Vermont Wood Manufacturers Association

Rutland, VT

VWMA, along with its partners, will launch and implement a pioneering workforce development initiatives for the secondary wood products manufacturing industry statewide, to establish a credentialing and training system to enable the industry to build the robust, highly skilled workforce necessary to be economically competitive in the global marketplace in the 21st century. The system will assist companies in hiring, training, retaining and promoting workers with needed skills, establish a strong career path for woodworkers, and better link educational/training opportunities with market needs of companies.

Total Working Lands Grant—$48,000.00
Total Match provided by the VWMA —$101,000.00

VERMONT WORKING LANDS ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE

GRANT RECIPIENT UPDATE - MARCH '14

Using a grant from the Working Lands Enterprise Fund, the Vermont Wood Manufacturers Association, in partnership with the Northern Forest Center and Woodwork Career Alliance, has launched a pioneering initiative to help Vermont's secondary wood products manufacturing industry to build the highly skilled workforce necessary to be economically competitive in the global marketplace of the 21st century.

The initiative is designed to:

- Assist companies in hiring, training, retaining, and promoting workers with needed skills
- Establish a strong career path for woodworkers, and
- Better link educational and training opportunities with the market needs of companies

In the initial phase of the program, a team from the Woodwork Career Alliance and Northern Forest Center has been conducting detailed site visits at Vermont wood manufacturing companies, leading to reports regarding their credentialing and training needs for current and future employees. Confidential profile reports are being completed for a number of Vermont companies, with more planned in the coming months. The next steps will be to begin a credentialing process for existing employees, and to engage in discussions with educational institutions about new or revised curricula and incorporating credentialing as part of their educational offerings.

One of the first companies to have gone through the profiling process is Amoskeag Woodworking, headquartered in Colchester, VT. According to Kevin Hastings, Amoskeag Woodworking's Owner and President, "The work is out there, but if we can't train and retain a skilled workforce, our opportunities for growth are more limited. This program will significantly advance the woodworking sector in our area and we're looking forward to the possibilities it brings us."

Site Visits...