportunities for Kentuckians."

The collaborative will include 18 members representing state and federal agencies, local workforce boards and employers. Each member represents an agency that provides job training, counseling, career development and technical assistance services to Kentucky employers or job seekers.

"The KentuckyWorks Collaborative allows Kentucky to guide workforce initiatives by eliminating challenges to improving workforce participation and retention through the alignment of resources among workforce development partners," said Derrick K. Ramsey, secretary of the Education and Workforce Development

Cabinet. “This alignment affords us with the opportunity to more accurately tailor career pathways, education and training to specifically meet employer demand and place Kentuckians on a path of self-sufficiency and competitive wages.”

TEXAS: BIG AND GETTING BIGGER

Texas is investing in education and workforce development to continue meeting employers’ needs for a highly skilled workforce to fill higher paying, in-demand jobs. The state leads the nation in jobs created by foreign and domestic investment and—for the seventh year in a row—leads the nation in the highest number of new and expanded corporate facility projects.

“Today, Texas is home to nearly 50 *Fortune* 500 company headquarters, hundreds of publicly traded firms and some of the biggest brands in the world, as well as more than 2.6 million small businesses,” said Gov. Greg Abbott. “CEOs who relocate or expand operations in Texas cite our job-ready workforce as the top Texas advantage.”

Digital retail giant Amazon and McKesson Corporation, the largest healthcare company in the nation, are just two examples of major projects attracted to Texas’ growing, job-ready workforce, now 14 million strong.

Amazon has targeted the Dallas-Fort Worth area for one of its largest concentrations of distribution facilities in the nation. In September 2018, Amazon announced it was expanding its warehouse operations with two huge fulfillment centers—one in West Dallas and another on Interstate 45 in southern Dallas County.

In November 2018, McKesson announced it was relocating its corporate headquarters from San Francisco to Las Colinas. The Las Colinas campus already is a key hub for the company, a global leader in health care supply chain management solutions, retail pharmacy, community oncology and specialty care, and healthcare information technology.

Key programs helping to drive workforce development include the Texas Skills Development Fund and High Demand Job Training program, both facilitated by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the state agency charged with overseeing and providing workforce development services.

Texas’ Skills Development Fund, the state’s customized job training program, has helped 4,446 employers create 116,065 jobs and upgrade the skills of 256,885 incumbent workers, for a total of 372,950 workers trained since it was established in 1996.

The Skills Development Fund provides direct funding to a Texas public community college, technical college or the Texas Engineering Extension Service as a grant in partnership with a business, business consortium or trade union.

Participating workers have received career and/or advancement opportunities at the completion of training, which includes wages equal to or greater than the prevailing wage in the local area. Statewide, the average wage paid to workers trained with skills grants has increased from \$10.33 an hour in FY 1996 to \$28.54 an hour in FY 2018.

In September 2018, TWC awarded a \$455,400 Skills Development Fund grant to Brookhaven College, in partnership with Thomson Reuters Applications, Inc., to provide training in Amazon Web Services and Java for Object Oriented platform using SPRING framework required by 245 new incumbent workers.

“This partnership focuses on specialized IT skills training needed to support this high-demand industry in the Greater Dallas area,” said Ruth R. Hughs, TWC Chair and Commissioner Representing Employers.

In May 2018, TWC awarded a \$157,608 Skills Development Fund grant to Brazosport College in partnership with the BASF Corporation to provide job training to 70 new employees. The training is for engineer technicians and operators, on industry-related topics, with focused instruction on chemical plant operations to include troubleshooting, pipefitting and hazardous materials management.

Also part of the Skills Development Fund, the Recruit Texas program allows public community or technical colleges an opportunity to provide intensive and rapid response and support services for employers expanding in or relocating operations in Texas.

The High Demand Job Training program supports local Workforce Development Boards through partnerships with Economic Development Corporations (EDC). The EDCs use local sales taxes and workforce boards receive a matching grant for allowable high-demand job training activities and related direct costs as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

With the Permian Basin a primary hub of activity for the oil and gas industry, the local Workforce Solutions office is experiencing a high demand for drivers with a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL). To address the need, Workforce Solutions Permian Basin, the Midland Development Corporation (MDC) and Midland College have partnered to expand the area’s CDL training program.

In May 2018, TWC awarded a \$100,000 High Demand Job Training grant, which was matched by MDC's contribution of \$381,000. This funding has enhanced the CDL training program by offering expedited certification of truck drivers and providing employers with a highly skilled workforce.

Workforce Solutions South Plains was awarded more than \$740,000 in leveraged funds, from the High Demand Job Training grant and Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, to prepare secondary students for success in high-demand occupations. More than 1,400 high school students in 15 school districts across the South Plains region have been trained in high-demand occupations and received industry-recognized certifications and college credits.

Many of these students come from small, rural school districts that did not have the capacity to offer these opportunities. By the end of the 2018–2019 school year, 1,993 students and businesses in 10 industry sectors will be set up for mutual success.

To ensure Texas continues to meet workforce demands, its education agencies are aligning programs of study and career clusters based on employers' needs to help more students seamlessly transition from high school to college or technical school.

For example, the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) grant program helps to defray start-up costs associated with the development of career and technical education programs by public community and technical colleges, as well as independent school districts.

In March 2019, TWC awarded Trinity Valley Community College a \$279,139 JET grant to help purchase and install equipment to provide 255 students with training for careers in the health care profession.

Equipment funded through JET grants must be used to train students for jobs in high-demand occupations.

"This JET grant helps to expand training for in-demand middle-skilled health care workers," said Robert Thomas, TWC Commissioner Representing the Public. "With this grant, we are investing in more than pump technology and medication dispensing systems—we are investing in the economic health of students and their families as well as the physical health of all of East Texas."

The Texas workforce development system also is expanding access to apprenticeships, paid internships, affordable two-year associate degree programs and technical training and certificate programs for high school students, returning adult learners and veterans transitioning into civilian careers.

For example, the TWC's Apprenticeship TEXAS program provides grants to apprenticeship programs at local community colleges and independent school districts to support the cost of classroom instruction.

Apprenticeship Texas prepares individuals for highly skilled jobs and life-long careers in over 1,200 possible trade or craft occupations with competitive wage opportunities.

NEW YORK STATE'S INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTS TALENT WITH INDUSTRIES

In the state of New York, aggressive strategic plans and long-ranging goals of economic development have taken center stage. From strategic investments to fostering a highly educated talent pool, the state is aligning its competitive resources to attract and maintain business across the state now and into the future.



MADE IN NY: SKILLED WORKERS

- #1 in the Northeast for STEM graduates
- #2 in U.S. for physical science undergraduate degrees
- #3 in U.S. in number of engineering students
- #3 in the country for high-tech employment
- #2 in the country for college enrollments

The Empire State broke the old “top-down” economic development mold eight years ago, with Governor Andrew M. Cuomo’s establishment of 10 Regional Economic Development Councils to empower local communities to develop strategic plans to grow. The results keep accumulating: more than \$6.1 billion has been awarded to more than 7,300 job-creation and community development projects across the state.

With its regional development framework in place, New York State—with its unmatched university system—supports diverse industry-specific initiatives.

New York State’s \$620 million Life Science Initiative is spurring the growth of the state’s life science research

cluster with a goal to attract life science companies and build a thriving life science ecosystem.

This investment is furthering the growth of life science clusters that are already benefitting from unparalleled academic and research talent.

Empire State Development's Division of Science, Technology and Innovation (NYSTAR) has created a culture of innovation and success around the state, thanks to services and resources that make a dramatic difference in a startup and early-stage company's next steps.

A network of Innovation Hot Spots and Certified Business Incubators provide companies with entrepreneurial networks, access to capital and mentoring.

Across the state, specialized Centers of Excellence and Centers for Advanced Technology help partners develop new technologies, with access to research labs and experts. Additionally, qualified businesses can operate tax-free for 10 years on or near eligible university campuses.

Perhaps one of New York's biggest strengths, however, is its diverse, highly-educated talent pool. In the past eight years, New York State has been committed to strengthening the workforce that is feeding thriving industries, and it's showing no signs of slowing down.

New York State boasts a workforce that is first in the Northeast for STEM graduates, third in the country for engineering graduates and third in the country for high-tech employment. As the first state in the nation to offer free college tuition to middle class families, more students have access to the nation's largest public university system.

For rising industries, the state strategically invests in workforce development and training programs to meet the needs of a changing economy. For example, New York State's ambitious clean energy mandate of 100 percent clean energy by 2040 is creating new jobs across the state. To help prepare the talent pool for the future, the state is investing \$27.5 million for workforce development training in the clean energy industry.

New York, through its university-industry collaborations, unique assets and investment innovation, is building a workforce both for today and for the future. Visit esd.ny.gov to learn more.

TAILOR-MADE WORKFORCE IN MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi's innovative workforce development initiatives and partnerships are helping to bolster private capital investment and job creation across the state.

Since 2012, projects that involved Mississippi Development Authority's (MDA) assistance with workforce development and other programs are responsible for more than 37,000 new jobs and almost \$7.4 billion in private capital investment.

"Mississippi's workforce development strategies produce employees whose skills are tailor-made for every kind of company to be successful," said Glenn McCullough, Jr., Mississippi Development Authority Executive Director.

According to McCullough, Mississippi has commitments from 30 companies for 5,500-plus new jobs using \$12.3 million in Mississippi Works funds and private capital investment of \$1.7 billion. The average yearly salary for these careers is \$46,153.

"What sets us apart is our ability to quickly shape programs to specific needs, allowing all our business and industry partners to achieve their goals and our citizens to have a meaningful, long-lasting career," said McCullough.

In April 2018, Toyota announced a \$170 million investment and 400 new jobs with the addition of new production lines at its Corolla manufacturing facility in Blue Springs. The expansion brings Toyota's total investment in Mississippi to more than \$1 billion since 2007.

With production of the 12th generation Corolla underway, Toyota continues to rely on a workforce trained via its partnership with Itawamba Community College. A new on-site training center scheduled to open in November will strengthen this partnership.

"Toyota has created thousands of careers for Mississippians since beginning production in 2011," said McCullough. "Those careers have been made possible by workforce development strategies implemented through the company's partnership with Itawamba Community College. The addition of an on-site training center will ensure Toyota's labor pool remains skilled and sustainable."

Continental Tire continues to construct its largest and most sophisticated manufacturing facility in Hinds County, a few miles west of the Capitol in Jackson. The facility will employ 2,500 people and represents \$1.45 billion in private capital investment.

Continental has partnered with Hinds Community College to develop and implement specific workforce training programs that will be administered at an on-site training center. More than 100 people are already participating, with the facility scheduled to begin production in late 2019.

“Continental’s partnership with Hinds Community college will ensure the company is able to tap a deep and sustainable pool of skilled workers,” said McCullough. “This is yet another example of Mississippi’s community college system proving itself the best in America. The programs offered and the students who complete their development at a Mississippi community college are second to none.”

A new workforce development initiative of Gov. Phil Bryant will further help to expand economic opportunities in the state. The Mississippi Works Fund will bring new investments to all regions of Mississippi while continuing to grow existing businesses and expand them into new markets.

“The program will provide a forum for business leaders to learn about the great work going on throughout the state, giving them tools they can use in spreading success stations around the U.S. and the world,” said McCullough.

The program commits \$50 million to enhance workforce training and build a qualified applicant pool in the state. 75 percent will go to job creation among new/existing businesses and up to 25 percent for growing and improving the skilled labor pool. Each business may receive up to \$500k annually for workforce training.

The program provides customized training solutions using Mississippi’s network of 15 community and junior colleges, which house a wide spectrum of education and training programs.

Mississippi also is home to two coding academies which are tuition-free and employ an 11-month program to teach students “full-stack” computer programming. With instruction beginning in October 2017, the academies already have graduated their first classes, with each student either receiving a job offer or pursuing higher education. The next class will graduate in May 2019. The third class will begin in June 2019. Ninety percent of students are employed before they finish the program.

Mississippi has several academies that are industry-driven in cooperation with the community colleges, the State Workforce Investment Board and MDA. Examples include furniture, diesel and shipbuilding (Ingalls Shipbuilding).

Unveiled in January 2017, the Furniture Academy is a partnership between Mississippi State University’s

Franklin Furniture Institute, Itawamba Community College, Northeast Mississippi Community College, the Community Development Foundation, Three Rivers Planning and Development District and several industry partners. The Furniture Academy is designed to help further develop and enhance a talented workforce to sustain quality production for the region's furniture manufacturers.

"Under Governor Phil Bryant's leadership, we have led with innovation when it comes to building and maintaining a pipeline of skilled workers," said McCullough. "Our Coding Academies, the Furniture Academy and continuous, reliable funding for workforce development programs under the Mississippi Works Fund are tailor-made solutions that will help businesses achieve their goals here in Mississippi."

For Mississippi, talent attraction begins with employment opportunities, and Mississippi has almost 40,000 jobs across every sector looking for people. "Combine that with our world-class food, culture and hospitality, and it's clear Mississippi is the best place in America to live, work and raise a family," said McCullough.

VIRGINIA: TECH-SAVVY, DIVERSE TALENT POOL

Virginia is home to a 21st century workforce with tech talent that's increasingly sought after. Amazon recently selected Arlington County, Virginia for the location of its major new headquarters and the state boasts the third-highest concentration of technology workers in the country.

"Companies considering expanding or locating a facility in Virginia will find top-rated educational institutions and a vibrant, tech-savvy and diverse talent pool," said Stephen Moret, President and CEO, Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP). "Ensuring a pipeline of talent is a top priority, and Virginia is committed to positioning its workforce to meet the requirements for in-demand jobs today."

According to Moret, Virginia's biggest employment growth opportunity in the years ahead will be in tech—from artificial intelligence to cloud computing to cybersecurity, and everything in between.

"The tech-talent pipeline investments that Governor Northam and the General Assembly are launching will position communities across the Commonwealth for healthier, more diversified economic growth," said Moret.

Winning Amazon's major new headquarters is a big accomplishment for Virginia's tech sector. Amazon announced in November 2018 that it had selected Arlington County for the location of its new headquarters, a \$2.5 billion investment that will create more than 25,000 high-paying jobs over 12 years.

“We are looking forward to joining the community and are excited to be creating high-paying jobs in Arlington,” said Holly Sullivan, Amazon Director of WW Economic Development. “We believe that northern Virginia is a great place for our teams to keep inventing on behalf of our customers.”

In addition to the 25,000 direct jobs Amazon will create, the Commonwealth estimates the creation of more than 22,000 permanent, direct and indirect jobs in Virginia. Roughly half of the employment is expected to be in tech positions, with a particular focus on software development, engineering, machine learning and artificial intelligence, user experience design and user interface design.

Graduates in computer science and related fields represent a critical source of tech talent for hundreds of existing Virginia employers, such as Alarm.com, Appian, Capital One, CGI and Northrop Grumman. The growing tech-talent needs of existing tech firms in Virginia, in combination with the HQ2 RFP, led Virginia to make a tech-talent pipeline initiative the centerpiece of its proposal for HQ2.

The initiative includes more than doubling Virginia’s tech-talent pipeline through performance-based investments in public higher education institutions statewide to produce 25,000 to 35,000 additional degrees in computer science and related fields over the next two decades.

Virginia’s workforce system also includes long-established programs such as the Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP), which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2015, coupled with new programs like Fast Forward, which launched just two years ago.

VJIP provides consultative services and funding to companies creating new jobs or experiencing technological change to support employee training activities. As a business incentive supporting economic development, VJIP reduces the human resource costs of new and expanding companies.

In the last seven years, VJIP has supported hundreds of projects that, at completion, are associated with the recruitment, training or retraining of more than 72,000 jobs.

In August 2018, NIBCO, Inc., a manufacturer of wrought copper fittings for the flow control industry, announced it is investing \$14 million to expand its metal manufacturing operation in Augusta County. The company is utilizing VJIP to train its 30 new and 117 existing employees on new equipment, technology and new products.

“With the large amount of new technology we are adding to our manufacturing and with the new jobs we are creating, we have much need for training,” said Mark Frazier, Plant Manager, NIBCO, Augusta County.

“Training is a big expense and many times can be comprised in an effort to keep our costs down and make our budget.”

Arkay Packaging, one of the world’s premiere folding carton manufacturing companies, has expanded in Virginia four times since it began operations in 1996, utilizing the VJIP each time. In 2016, the company spent \$11 million to upgrade equipment and expand its operation in Botetourt County creating 50 new jobs.

“Arkay has been working with the VJIP program since 2009,” said Kimberly Bushong Crawford, PHR SHRM-CP, Human Resource Manager, Arkay Packaging, Botetourt County. “This partnership opportunity has allowed us to capitalize on training employees for new and higher skilled positions within our company.”

The FastForward program provides an affordable and innovative pay-for-success approach for students and workers who participate in an eligible, state-funded, short-term training program. Despite launching just two years ago, the FastForward program already is seeing promising results. Currently, 95 percent of the students enrolled have completed their training, 65 percent have earned their related credentials and a majority of FastForward students have seen wage increases of 20 percent to 50 percent or more.

Last year, FastForward program completers in Virginia’s community college system earned more than \$81 million, an increase of \$15 million over what they earned prior to receiving the training. Since the program’s inception, 98 percent of the 11,000 credentials earned have been aligned with Virginia’s top 12 in-demand occupations.

“This program has been a catalyst to consider ways Virginia can mobilize other workforce training and education resources to address critical workforce shortages across the state,” said Moret.

Funding has been approved by the Virginia General Assembly to launch a customized, turnkey workforce development program, which will be executed in collaboration with the Virginia Community College System (VCCS).

Modeled after similar programs in Georgia and Louisiana, the program will provide highly-customized employee recruitment and training solutions for high-quality, competitive business expansion and recruitment projects, serving individuals with sub-baccalaureate credentials and baccalaureate degrees alike—at no cost to qualifying companies. The custom workforce development program will help Virginia’s communities secure more competitive, traded-sector business expansion and recruitment projects that result in the creation of high-wage jobs.

Key features of the program will include a dedicated team of highly-experienced, energetic professionals with a singular mission to deliver world-class, custom workforce recruitment and training solutions to qualifying companies and outstanding execution and consistent interaction among the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and Virginia's higher education and community college partners, especially VCCS.

"Workforce training programs are a top priority in Virginia," said Sara Dunnigan, Director, Labor Market Research & Strategic Partnerships, Virginia Community College System. "We're committed to managing our workforce and education system resources in a way that maximizes impact for Virginia businesses and for current and future Virginians."

Among Virginia's best-selling features are its rich quality of life and diversified economy. In 2018, Forbes named Virginia first for Quality of Life in its Best States for Business ranking.

"There are some exciting regional initiatives underway across Virginia to engage young people in their communities, retain talent and attract new talent," said Moret. "Employers have become much more engaged in these efforts, which is important to the success of initiatives like these."

These initiatives are being spearheaded by GO Virginia, a coalition comprised of business and community leaders, partners in education and government and interested Virginians from across the Commonwealth who support regional cooperation on private-sector growth, job creation and career readiness.

GO Virginia has funded multiple workforce-related projects across the state, including talent attraction, retention and development initiatives. In total, roughly \$23 million has been invested in talent attraction and retention initiatives through this program.

One project is Roanoke Regional Partnership's "Stopping the Brain Drain Strategy Development" to create a talent attraction and retention plan to reduce outmigration of recent graduates from the region's 25 colleges and universities. Another is the Great Opportunities in Technology and Engineering Careers (Go-TEC) regional program at Danville Community College which focuses on careers in IT and advanced manufacturing.

WORKFORCE SEALS MAZDA-TOYOTA ASSEMBLY PLANT DEAL IN ALABAMA

Business Facilities has ranked Alabama's business climate as one of the best in the nation. Home to a growing, talented workforce and top notch workforce development programs, Alabama is scoring one big-ticket project after another.

*Toyota Motor Manufacturing Alabama recently announced a major expansion that includes the creation of 450 jobs at its Huntsville plant.
(Photo: madeinalabama.com)*

In November 2018, with help from a robot, the first shovel of dirt was turned at a sprawling site that will be home to Alabama's next auto assembly plant—a \$1.6 billion facility being built by Mazda Toyota Manufacturing USA that will produce 300,000 vehicles annually, with production beginning in 2021.

The jointly owned-and-operated automotive production plant in Huntsville is expected to create 4,000 jobs and accelerate growth in Alabama's auto sector. The facility is located just miles away from a Toyota engine plant that employs 1,400 people and produces more than 700,000 engines annually. The automaker has invested nearly \$1 billion in the Huntsville plant, after repeated expansions.

“As we've seen at our Huntsville engine plant, Alabamians are a proud, talented, hard-working group,” said Jim Lentz, CEO of Toyota Motor North America at the groundbreaking ceremony. “We are excited to continue our deep investment in the U.S. and Alabama and see nothing but a bright future.”

According to AL Secretary of Commerce Greg Canfield, workforce development was one of several attributes that helped the automakers decide to locate in Alabama.

“There are many reasons these two great automakers decided to locate their joint-venture manufacturing facility in Huntsville and Alabama,” said Canfield. “First, we have built a trusting relationship with Toyota, whose engine plant in Huntsville is undergoing its fifth expansion. In other words, Toyota is familiar with Alabama’s advantages. Drilling down into that, a major reason for Alabama’s selection is the quality of the state’s workforce and our excellent job-training programs.”

The state also put together a competitive incentive package: “We also have a track record of working together as a team to provide the critical support that helps companies expand their operations over the years. And while we put together a competitive incentive package, incentives would never be the sole reason that corporate decision-makers select a site for an investment totaling \$1.6 billion.”

The Mazda-Toyota facility will become Alabama’s fourth auto assembly plant to open since 1997. The rapid growth has made Alabama the nation’s fifth largest auto-producing state, with 1 million vehicles built each year. The state’s ranking is expected to climb once the new plant reaches full production.

As part of the groundbreaking, Mazda Toyota Manufacturing donated \$750,000 to support STEM-related programs that will encourage and motivate students to pursue a career in the advanced manufacturing field.

With 4,000 jobs to fill, the automakers say they are committed to investing in developing its future workforce in collaboration with local educators and economic development partners.

The donation includes \$500,000 to the Huntsville Madison Chamber Foundation to launch a new career exploration online platform that will help highlight careers in manufacturing to students, build skills and connect job seekers to opportunities.

They also gave \$250,000 to be split between six school districts in Madison, Limestone and Morgan counties to advance STEM or career technical programs that align with advanced manufacturing.

Mazda-Toyota will take advantage of the Alabama Robotics Technology Park in Decatur, Alabama to help train and house the Mazda Toyota program at the beginning until their dedicated training center is complete. From there, they will continue to use the facilities for training workers in robotics, PLC controls and other automation programs needed to keep their workforce on the cutting edge.

According to Ed Castile, director of AIDT and deputy secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce, Alabama is laser focused on new and innovative workforce training options through technology, resource

leveraging and hard work.

“Our new companies (the last 25 years) demand continuous improvement programming and technology innovation and more specifically education and training programs that meet their needs, current and long term,” said Castile.

AIDT, the state’s primary workforce training program, provides training, recruitment and assessment services for Alabama’s new and expanding businesses and employees. Additional programs that contribute to the State’s success include Apprenticeship Alabama, which expands industry-driven registered apprenticeships, and the Success Plus Initiative, with a goal to have 500,000 Alabamians prepared for careers of the future.

“AIDT is considered a leader in job specific recruiting and training as an incentive to new and expanding companies,” said Castile. “AIDT consistently ranks as one of the top 3 workforce development programs in the country. Within Alabama, it is the number one incentive for business attraction and development.”

In January 2019, Airbus announced it will begin expansion with a new aircraft being built at their facility in Mobile. Airbus is working with AIDT to seek candidates to fill the first manufacturing positions at a new assembly line for A220 aircraft. In addition, Airbus said it is hiring for production positions at its existing A320 Family aircraft manufacturing line on its Alabama campus. Altogether, Airbus plans to add 600 new employees in Mobile over the next 18 months.

“The addition of the new Airbus A220 family of aircraft in Mobile is proof that Alabama is well positioned with its workforce training to meet the needs of manufacturers all over the world,” said Castile.

With the expansion, Airbus will continue to use the Alabama Aviation Training Center built in 2014 for the original Airbus Project. Successful candidates for all positions will participate in several weeks of preparation at AIDT in a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

In addition, a new learning center, FlightWorks Alabama, dedicated to introducing younger students to careers in aviation, will come on-line later this year.

According to Castile, preparing its workforce for the jobs of the future is AIDT’s number one priority.

“Right now, Alabama is in a worker’s market,” said Castile. “Meaning we have workers who are underemployed and really can write their own tickets to a new career. As a state, we have to maintain and

progressively expand our educational/training options for not only these current workers to keep them viable in the ever changing market, but to begin laying the foundation for our younger generation of workers that are coming into the workforce soon. One of the ways we're doing this is through the expansion and growth of Apprenticeship Alabama."

Apprenticeship Alabama promotes the expansion of industry-driven registered apprenticeships in the state that support statewide workforce and economic development. This program connects employers with access to the tools and human capital needed to develop and/or expand their registered apprenticeship program.

To further attract talent to the state, some Alabama communities are working on expanding entertainment options within the cities, along with creating a more inviting inner-city/urban living environment by subsidizing some housing costs and making it more affordable for people to live and work in the same general area.

"This is helping to create more of a work/life balance that is so desired by younger workers," said Castile. "Also, upgrades to education systems continue to be made to meet the needs of families that move to the area with an emphasis on arts education as well as STEM education options."

NEW MEXICO: TRADITION OF TRAINING

New Mexico has one of the most generous training incentive programs in the country. The Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) funds classroom and on-the-job training for newly-created jobs in expanding or relocating businesses for up to six months. The program reimburses 50-75 percent of employee wages. Custom training at a New Mexico public educational institution may also be reimbursed.

The New Mexico State Legislature created JTIP, formerly known as the Industrial Development Training Program, or "in plant training," in 1972. Since then, JTIP has supported the creation of more than 46,000 jobs for New Mexicans in nearly 1,500 businesses across the state.

Eligibility for JTIP funds depends on the company's business, the role of the newly-created jobs in that business and the trainees themselves. Interested parties can read through the eligibility guidelines (see Policy and Procedures below) and then fill out the Eligibility Questionnaire to begin the JTIP application process. A member of JTIP staff will contact applicants to determine company eligibility and discuss the program in detail.

Businesses eligible for consideration include: companies that manufacture or produce a product in New Mexico; certain green industries; non-retail service companies that export a substantial percentage of services out of state (50 percent or more of revenues and/or customer base)—customer support centers and product testing laboratories are two examples of businesses that have qualified in this category.

The eligible company must be financially sound and must be creating new jobs as a result of expansion or relocation to the state of New Mexico. Businesses in certain industries are not eligible. Some examples are agriculture, construction, extractive industries, gambling, health care and retail.

Jobs eligible for funding through JTIP must be full time (minimum of 32 hours per week); year-round; and directly related to the creation of the product or delivery of the service (1 in 5 positions applied for may be outside product/service creation).

Trainees must be guaranteed full-time employment upon successful completion of the training program. To be eligible for funding under JTIP, trainees must: be new hires to the company; have been residents of the state of New Mexico for at least one year at any time prior to employment (trainees that do not meet the one-year residency requirement may be eligible if hired into high-wage jobs); and not have left high school in the three months prior to employment, unless they have graduated or completed a GED.

JTIP funds three types of training: Custom classroom training at a public educational institution, structured on-the-job training (OJT) and a combination of classroom training and OJT.

Jobs with entry wages that align with the High Wage Job Tax Credit are eligible for an additional five percent reimbursement; also companies that utilize the WorkKeys® assessment tools as part of their hiring process, hire trainees who have graduated within the past twelve months from a NM institution of higher education or who are U.S. Veterans may be eligible for an additional five percent reimbursement above the standard rates.

LED FASTSTART: THE GOLD STANDARD

Louisiana is home to one of the best workforce development programs in the nation: [LED FastStart](#). The program works with new and expanding companies in target industries to tailor comprehensive recruiting, screening and state-of-the-art training solutions which enable employees to be fully prepared for the launch of new corporate operations on day one.

Waitr, a food industry tech firm headquartered in Louisiana, recently announced an expansion into downtown Lafayette, LA. Gov. John Bel Edwards presided over the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

LED FastStart has stepped up its prowess even further by creating new innovative tools such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality and applicant tracking systems, while continuing to help employers meet workforce goals more effectively than ever.

“We’re all about solutions,” said Paul Helton, LED FastStart executive director. “All our clients are expanding their workforce, yet each one of them faces unique challenges. Our goal is to solve those challenges with the smartest tool at our fingertips. Often, that means we create a new tool, and almost always it benefits other clients, too.”

For employers adding a minimum 15 manufacturing jobs or 50 service jobs, LED FastStart services come free. Since 2008, FastStart has delivered 463,000 training hours to over 29,000 employees linked to 233 projects.

One recent success story is Australian company Syrah Resources. Located in the Mississippi River community of Vidalia, Louisiana, Syrah Resources is importing graphite from Mozambique and purifying it for battery anodes that will power electric cars.

To attract the right mix of technicians, mechanics and process operators, FastStart created a custom Syrah landing page; linked it to LouisianaJobConnection.com, FastStart's innovative job matching portal; amplified job opportunities on social media channels; and connected all of that to a physical job fair.

"Louisiana Job Connection went above and beyond with helping Syrah match up to the most-qualified candidates," said Jarred Povenza, senior plant engineer for Syrah Resources. "Their level of customer service is truly appreciated, and Syrah was lucky to have been given the opportunity to have LJC help build our own team of hard-working and dedicated employees."

Many employers using the LED FastStart job site don't have an applicant tracking system or a dedicated, in-state HR department. Louisiana Job Connection provides a virtual version through a job description builder to attract candidates; filters to identify strong matches; and uses a tracking system to manage the process.

New features will help employers translate military classifications to civilian job skills and—when a particularly impressive résumé emerges—instantly identify the most similar résumés among hundreds of thousands on the site.

In May 2018, when Western Global Airlines announced plans for a Shreveport aviation MRO (maintenance, repair, overhaul) center, LED FastStart created a custom Louisiana Job Connection site. Within 48 hours, 292 job seekers registered there and 38 had the exact qualifications needed. That strategy, coupled with a career event, helped the company easily meet a goal of hiring 50 people within a month.

In all, 98 percent of FastStart clients use LouisianaJobConnection.com, where seven million job matches have occurred in just five years.

In March 2019, FastStart is rolling out artificial intelligence and machine-learning algorithms that will make those matches more powerful.

Waitr, a food industry tech firm headquartered in Louisiana, is growing to 500 operations jobs in the state, and it contracts with 10 times that many employee-drivers in Louisiana alone. To quickly assimilate drivers on varying schedules, LED FastStart developed custom e-learning modules for Waitr's intranet. That innovation joined FastStart "day in the life of a driver" and hype videos, along with a Waitr driver app, visual aids and checklists to ease the training transition.

For a major manufacturing employer with thousands of employees, FastStart is participating in an

augmented reality trial that will accomplish many safety and performance milestones. The client normally would have to shut down production to train new employees in volatile chemical environments. Through the augmented reality tool, trainees will experience a virtual environment mimicking the real one, allowing them to safely go through maintenance tasks until they've mastered them.

"We'll create the environment where they can conduct the actual training without having to put themselves in jeopardy," said Helton.

Over the past decade, FastStart has also worked hand-in-hand with Louisiana's higher education systems, helping to expand its roster of IT leaders (CenturyLink, IBM, GE Digital, General Dynamics Information Technology, CGI and others), develop advanced manufacturing partnerships supporting major investors (Sasol, Benteler Steel/Tube, Boeing) and coordinate facility and talent initiatives with community colleges and research universities.

During the decade, Louisiana dedicated more than \$200 million in STEM-related, higher education investments aimed at producing a new generation of tech talent creating more than 20,000 new high-demand jobs.

Working with the Louisiana Department of Education, the number of career credentials earned by Louisiana high school students tripled, totaling 60,000 last year. Working with the state's Board of Regents, students at four-year colleges earned an 18-hour undergraduate certificate in high-demand STEM skills. The result will be a much larger pool of graduates attractive to such companies as IBM.

"We are constantly looking to hire qualified employees," says Beth Aucoin, IBM's Baton Rouge talent manager. "Right now, we are training those with potential on our own, but this undergraduate certificate will shorten that time period for us. Additionally, from a diversity standpoint, this will help us hire a diverse workforce in our Louisiana operations, and we're excited about that."

Focused on that diversity, LED announced a \$1.2 million technology agreement with Grambling State University in February 2019. As one of the nation's leading historically black colleges and universities, or HBCUs, Grambling will benefit from industry-advised curricula in computer science, computer information systems and cybersecurity at its north Louisiana campus on the I-20 Cyber Corridor. Another HBCU, Southern University in Baton Rouge, is playing a key role in providing a pipeline of talent to the new 2,000-job Digital Transformation Center of DXC Technology in New Orleans.

LED FastStart's workforce leadership is drawing significant attention beyond the state. Five years ago, FastStart created an accelerated, one-semester credential in manufacturing called C4M, or Certification for Manufacturing. The program provides on-the-job training and job interviews to high school and community college students who complete the C4M credential. Discussions are underway with a professional manufacturing association to develop that credential as a national standard.

MINNESOTA: LEVERAGING ASSETS

Low levels of unemployment—and a growing need for technology-trained workers—pose a challenge for businesses nationwide looking to fill open positions. Minnesota has been a leader in addressing this challenge through a mix of workforce development and talent attraction initiatives that build on its strengths in education and quality of life.

Minnesota has one of the most educated workforces in the nation. It ranks first in the percentage of the population with a high school diploma or higher (93.1 percent), and 10th in the percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher (36.1 percent).

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) has long worked in close partnership with educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, businesses and labor groups to ensure that workers get the training they need to succeed and businesses have a pool of talent that will enable them to thrive.

"We have many successful programs now in place, and are actively developing creative and inclusive strategies to address current and future workforce needs," said DEED Commissioner Steve Grove. "These strategies include getting young people excited about careers in tech and STEM; providing training to startups; expanding mid-career job training; and empowering immigrants, who account for much of our population growth, to find jobs that use the skills they have and to develop new skills."

Minnesota has added about 170,000 jobs since 2013—and ranks seventh nationally in employment and economic prospects, according to U.S. News & World Report (2018).

The Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP), SciTechsperience and Minnesota Apprenticeship Initiative are three examples of successful workforce development initiatives in Minnesota that have provided specialized training for thousands of current workers and people launching their careers.

In July 2018, DEED awarded workforce development grants totaling \$2.7 million under the MJSP to train 4,402 workers. One grant is for Daikin Applied and South Central College in Mankato to restructure Daikin's new hire orientation to include more specialized training. Daikin designs and manufactures heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) technologies for customers around the world. Its Japan-based parent company, Daikin Industries, is the world's larger HVAC maker.

A total of 849 employees are expected to receive training relevant to their positions. The project includes cross-training employees in multiple core skills and having select individuals complete a train-the-trainer class and assist in the design and implementation of structured on-the-job training.

"The training programs will increase the skills and confidence employees need to drive production efficiencies and throughput," said George Chapple, Daikin training manager. "Not only will they help Daikin Applied achieve our goal to become number one in our industry, we hope to also strengthen a community that has already achieved recognition for a highly skilled talent base."

Another grant was for Sappi North America, which operates a pulp and paper mill in Cloquet, and Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College, to develop a specialized training program for 640 employees that includes a new certificate program in pulp and paper technology.

Smaller businesses also can take advantage of Minnesota's workforce development programs. When Atomic Data—an IT firm in Minneapolis—found it difficult to find entry-level tech employees, it developed a new training program in partnership with Summit Academy OIC, an accredited vocational school in Minneapolis.

The 20-week training program, called Atomic Academy, launched in 2018 with help from a \$191,604 MJSP grant. Students are trained for one of two positions—service desk technician or network operations center technician. In December 2018, 19 students graduated from the program and 17 were offered jobs with Atomic Data.

SciTechsperience is a paid internship program offered by the Minnesota High Tech Association with funding through DEED that connects college students in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines with rewarding hands-on opportunities at Minnesota companies that need their skills. The focus is on strengthening Minnesota's STEM industries and developing an experienced and well-trained workforce.

Launched in 2012, the program has helped nearly 1,300 students find paid internships in small- to medium-sized Minnesota science and technology companies. Companies receive assistance finding qualified candidates

and a one-to-one matching stipend to cover 50 percent of the intern's wages up to \$2,500.

In 2017, the Minnesota Legislature invested \$2.7 million in SciTechsperience, allowing it to dramatically increase the number of interns placed. As of early 2019, the legislature is considering a bill that would increase funding over the next two years.

Another workforce development program is the Minnesota Apprenticeship Initiative (MAI), begun in 2015. To date, it has included close to 50 employers throughout the state and about 480 registered apprentices in five industry sectors: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care, information technology and transportation. Employers receive \$5,000 per MAI-registered apprentice to assist in apprenticeship support activities.

Talent recruitment initiatives around the state include CareerForce, "Make It. MSP." and "Develop in MSP."

CareerForce is a unified new brand that is Minnesota's career development and talent matching resource. DEED operates 50 CareerForce locations across the state. It is launching a new website—CareerForceMN.com—in April 2019 to connect career seekers, employers and system partners with each other and with career, education and workforce development resources.

"Make It. MSP." focuses on welcoming and onboarding newcomers, better retaining professionals of color, attracting technology talent and converting interns and college graduates into employees. The "Develop in MSP" campaign includes a new website, a web campaign and targeted advertising.

ARIZONA: DATA-CENTRIC TRAINING

Arizona has been very proactive in creating innovative programs to maintain a workforce with the skills employers require and ensure the talent pipeline stays healthy, from the high school level and beyond. As a result, the state has consistently been recognized as a top location for workforce quality and availability.

"Arizona's state researchers are constantly evaluating workforce needs, utilizing data and statistics to identify areas where development programs could be beneficial," said Sandra Watson, President & CEO of the Arizona Commerce Authority. "Analyzing this data enables the state to stay a step ahead of trends and prepare the workforce for careers in emerging areas."

The state saw the nation's highest growth rates of financial activities and insurance in 2017 and is home to

three of the 10 largest data center operations in the country. With over 460,000 jobs in business and financial services in the state—and more on the way—training the workforce for this industry is vital.

Two national insurance companies have set up their first-in-the-nation insurance apprenticeships in Arizona recently, citing the state program's unique system of training. The Arizona Apprenticeship Program is the only formal, structured, and nationally-recognized education and training program available in the state that combines the two most common forms of career and occupational learning: classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

Liberty Mutual Insurance launched its apprenticeship program last year, training new apprentices over the course of a year in licensing. At the end of six months, the apprentices are eligible for sales associate roles. At the successful completion of the full year, they are qualified for a sales representative position.

In 2017, The Hartford insurance company and its partner, Rio Salado College, launched its apprenticeship program which allows students to complete 61 credit hours of college coursework and 2,400 hours of paid, on-the-job-training at The Hartford claims center in Phoenix. After the two-year program, these students are eligible for full-time employment with The Hartford, in addition to earning their associate's degree.

Arizona's Advanced Technology Network, a 130-mile corridor along Interstate 10 between Tucson and Phoenix, is an organically developing cluster of manufacturing establishments that provides high-value jobs to thousands of Arizonans.

Electric vehicle manufacturer Lucid Motors is planning to break ground this year on its new production facility in Casa Grande, creating more than 2,000 jobs. In nearby Coolidge, Nikola Motor Company is projected to hire 2,000 people at its zero-emissions commercial truck manufacturing plant. Over the next two years, Raytheon will hire up to 2,000 for its missile systems facility in Tucson.

Before Lucid Motors selected Arizona for its electric car manufacturing plant, the company began talks with Central Arizona College (CAC) on training the workforce for advanced manufacturing. CAC had the curriculum, facilities and people in place to train the company's future employees, revamped its engineering department and added classes in the Advanced Technology Manufacturing program to accommodate Lucid's needs.

The Arizona Advanced Technology Network is helping build a pipeline of skilled workers at Maricopa County Community College District, CAC and Pima Community College, where students can earn Industrial Technology certificates from the highly regarded National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) as well as an

Associate's of Applied Sciences in Automated Industrial Technology degree.

The newest workforce development initiative in Arizona to develop the workforce is a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, one of Gov. Doug Ducey's top priorities in 2019. In his budget, Ducey is proposing \$10 million for the program that would incentivize schools to offer students more opportunities to earn industry certifications that align with Arizona's growing workforce needs.

High schools offering CTE courses would receive up to \$1,000 per student who graduates with specific industry certifications based on analysis of in-demand employment sectors and specific vocations in labor shortage areas.

Arizona's state and private higher educational institutions offer excellent academic programs which give companies access to a consistent talent pipeline.

In August 2018, Caterpillar and Pima Community College launched an educational partnership called the Applied Technology Academy for company engineers and future students to develop hands-on skills in welding and machining.

That same month, Cognizant Technologies, the ACA and the Maricopa County Community College District announced a new partnership with Maricopa Corporate College to provide technical training for in-demand digital economy jobs. Training will be provided at no cost to those selected to participate. Courses will focus on "application support" and "infrastructure services."

Mesa Community College (MCC) also began offering a Blockchain Technology Certificate, becoming one of the first community colleges in the country to provide such a certificate.

WozU is a digital education institute addressing the skills gap for high paying technology jobs across the country. WozU was founded by Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak and is headquartered in Arizona.

Greater Phoenix has two stand-out workforce development programs to support talent growth in the region: Pipeline AZ and Arizona@Work.

Pipeline AZ is the nation's first comprehensive, "end-to-end" talent optimization platform. Officially launched in January 2019, Pipeline AZ connects job seekers and employers. Job seekers can explore career pathways or be matched to jobs, internships, mentorships and apprenticeships. Employers can post career opportunities

and be matched with job seekers with the skills to fill that position.

All of the services at Pipeline AZ are offered for free to employers and job seekers through a grant from the Maricopa County Industrial Development Authority.

GEORGIA: QUICK START FOR NEW WORKERS

For businesses in 2019 it all comes down to one thing: talent. Recognizing this, Georgia has focused its workforce development efforts on meeting current industry needs and building a more professional 21st century workforce.

Simulated Work Environment at the Quick Start-Athens Training Center

“We have worked with industry to understand where the workforce demand exists and we have moved to ensure that our educational and training investment is laser focused on those real-time demands,” said Ben Hames, GDEcD Deputy Commissioner of Workforce. “Look no further than The Georgia Film Academy, the Georgia Cyber Innovation and Training Center, the HOPE Career Grant and the newly minted Nexus degree

track to see how Georgia is operating. We are moving every day to deliver talent.”

Between 2010 and 2018, Georgia’s population grew by more than 830,000.

“The data illustrates that Georgia is a sticky and magnetic state,” said Hames. “Georgia residents are far more likely than non-Georgia residents to remain in their home state and the state is a magnet, with strong positive net domestic migration.” Of particular interest for employers demanding a professional workforce, Metro-Atlanta is a magnet for those age “25-39 with at least a Bachelor’s degree” demographic. This population growth married to Georgia’s relatively young population provides a strong competitive advantage.

The Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) plays a crucial role in growing a talent base in Georgia for many positions that are in demand.

TCSG provides industry with customized contract training to meet specific training needs. These non-credit programs typically offer industry recognized credentials and cover critical areas such as Leadership/Soft Skills, Computer Programs, OSHA/Safety Programs and Industrial Maintenance. These programs are funded by the employer and can often be offered on-site.

“In a tight labor market, securing the talent you need to do business is paramount,” said Hames.

“Customized Recruitment is a proven tool able to match available talent with labor demand. This service works to identify a company’s specific hiring needs and then moves to build a recruitment strategy. Customized recruitment is designed to find the most qualified candidates, sending only the best to employers.”

As a result of CR’s popularity and success, the Georgia Department of Labor’s Business Services Unit is creating a new program, Customized Recruitment X (CRX), to extend these services to existing Georgia businesses that are expanding their investment in the state by creating new jobs and hiring new staff.

Recently, Georgia announced that SK Innovation would locate in Jackson County, Georgia, representing investment of \$1.67B and more than 2,000 jobs. The Georgia Department of Labor—Customized Recruitment (CR) team played a key role in this project win and they will be recruiting for this South Korean manufacturer of lithium-ion batteries for hybrid electric vehicles.

Quick Start has equipped the Georgia Advanced Manufacturing Training Center with a substantial arsenal of high-tech training capabilities to serve multiple counties in the region. Computer imaging allows increased

speed and accuracy of quality inspections. 3-D models made from polymers and metals can produced custom-designed prototypes.

Integrated, automated, data-driven systems model processes where operators refine their skills before getting to work in the production environment. Training facilities are dedicated to mechatronics, robotics, control systems, and a host of industrial technologies.

You Might Like:

- [Workforce Development Training & Talent Acquisition](#) Workforce training is still job one for locations vying to compete for high-tech projects, but talent acquisition—a.k.a. recruiting—now is a critical component for success.
- [Snapshots: 60 Seconds With Paul Helton, LED FastStart](#) Paul Helton, Executive Director, LED FastStart, discusses the recruitment, training and support services at the heart of one of the nation's top workforce development programs.
- [Business Facilities' 2018 Metro Rankings Report](#) Business Facilities' 2018 Metro Rankings Report takes a look at the hot topics in economic development on the city level, including solar energy, job growth, economic growth potential, diversity, and more.



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