

IMA Morning Digest

Illinois Manufacturers' Association

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Today's headlines in Illinois...

Illinois Manufacturers' Association Champions MSSC Skills Certification System for Production Workers

From Quality Magazine: Manufacturing remains a vital part of the Illinois economy and the need for highly skilled workers continues. Experts say some 30,000 new manufacturing workers will be needed each year for the next 10 years to replace the retiring baby-boomer generation. "Despite the current recession, we are facing a 'pipeline' crisis," says Ron Bullock, Chairman of the Illinois Manufacturers Association (IMA) board of directors.

In response to this challenge, the IMA concluded an agreement on January 26, 2009, with the nationally recognized Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC). This agreement gives the IMA exclusive rights to distribute and take the lead in marketing the MSSC Certification System in Illinois. This agreement builds on a September 2008 IMA board resolution that encourages its 4,000 members to take MSSC certificates into account in their recruitment and hiring processes.

The MSSC is an industry-led training, assessment and certification system focused on the core competencies needed by the nation's workers in all production occupations in all sectors of manufacturing. The nationwide MSSC Certification System, based on federally-endorsed national standards, offers both entry-level and incumbent workers the opportunity to demonstrate that they have acquired the foundational knowledge and basic technical skills needed in the high-growth, technology-intensive jobs of the 21st century.

The MSSC awards certificates to individuals who pass MSSC assessments in the four critical functions of production—safety; quality practices & measurement; manufacturing processes & production; and maintenance awareness. Individuals who pass all four assessments are certified as a full MSSC Certified Production Technician (CPT). MSSC also offers training courses, MSSC instructor certification training, assessment center certification training and a "diagnostic tool" that benchmarks a company's production workforce against national standards.

"MSSC credentials offer Illinois manufacturers an opportunity to reduce recruitment costs, eliminate remedial training cost, and attract a motivated workforce," says Leo Reddy, MSSC chief executive officer. "MSSC's industry-recognized credentials also allow high school students, college students, workers and career-changers to demonstrate that they possess the core skills and flexibility needed to keep pace with technological change in both current and future industries.