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Purdue launches green, healthy work force programs

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. -

Purdue University's Technical Assistance Program has launched two new work force initiatives aimed at improving employees' health and helping employers become more environmentally friendly.

TAP, which works with companies and health-care providers to improve performance and enhance the quality of life for Indiana citizens, is a partnership among Purdue and the state and local communities.

The Green Workforce initiative will educate workers in the principles of sustainable manufacturing, energy conservation and waste reduction. The new Healthy Workforce program provides wellness-oriented interventions at the employee level to improve overall health and encourage wise use of the health-care system.



**Anesthesia breathing circuit
caption below**

TAP director Dave McKinnis said demand is strong for both initiatives.

"Helping employees reduce health-care costs and become better stewards of the environment are two of the biggest concerns voiced by companies throughout Indiana," McKinnis said. "Small businesses will be pleased to know that the state provides a tax credit if they enroll in the Healthy Workforce program. Through the Green Workforce initiative, companies will know that becoming more sustainable is not only in the best interest of our environment, but it also can lower costs and provide product differentiation."

Meanwhile, growth continues for existing TAP programs. According to the program's recently released annual report, TAP served 622 companies and health-care providers in 80 counties during the 2007-08 fiscal year. These efforts led to another year of record economic impacts, including the creation of 904 jobs and nearly \$63 million in sales. Work force development experts also trained 4,802 employees in the manufacturing, public health, health-care and pharmacy sectors.

Other TAP initiatives that have experienced steady growth include the Energy Efficiency program, which worked on 228 projects to help employers lower their energy usage and costs. Haynes International Inc., an alloy manufacturer in Kokomo, Ind., saved \$18,000 in natural gas costs in three months since working with Purdue experts. They expect annual savings to be approximately \$360,000.

Healthcare TAP, which was launched in May 2005, also remains in demand. A partnership with the Indiana Hospital&Health Association and Purdue's Regenstrief Center for Healthcare Engineering, Healthcare TAP sends interdisciplinary teams from the College of Engineering, the School of Nursing and other disciplines to Indiana hospitals to offer operational improvement assistance.

TAP also administers the Indiana Manufacturing Extension Partnership Center, which helps manufacturers implement lean manufacturing, quality systems, marketing and other initiatives to improve their operations. In 2008 the center worked with 135 companies to train 3,847 employees in projects related to advanced manufacturing, quality and leadership. Clients, such as critical-care product manufacturer King Systems of Noblesville, Ind., said the projects more than doubled their cost savings target and improved employee morale.

"The TAP/MEP training program has helped accelerate King's continuous improvement program," said Christie Andersen, King Systems SixSigma coordinator. "A sense of empowerment carried all the way to the shop floor, since

the excitement level after training was high."

TAP also plays a key role in administering the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) program in north-central Indiana, through which Purdue was awarded a U.S. Department of Labor Work Force grant. TAP uses a portion of the grant funding to help manufacturers improve operations, grow top-line sales, control health-care costs, expand energy efficiency technical skills and refine the agribusiness supply chain.

To meet the growing demand for its services, TAP plans to open new offices in Evansville, New Albany and South Bend.

McKinnis said the combined success of all TAP initiatives remains a bright spot in today's challenging economic climate.

"Whenever companies or health-care providers want to increase their competitiveness, profits or customer satisfaction, TAP can provide experts who know how to reach those goals," McKinnis said. "We help companies and health-care providers throughout Indiana, which ultimately leads to a healthier economy and a better quality of life."

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Note to Journalists: To obtain a copy of the Technical Assistance Program 2007-08 annual report, which profiles companies throughout Indiana, contact TAP staff at (765) 494-6258, tap@purdue.edu

PHOTO CAPTION:

Kay LaShure, a production assembler for King Systems in Noblesville, Ind., adds a part to an anesthesia breathing circuit. King Systems, a critical-care product manufacturer, has worked with the Indiana Manufacturing Partnership Center on projects designed to increase efficiency, lower costs and boost employee morale. The center is administered by Purdue's Technical Assistance Program, which recently released its 2007-08 annual report. (Purdue Marketing Communications photo/Mark Simons)

A publication-quality photo is available at <http://news.uns.purdue.edu/images/+2008/king-systems.jpg>

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