

My Ride

SC BOCES classes help fill big need for machinists

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Conventional machining is one of the most important material removal methods around. Power-driven machine tools, such as lathes, milling machines and drill presses, are used to mechanically cut the material to achieve the desired design. Machining is a part of the manufacture of almost all metal products, but it's not uncommon for other materials to be machined.

Machinists, however, are unfortunately becoming a thing of the past. The average age of a top-quality machinist is 50-plus. These folks are getting ready to retire. This has made the employment rate for machinists about 110 percent. The need is astounding. Computer Numerical Control Machinists earn between \$12 and \$30 per hour based on education.

At Sullivan County BOCES on Ferndale-Loomis Road in Liberty, Custom Fabrication & Metalworking instructor Michael Mullally teaches the Computerized Machine course to high school students. Steve Schmidt, owner of ASA Precision Co. in Jeffersonville, instructs the adult class.

Steve is an expert in machining, having been in machine shops since he was 5 years old. Steve was instrumental in getting the BOCES class started. It's a relatively new class, being only five years old, but it has milling machines, lathes and drill presses, both the manual and the computerized. BOCES is one of the few schools that offer that class.

Both Steve and Michael are trying their best to get the word out to encourage students to join the class and show them that there is a job waiting for them. "Machine shops that we visit on field trips approach the kids right away, offering them jobs as soon as they graduate," Michael said. "That's how big of a need there is for machinists."

The class has been successful, producing some very talented students, such as Travis Bright of Youngsville, a 2004 BOCES student who went on to Alfred State College and now works for Allendale Machinery Systems in Upper Saddle River, distributors of the Haas computerized lathes and milling machines. Haas equipment is used in the class.

The classroom is equipped with a Smart Screen. It's a huge screen on the wall that works like a computer, but Michael can operate it by touching the screen so the whole class can see what it couldn't on a small computer screen.

A program called Master CAD/CAM is the coolest thing yet. As you design your piece, the program basically writes the code for the Haas machine. You can even watch as a computer-generated drill bit carves out your design on a computer-generated block of metal. If you love computers, you'll love this.

I visit many bike-building shops and car-restoration facilities and there is always a need for machining. It's a craft, a craft that can only be improved upon. Expert instructors like Steve and Michael don't come along every day. There are plenty of openings in the following classes:

- Introduction to Manufacturing — Basic concepts of manufacturing and operation of machine tools
- Basic Manufacturing — Course combines the theories of the lathe and grinding machine operations with technical information to manufacture parts to industry standards
- Advance Manufacturing — In-depth study of milling machine operations and practices
- CAD technology — Study of the concepts involved in programming computer numerically controlled (CNC) machines

At the open house, Michael gave me a demonstration of the Haas milling machine. It was amazing, and the finished product was even better — a hollowed-out cube with two smaller cubes trapped inside it. It is really an interesting machine to watch.

If you are interested in joining the machining classes at Sullivan County BOCES or want information, call 791-4070 or visit www.scboces.org. Could be the start of a whole new career.

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Chris

Aviation



DRIVE TOOLING

SECURELY CLAMP WORK TO TABLE. PARTS
CAN BE THROWN WITH GREAT FORCE.
SHUT OFF MACHINE WHEN NOT IN USE.
AVOID USING MACHINE IN WET, DAMP OR
POORLY LIGHTED WORK AREAS.
NEVER PLACE YOUR HAND ON THE TOOL IN THE
SPINDLE AND PRESS ANY PMS, NYC, OR
TOOL OR CHANGE A TOOL CHANGE CYCLE.
THE TOOL CHANGER WILL MOVE IN
AND CRUSH YOUR HAND.
NEVER WOOFY MACHINE
DO NOT DEPRESS HOLD-TO-HOLD SWITCH
WARNING 1 WARNING 2 WARNING 3

TOOLING





