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MANUFACTURING: Program helps Rowley spring forward



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Rowley springing forward

John Dellalana

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Special to The Herald

BRISTOL — Rowley Spring & Stamping, which makes parts for industry sectors including automotive, medical, military and hardware, is participating in the state's Manufacturing Fund Apprenticeship Program.

Rowley employes about 100 workers, 20 percent of whom have been certified in lean manufacturing, working on 500 machines, including about 150 computer-aided machines. The combination of equipment and skilled employees enables Rowley to make parts to each customer's exact specifications, President John Dellalana said.

Administered by the state Department of Labor and funded by a federal grant, the apprenticeship program has helped Rowley hire three new apprentices. Funding helps defray costs of on-the-job training and outside course work apprentices need to get their skills up to par.

"The apprenticeship program makes sense for everybody concerned," Dellalana said. "It helps the person trying to learn a skill set, it helps us get trained employees and it helps us keep good workers and start them on a career

ladder."

That career ladder can be rewarding. Dellalana said a trained employee can move up and into a career that can pay about \$70,000 a year. And that's before overtime.

"We like to set a career path for our younger employees, an advancement ladder for people who show mechanical aptitude," Dellalana said.

Right now, one of the company's apprentices is learning to become a spring maker and set up machines that make springs. The other two are in the four-slide department. A four-slide machine, Dellalana explained, has four motor-driven tools that cut, stamp, punch, fold and crimp material into three-dimensional parts.

Rowley Spring has taken advantage of other state programs that assist worker training and provide capital for the purchase of equipment.

"I don't know why more people don't take advantage of DECD (programs offered by the Department of Economic and Community Development)," Dellalana said. "Their personnel are knowledgeable and they want us to have success."

"As our economy continues to grow, so does the demand for skilled workers to fill new jobs," said Gov. Dannel P. Malloy. "We not only need to attract new companies — which we're doing each and every day — but we need to ensure that training is aligned with the needs of those companies. We have one of the most educated workforces in the country and we need to keep it that way. I thank the U.S. Department of Labor and Secretary Tom Perez for this

grant, which will help us to continue our progress in bringing down the unemployment rate by helping companies create good jobs as we prepare residents with the requisite skills.”