

**NEW Manufacturing Alliance**  
**RETIRED WORKER TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES**  
**Bemis – Appelton, WI**  
**April 24, 2017 – 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.**

Attendees: Amanda Kopetsky, Chris Linn, Sonia Otte, Steve Paider, Rob Peterson, and Ann Franz

**Topic 1: Review results of survey**

There were 55 companies that participated in the survey. In total the manufacturers that answered the survey employ 30,896 people in northeast Wisconsin. There are 110,000 employed in manufacturing in northeast Wisconsin, so the survey accounted for 28% of all of the workers in the region.

The first question was “Is the company concerned with losing skills/knowledge due to retirements?” 85% of the respondents stated ‘yes’. Only 35% of respondents stated that their company had in place a program addressing the knowledge loss due to retirements.

The average tenure for production was 11 years. Average age for production was 43 years old.

The average tenure for engineering was 9.5 years. Average age for engineering was 40 years old.

Attached to the minutes is an analysis of the age ranges for 19 different occupations. The occupations that seem to have the most potential number of people retiring in the next 1-5 years are: general labor, operators, maintenance mechanics/millwrights and machinists. Manufacturing engineers had the largest number of individuals 61 or over compared to all other engineering occupations.

Best practices shared by respondents included:

- Part-time/flexible schedule for older employees to stay on the job
- Training programs – Bemis has an electro-mechanical maintenance training program.
- Cross training

Programs shared by respondents in addressing the knowledge loss due to programs are:

- Risk Matrix outlining ages of workforce and knowledge of those individuals
- Cross training
- Leadership Legacy training
- Apprenticeship
- Documentation & SOPs

Most companies offer a wage increase for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shifts. The average wage increase for 2<sup>nd</sup> shift is \$1.32, however the median was .50 cents. For 3<sup>rd</sup> shift the average increase is \$3.12, however the median was .60 cents.

The taskforce inquired if companies can legally ask the question ‘Are you going to retire’? Chris shared that ATech high school needs retired manufacturing employees to assist in mentoring high school students. A guide for retirees on what to do next might be beneficial.

**Topic 2: Next steps related to the survey**

From reviewing the survey results, the taskforce would like to do the following before the next meeting:

1. Ann will contact the companies that had best practices to learn more about them to bring back to the taskforce members.
2. Companies responding that they have an apprenticeship program will be asked if it is formal or informal.
3. Taskforce members should review the survey results for further discussion.

At the June 1 full membership meeting, the results from the survey will be shared with the membership. The taskforce will need to work on what will be shared at the meeting.

**Topic 3: Retired Worker Symposium**

The taskforce discussed hosting a conference in spring of 2018 related to retired workers. The program could include: David DeLong, author of *Lost Knowledge*, best practices related to retired workers by local manufacturers, and labor market data.

**Topic 5: Next steps and next meeting**

The taskforce will meet the fourth Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. The next meeting will be held on **May 23, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. at Sargento in Hilbert.**