



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

By Steve Fogarty | Elyria Chronicle-Telegram

ELYRIA — A pair of longtime employees of Ohio Screw Products were recognized for their years of service, experience and skill by State Treasurer Josh Mandel as part of a new statewide initiative aimed at drawing more young workers into manufacturing and skilled trades jobs.

Dorothy Knieriemen and Drew Parker were presented with the "Ohio Strong" award by Mandel as the pair was encircled by nearly 80 co-workers at the Lowell Street plant, which produces custom-made steel, aluminum and brass screws, bolts and other parts and components shipped to customers across the U.S. and in other countries including Belgium, Italy and Mexico.

Mandel said he was sick and tired of company CEOs getting the accolades when times are good and profit-and-loss sheets are healthy.

"It's about time we recognize the workers who go above and beyond," Mandel said as Ohio Screw workers enthusiastically cheered and applauded.

Knieriemen has almost 20 years in with Ohio Screw, where she works as a manager of the company's Quality Department.

Parker is a 24-year veteran lead man in the Acme Department, so named for the type of machinery used to produce a variety of items used in military munitions, automotive power distribution systems, and hydraulics, according to Ohio Screw President and CEO Daniel R. Imbrogno.

Ohio Screw's 78 full-time employees have partial ownership of the company, according to its www.ohioscrew.com website.

Founded in 1945 by H.A. Hewitt, the firm has grown from a rented 6,000-square-foot shop to its 73,000-plus square-foot plant, according to a website history of Ohio Screw.

Imbrogno echoed Mandel's message by saying his company has openings for a few more skilled machinists but is having trouble finding qualified people to take such jobs.

"It's impossible to find them without stealing from other shops," Imbrogno said.

He cited a lack of interest coupled with a lack of preparatory training at the high school level for the shortage of skilled laborers.

"We could definitely do more work and produce more volume and sales with more skilled people," Imbrogno said.

Mandel is making a number of stops at manufacturing facilities across the state as part of the fledgling "Ohio Strong" program begun this week to boost awareness of the need for more machinists, pipefitters and welders.



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"Young people are being told the only way to be successful is to go to college and get a four-year degree," Mandel said. "That's one way to do it but not the only way. You can also have a high quality of life with a job in skilled trades."

While pay depends on one's skill level and experience, experienced Ohio Screw machinists with 10 or more years can see earnings "well in excess of \$50,000 … with overtime," Imbrogno said. "It's quite substantial."

Mandel also cited misperceptions by today's young jobseekers about manufacturing work.

"In the 1950s, manufacturing jobs were a lot dirtier but they are so advanced and high-tech today," Mandel said. "It's a lot different."

Knieriemen and Parker seemed genuinely taken aback by Wednesday's recognition ceremony.

"This is such a privilege and honor," Knieriemen said. "It's not just us, it's everybody" that has made the company prosper, she said. "It's so much knowledge and experience."

Parker said the award "came out of left field. I really appreciate it."