Northfield Block Company

Northfield Block Company is a leading manufacturer of concrete products that are used for building and landscaping. The Company creates custom products in addition to architectural block and brick, pavers, and segmental retaining wall systems. State-of-the-art facilities in Romeoville, Joliet, and Channahon feature automated processes to create this diverse line of products.

Northfield's products are made with abrasive aggregates that are extremely destructive to equipment. As a result, maintenance of machinery is a huge issue. While many of its employees have practical experience in the manufacturing and some technical training, Northfield recognized a need to increase its workers' knowledge of machinery and computer automated manufacturing processes. With assistance through the Workforce Investment Board of Will County's Business Grants for Employee Training Program, workers at all three Northfield locations benefited from training that included a series of accredited classes in electronics and mechanics delivered by Joliet Junior College and specialized production equipment training through Alpena College. Classes were designed to increase worker knowledge but, more importantly, their technical application of that knowledge to address ongoing maintenance and operation of machinery.

As a result of training, Northfield's productivity and efficiency has improved. According to Jim Cayten, Superintendent of Operations at the Romeoville facility, "Most successful businesses understand the need to continually upgrade worker skills but are intimidated by the process – the Business Grants for Employee Training Program is very manageable. This is a great use of County resources. It is a win-win for the County and its businesses - improving the skills of people living and working in Will County."

Wayne Wright, Vice President of Operations at the Channahon facility adds, "We recognize that our greatest asset is our workforce. This program provides a great return on investment – as a result of investing in training for our workers we reaped increased loyalty to the company and increased production efficiency."

Workforce Investment Board of Will County

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