

Kentucky on the Forefront of Using Apprenticeship Model in New Ways

RUSSELL SPRINGS, Ky. – The saying “What goes around comes around” could be applied to the renewed attention apprenticeships are receiving both at the secondary educational level as well as those who have graduated from high school.



Torsten Langguth, CEO of Dr. Schneider Automotive Systems

As business and industry needs grow for qualified employees, many are looking at the apprenticeship model as a way to fill those needs.

According to information from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), apprenticeships have helped build America from its early colonial beginning to the present day noting some very famous early apprentices that included George Washington (surveyor), Benjamin Franklin (printer) and Paul Revere (silversmith).

From a national perspective,

there are almost 24,000 registered apprenticeship programs providing education and training for approximately 400,000 apprentices in a number of emerging and high-growth sectors such as energy conservation, health care and information technology, in addition to traditional industries such as manufacturing and construction, states the DOL.

Kentucky is on the forefront of utilizing the apprenticeship model in new ways to help combat a growing shortage of qualified employees for an array of business sectors.

Recently state Labor Cabinet Sec. Larry Roberts, Kentucky Department of Education Commissioner Terry Holliday and Torsten Langguth, CEO of Dr. Schneider Automotive Systems announced a partnership that will set a new standard in apprentice education in Kentucky.

Gov. Steve Beshear applauded the partnership with the German company. The announcement comes after the Governor recently visited Germany to share Kentucky’s accomplishments in workforce training and promote Kentucky’s thriving automotive industry at an international automotive conference.

Career readiness is a crucial part of our economic well-being now and into the future,” said Gov. Beshear. “This competency-based initiative not only helps students build better lives for themselves, but it sets a new standard in apprentice education in

the Commonwealth that will better prepare our workforce to meet the needs of employers and continue to attract new companies to Kentucky.”

In a ceremony held at the Dr. Schneider plant and attended by a host of local education and industry leaders from Russell and Adair Counties, Sec. Roberts said for the first time in Kentucky, the apprenticeship program will recognize competency-based learning, which provides participating high school students a more customized approach to training.

“This enhancement of Kentucky’s current apprenticeship program will allow students a more personalized approach to job training at an earlier age than many apprenticeships have in the past,” he said. “Also, it will give business partners a chance to grow a new generation of employees trained specifically for their operations.”

The new initiative, which is the first of its kind, allows high school students to complete up to half of their apprenticeship before graduation based on competency in registered apprenticeship programs – instead of a set amount of classroom and on-the-job training hours previously required for many apprenticeships.

The program at Dr. Schneider’s will work in conjunction with an already established pre-apprenticeship program known as Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK). That program also allows students to gain apprenticeship credit through their Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes and participating local business and industry partners.

Holliday said work-based learning experiences are essential for Kentucky students to gain the skills and competencies needed for 21st

century careers.

“Kentucky and the U.S. in general are lagging behind other nations in this regard. As we look to expand work-based learning experiences for more students in Kentucky, this program will serve as a model for the rest of the state,” he said.

Langguth said he is pleased that his company is leading the way in a new era of apprenticeship while giving young people an enhanced opportunity to learn a lifelong skill.

Through an extensive screening process, Dr. Schneider Automotive Systems has already placed two students from the nearby Lake Cumberland Area Technology Center in this new training program. Garrett Foley, who works as an industrial maintenance technician, and Tyler Moore,



Kentucky Labor Cabinet Secretary Larry Roberts

who is an injection mold setter, are considered regular Dr. Schneider employees.

“My wish is to advance this whole program,” said Torsten Langguth, CEO of Dr. Schneider Automotive Systems. “I have been impressed with what the students have learned, and this spring we would like to start the process of looking for four more students to participate in this program. In operating this way, you have to look at apprenticeships differently, and realize these students are like diamonds that are being shaped, and eventually they will have lifelong skills.”

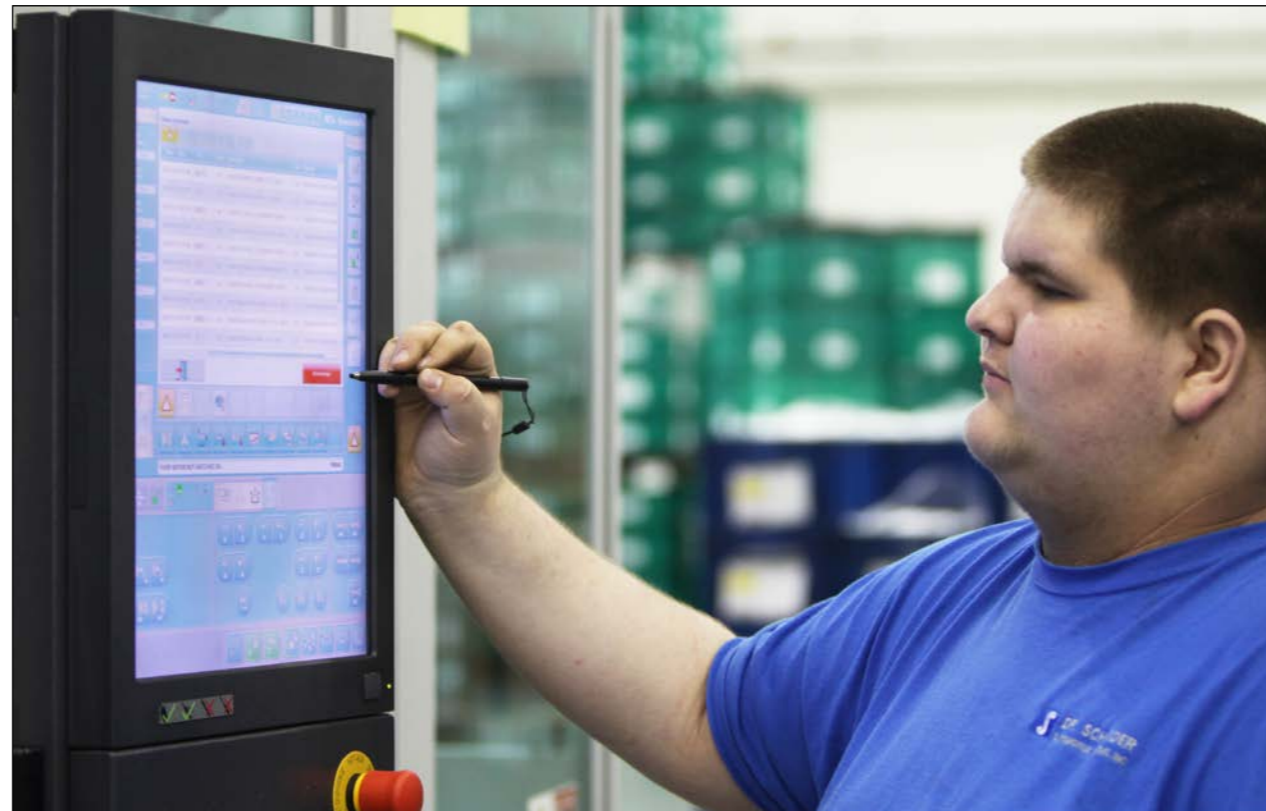
Langguth added that while these are just students, they are also regular employees and have been entrusted to work with very sophisticated technical machinery.

Foley said the program at Dr. Schneider’s is a life changing opportunity.

“I have learned skills in which otherwise I wouldn’t have and the program has jumpstarted not only a job in the workforce but a career,” he said. “This has put me in a real workplace doing real jobs and I think more businesses should implement this type of a program to create a better workforce.”

Moore said the opportunity has provided real-life skills that will create a better future.

“It’s giving me a great learning experience and options to better myself as an individual,” he said. “I’m enjoying this so much that I plan to make a career out of this apprenticeship.”



Tyler Moore works as an injection mold setter as part of his pre-apprenticeship program

On Page One: Garrett Foley, who works as an industrial maintenance technician, works on one of the many advanced pieces of equipment at the facility.