



Why local manufacturers want to hire teenagers

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CINCINNATI -- "It's tough to stay with technology," Precision Machine instructor David Fox admitted Thursday. In the manufacturing field, companies constantly seek newer, fastest ways to create their products and engineers who can help them pioneer better methods.

That's why, Fox said, Greater Cincinnati's manufacturing businesses are so interested in youth who participate in Butler Tech's annual manufacturing competition. The yearly event asks participating high school students to program milling machines to turn a flat sheet of metal into a product within a time limit, and students who perform well can reap benefits beyond the satisfaction a job well done.

"Half our students are employed already with local manufacturers," Fox said. "They're in high demand. ... I had a student last year making \$22.50 an hour."

Damien Jeffries, a high school senior, will participate for the second time on Friday. As one of the top-ranked manufacturing competitors in the state, he's one of Fox's students with a job; he helps make parts at Valco Melton.

"The competition was before I was employed, so I think that was a big part of me being employed," he said. "That's when a lot of businesses come in and watch us work and see what we can do."

More than 30 manufacturers, including Rhinestahl Corporation, will be watching the competition and assessing the students who take part.

"We've got a company with hundreds of employees, and the hardest job to fill is that of skilled manufacturing trades," Rhinestahl president Dieter Moeller said.