

NORTHERN INSURANCE AGENCY FIND SUCCESS AT MICHIGAN WORKS!



Northern Insurance Agency recently worked in partnership with Michigan Works! to identify workers who have the right combination of knowledge, skills and abilities to join their team. A representative from Michigan Works! approached the company to present the wide range of human resource solutions and when they heard about the application/resume screening services available it sounded like a great fit. Paul Fix of Northern Insurance says, "The screening process was like using front line underwriting."

The candidate that was chosen was Cindy Artley. She is now doing a great job as a Customer Service Representative. Her duties involve producing quotes, processing payments, making changes in policies, setting up policies and providing the highest levels of customer service and commitment at all times. Cindy has completed Customer Service Representative training in Cincinnati with flying colors.

Northern Insurance Agency has been in business in Escanaba since 1957, with a new location since 2001. They currently have eleven employ-

ees. Their hours of business are Monday through Friday from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm, with other times available by appointment. They are located at 601 Ludington Street in Escanaba and you can find them on the Web at www.northerninsuranceagency.com.



L to R: Paul Fix, Cynthia Artley; Bruce Movalson of Northern Insurance Agency

One thing that sets Northern Insurance Agency apart from competitors is that they list their home, cellular phone and other after hours contact information on their business cards so their customers can always receive the highest possible levels of service. Additionally, anyone who works in the office can accept calls

and answer questions so you never have to wait just because your agent is away from his/her desk.

The company focuses on customer retention as one of its main priorities. They are proactive in making money saving changes to customers' policies and products. The company will call the customer and let them know that making an adjustment will save them money, then the customer has the opportunity to accept the change or not. This is a great benefit to all customers of Northern Insurance Agency.

Northern Insurance Agency's mission and values can be summed up with the acronym CPSR. They feel they offer the best combination of coverage, price, service and reputation in our community. They feel it is important for their customers to know, trust and respect the people providing them with their insurance coverage.

Some of the companies represented by Northern Insurance agencies include: Accident Fund, Northern Mutual Insurance Co., Auto-Owners Insurance Co., Capitol Indemnity, Cincinnati Insurance Company, Citizens Insurance Company,

Progressive Insurance Co., EMC Insurance Company, Foremost Insurance Company, and Fremont Mutual. These companies have links on Northern Insurance Agency's Website.

Northern Insurance Agency is strongly committed to Delta County and the Upper Peninsula. They have representatives working with Noon Kiwanis, The Escanaba Housing Commission Board, United Way of Delta County, YMCA of Delta County Board, and Hospital Foundation Council. They are also very proud of the many professional achievements they have earned such as: Being named to the Cincinnati Insurance Company's Presidents Club for 2003-2004, Being ranked as one of the top ten personal lines agents for Auto-Owners in the State of Michigan, Serving on the Citizen's Agents' Advisory Council, Serving on the Accident Funds' Agent's Advisory Council and currently serving on Blue Cross/Blue Shield's Agent's Advisory Council.

For more information on Northern Insurance Agency contact (906) 786-2122. For more information on Michigan Works! call (800) 285-Works.

KHOURY INCORPORATED FINDS SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEES THROUGH MICHIGAN WORKS!



Khoury Incorporated of Iron Mountain

Khoury Incorporated is a family-owned furniture manufacturing facility located in Iron Mountain, Michigan. The company has been producing high-quality solid-wood furniture

since 1945 and also owns Aspen Lumber Company, which provides birch, oak, pine, and aspen boards for the furniture production process. The Khoury design team uses state-of-the-art engineering methods to continuously find better ways to design and manufacture furniture with only solid wood to ensure beauty, fit, and function.

Khoury, which employs 196 employees in the local area, currently purchased the old Foley-Marten manufacturing facility and will trans-

fer their machinery over to the new building. It is estimated that the new operation will increase efficiency by over 20%, which will be accomplished by a more effective workflow. Currently, all applicants to Khoury Incorporated are sent to Michigan Works! to take the Purdue Board dexterity test. Lori Kinsella, Khoury Human Resource Manager, uses these results to place employees in specific positions throughout the facility. An applicant with high scores on the dexterity test will most likely be placed in the assembly area, which requires fast and precise hand-eye coordination. Lori appreciates the work performed by the team at Michigan Works! and plans to continue this relationship now, and in the future.

Michigan Works! is your local one stop center to increase the efficiency of your business, saving you both

time and money. The extensive experience of our high quality team allows us to provide you with professional services that free your time to focus on your #1 priority, growing your business.

With service centers throughout the state, the Michigan Works! Service Center System has access to a vast array of human resource services making Michigan Works! the ideal resource to recruit your new employees. The Michigan Works! Service Centers in the Central Upper Peninsula can also provide businesses with invaluable service intended to help not only with employee retention, but also with the development of the business itself.

To learn more about Michigan Works! and how they can help your business call 1-800-285-WORKS! or visit their website www.jobforce.org.



Kathy Salow, the Upper Peninsula Analyst for the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth's Office of Labor Market Information

KATHY SALOW UP ANALYST, MDLEG OFFICE OF LABOR MARKET INFORMATION TO RECEIVE EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Practitioners have called upon the Job Force Board for specific labor market information that is critical to the attraction of industry to our region. The strategic planning activities of the Job Force Board support a comprehensive workforce development system,

which creates a workforce with the knowledge necessary to sustain and improve the economy of the Central Upper Peninsula. The board is dependent upon clear, accurate and timely labor market information in order to achieve its goals. Likewise, education of job seekers, education and training institutions and business regarding local labor market information is critical to the economic viability of our region.

At any given time, and generally at the last minute, Salow, graciously comes through every time with the labor market data requested. "Kathy Salow exemplifies the ability to 'go the extra mile' and her contribution to the Job Force Board is greatly ap-

preciated," states Will Carne, President of the Job Force Board. A new business at KI Sawyer needed wage data across four separate job classifications within a 24-hour period and called the Job Force Board. With her proven customer service, she came through with flying colors! Salow, in the midst of data collection, stopped what she was doing and collected the required data, not only on an Upper Peninsula level, but for state and national as well. The data was submitted to the business that is still to this day marveling about the quick turn around time. This is just one of many examples of her outstanding excellence in customer service.

She has also been instrumental in assisting the Job Force Board with a recent grant application, where she took the necessary time to provide the Job Force Board with narrative for the grant application which would support the development of healthcare LMI on a website for the UP Healthcare Roundtable.

Salow has a can do attitude and a smile that permeates throughout the

Michigan Works! Service Center in Marquette County, where she is stationed. She is always willing to lend a helping hand to the Michigan Works! Service Center in any labor market information they require to help business and job seekers.

The Job Force Board relies heavily on Kathy Salow's expertise and utilizes her expertise to continually adjust its strategic plan and activities that support that plan. The Board calls upon her all the time to sit on committees or to provide labor market information consulting. She sits on the UP Healthcare Roundtable, the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance and is an ongoing contributor of LMI to the Job Force Board's Strategic Planning Committee.

Kathy Salow is our one stop shop and her excellence in customer service, her proven positive impact in the workplace and her ability to go the extra mile makes her an outstanding recipient of the Michigan Works! "Excellence in Customer Service Award."

The Michigan Works! Association's "Excellence In Customer Service Award" will be presented to Kathy Salow, the Upper Peninsula Analyst for the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth's Office of Labor Market Information at the Association's Annual Conference on September 13th.

Salow, was nominated by the Job Force Board to receive this prestigious award, for her exemplary service in her role as a Labor Market Analyst. Labor market information is critical to the success of business attraction, retention and expansion activities in the central Upper Peninsula and as well to potential job seekers. The Economic Development

MICHIGAN WORKS! ASSOCIATION AWARDS PARTNER OF THE YEAR TO MIDWEST SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Midwest Skills Development is the recipient of the Michigan Works! Association's Partner of the Year award. This award will be presented to the Lake Superior Community Partnership Foundation's Midwest Skills Development Center's advisory board representative Gary Erickson, President of the Upper Peninsula Power Company at the Association's Annual Conference to be held in Mt. Pleasant on September 13, 2004.

The **Midwest Skills Development Center** is a model in collaborative workforce development designed to meet the needs of current employers.

The Electrical Line Technician Program is one that utility companies have requested to be offered because of their current and future need of trained line technicians. The program is certified by Northern Michigan University.

The program is a pre-apprenticeship program that prepares students to install, maintain and operate electrical systems to

supply energy to residential, commercial and industrial customers and underground generation facilities. The Program Advisory Board is responsible for overseeing the program.

Friday, August 22 of 2003, was a very exciting day for the Lake Superior Community Partnership Foundation and their Electrical Line Technician Advisory Board. That was the day the MSDC officially opened its doors to the public. Nearly 200 visitors stopped by to celebrate the grand opening, tour the facility and meet the instructor and students.

The Advisory Board is made up of UP wide industry, workforce development, labor and community representatives who have continued to donate time, talent and treasure to this endeavor. Both volunteer boards should be commended for their commitment and dedication to seeing this project to fruition.

From inception to completion, it has taken over two years and hundreds of

hours of people power. It has received financial and in-kind support of nearly a quarter of a million dollars. It is U.P. wide in scope and the program is filled to capacity by eager-to-learn students.

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board has played a critical role in the establishment of the Skill Center from its inception. Employees sit on both the Advisory and Foundation Boards of Directors.

Michigan Works! Service Centers play a key role in the success of the Midwest Skills Development Center. Potential students are recruited through the one stop system and given assistance in resume and interviewing skills. Michigan Works! helps the Advisory Board narrow down the long list of candidates for program entry through a rigorous testing and interview process. Michigan Works! was able to obtain the Accuplacer test, received the appropriate training and proctor numerous testing sessions to accommodate nearly 100 applicants. Taking it a

step further, Michigan Works! provided the facilities to interview each candidate in a professional environment.

On April 30, 28 young men received their certificates at a graduation ceremony, sponsored in part by Michigan Works!. Approximately 40% of the students had received job offers prior to graduation. We continue to work with the remaining students as that number climbs weekly in hopes of reaching our target of 100% employment.

Recruitment, assessment and interviewing of new students is currently underway for the next class of The Electrical Line Technician Program. This model in collaborative workforce development will continue to grow its success. The Job Force Board congratulates the Lake Superior Community Partnership Foundation's Midwest Skills Development Center on their receipt of the Michigan Works! Association's "Partner of the Year" Award.

U.P. ORGANIZATIONS BRING AUTHOR/EXPERT TO THE U.P.!



Dr. Jeffrey Liker, Author of the book "The Toyota Way."

On Thursday August 5, 2004, Upper Peninsula business leaders, managers and owners had the great opportunity to visit

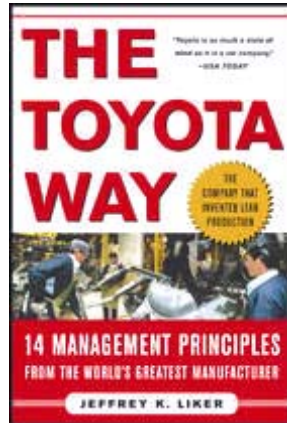
with Dr. Jeffrey Liker, Author of the book "The Toyota Way." Dr. Liker provided insights to operational excellence and a culture of continuous improvement to a group of nearly 100 attendees. As an organization, Toyota provides a solid operation model to emulate.

This event was part one of a Lunch-And-Learn Series designed to help UP businesses from all industries in professional development. The lunch and learn series is sponsored in part by Northern Initiatives, Operation Action UP, Northern Michigan University and the Job Force Board.

Joe Boyle, Professional Business Advisor for Northern Initiatives says, "Learning events like these help build business capacity and shape the economic climate of the UP. The message Dr. Liker brought to us

today can have a profound affect on our lives. As business owners, managers, CEOs and entrepreneurs, our local companies are the engines of economic growth in the Upper Peninsula. Our businesses are the key to growing wealth and assets for our communities."

Each participant received a copy of "The Toyota Way" before the event on August 5th so everyone could make the most of this time with Dr. Liker.



can help UP businesses understand the importance of operational excellence and organizational culture, and more events like this are needed in the UP "Talk to any CEO, manager or business owner and they will tell you that running a business is extremely challenging. Business owners and managers need to be continuously aware of the unique challenges they are faced with every day in just maintaining the current success of an organization. The more tools one has in their management toolbox, the more successful the company can be. In

Joe Esbrook, Director of Business Development and long-time Board Member for Operation Action UP said that workforce and economic development organizations

this case, Toyota made operational excellence a strategic advantage. The Toyota principles, although considered to be very simple, require a dedicated workforce combined with a strong leadership commitment to build, share and communicate values through out the organization."

Dr. Jeff Liker explained the Toyota Way and its production system. The principles were divided into four sections; 1) long-term philosophy; 2) the right process for the right results; 3) adding value to organization; and 4) driving organizational learning by continuously solving root problems."

Liker shared with the group how to apply the Toyota way and actions to achieve a lean, learning organization. He also provided some deep insights into practices, techniques, and the way people are joined with technology into a successful sociotechnical system.

Dr. Jeffery K. Liker is Professor of Industrial and Operations Engineering at the University of Michigan. He is the Director of the Japan Technology Management Program (JTMP) and co-Director of the Lean Manufacturing Certificate Program at the University of Michigan that offers a ten-day lean manufacturing certificate and a five-day lean product development certificate.

Dr. Liker has authored or co-authored over 65 articles and book chapters and five books. He is the Editor of *Becoming Lean: Experiences of U.S. manufacturers*, winner of the 1998 Shingo prize (for excellence in manufacturing research.) He has also won

Shingo prizes for his research in 1995, 1996 and 1997.

In addition to *Becoming Lean*, Dr. Liker has published numerous articles and other books, including *Engineered in Japan: Japanese Technology Management Practices*, *Concurrent Engineering Effectiveness: Integrating Product Development Across Organizations* and *Remade in America: Transplanting and Transforming Japanese Manufacturing Methods*. His most recent book, *The Toyota Way*, was released in January, 2004 by McGraw-Hill. He is currently working on Toyota's Product Development System with James Morgan (Productivity Press, in process.)

Dr. Liker is Department Editor of *Manufacturing Systems* for IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management. He is active as a keynote speaker, speaker for executive retreats and as a lean consultant, independently and through a company he cofounded - Optiprise, Inc. Recent clients include G.M., Ford, Intier, PPG Industries, Johnson Controls, Tenneco Automotive, Framatome Technologies, Northrop Grumman Ship Systems, Jacksonville Naval Air Depot and Portsmouth Naval Ship Yard.

The groups' goal is to have one Lunch-And-Learn program per quarter throughout the year. For information on future Lunch-And-Learn events, please feel free to contact Operation Action UP at 906.225.0089 or email Joe Esbrook, Director of business Development at jesbrook@jobforce.org. Please share any ideas for future topics.

YOUTH WORKS! (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

jects and learning about how much goes into maintaining such a facility.

Not all Schoolcraft County Youth Works! projects were public service internships. Businesses played an important role in providing real world work experiences. Companies like Jack's SuperValue,



Cyndi Kerridge (left) and John Melton (right), review a new database they just created for the City of Manistique.



Jay Crossley and Steven Creeden stand on the wheel chair ramp that Jay worked on.

Indian Lake Golf and Country Club, and Stoney Point Golf Course also added value to the initiative.

Tom Armstrong of Manistique worked closely with Manny Lopez,

course manager at Stoney Point Golf Course, Manistique's newest 9-hole golf course on US-2. Over the course of his internship, Tom learned about golf course management and how to care for the grounds and manage the variety of tools and equipment used at a golf course. While Tom is still deciding what his career goals are following high school, he has found that many of the soft skills including time management will help to improve his abilities academically.

Youth Works! has provided a real world learning experience for Schoolcraft County youth. These interns were able to see first hand, what it takes to run a business or a public organization. As well, the youth were provided opportunities

to work on projects that helped the community. Community projects build a sense of civic responsibilities in the youth participants.

To learn more about Youth Works! visit our web site at www.jobforce.org, and click on the "youth" menu item.



Manny Lopez (left) and Tom Armstrong (right) take a break in front of hole-9 after completing a grooming project.