

Career Opportunities Offered To North Salem High School Wood Working Students

The primary goal for WoodLINKS is to better prepare a labor force for the woodworking industry in North America to facilitate the growth in wood manufacturing. That goal took a very important step forward in early March of 2012. Joe Wadsworth, president of Custom Source Woodworking in Olympia, Washington, made a proposal to students in Dean



Joe Wadsworth offers Jobs to North High students.

Mattson's woodworking classes at North Salem High School in Salem, Oregon. Wadsworth is offering living wage jobs for up to 10 of Mattson's students over the next year. These jobs would allow students to utilize skills they have learned in Mattson's classes. The annual wages are expected to be up to \$50,000.00 within 5 years. Those figures, not typical of beginning woodworkers, are getting students', parents' and administrators' attention in a hurry.

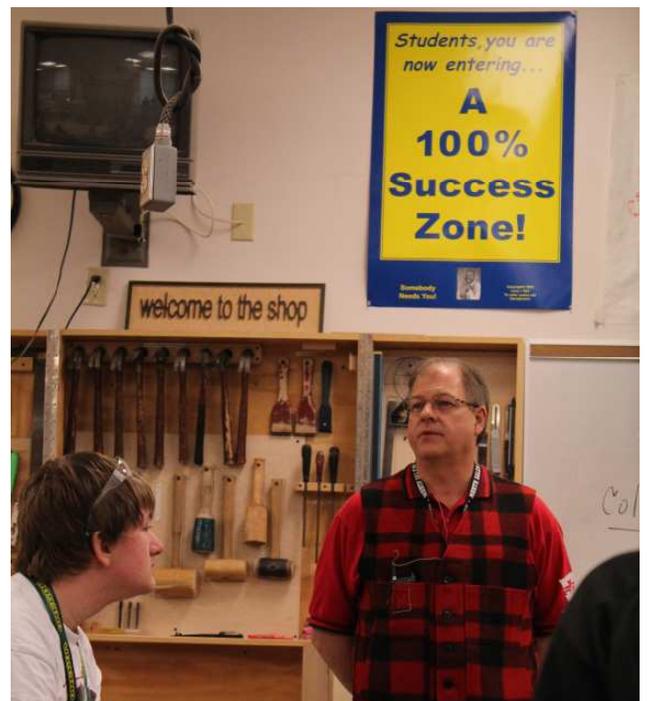
Wadsworth has taken a very bold step in offering this type of opportunity to students right out of high school. He does so on the faith that he has the attention of a group of over 100 well prepared students, many of whom are considering careers in woodworking. This could be just what the students are looking for, and Wadsworth knows the importance of a consistent labor force if his company is to grow.

A big part of Wadsworth's encouragement for this effort came when he learned of Dean Mattson's program. This happened at a WoodLINKS in-service meeting for woodworking teachers held in Vancouver, Washington in October of 2011. Wadsworth was looking for a forward thinking program, that was aggressive about preparing students for careers in woodworking.



Interest is very keen for Mattson and his students.

Dean Mattson began his teaching career in the fall of 2009, following over two decades of management level responsibilities in a variety of businesses. Through those experiences, he learned what is needed by employers and how to properly train employees. His students quickly recognize the skills that Mattson is emphasizing. The students are enrolled in courses entitled Cabinet Making, and build basic cabinet and furniture pieces to develop the fundamental concepts of wood manufacturing. However, the more profound lessons of personal integrity and a strong work ethic are taught with equal emphasis. Students quickly learn that what they do **when no one is watching** is just as important as what they do when being supervised. When Mattson made a presentation at the October in-service meeting, Wadsworth quickly recognized the opportunity for his company.



Dean Mattson addresses his students.

Wadsworth's initial meeting at North Salem High School was one of introduction. He brought two of his current employees with him to help students learn more about his company. The presentation included photos and descriptions of his company's projects. He expects to return later in the spring to hold more serious interviews for students interested in specific positions.

While this is a bold first step, it is the hope of both Mattson and Wadsworth that other employers realize the resource that WodLINKS programs offer. The woodworking industry needs a skilled work force, and high schools can prepare students for that opportunity. The kind of employment Wadsworth is offering will motivate students to take this opportunity seriously.

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