Local 86 Goes Holiday Helping Hand

Generous Giving for Guide Dogs

Monarch Machine Goes That Extra Mile

Helping Hand for the Holidays

Since 1947, Machinists Union members have proudly worked for Monarch Machine & Tool Company in Pasco, WA. The skilled craftsmen at this full-service fabrication facility tackle a wide assortment of work and deliver quality and expertise that has built Monarch Machine a reputation as one of the best. In 2004, they were named “Manufacturer of the Year” after being nominated by Fluor Hanford. Because they do not machine production parts, they work on a wide range of products and a lot of one-of-a-kind processes. One project may entail fabricating and leak testing boxes and lids to contain low-level radiological waste for vitrification, another could be machining spare parts for a sludge retrieval system, and the next may be fabricating a bulkhead screen structure for irrigation water in the Columbia River. Members there perform complex structural metal fabrication, manufacture industrial machinery, fabricate and install irrigation manifold systems, and perform Hanford prototype work. Monarch also offers up to 50 tons of field crane services to assist with installations and repairs.

Beyond just the skills and expertise of our members, there are many other features about this Union shop that motivates members to stay there for many years. At this company, loyalty is a two-way street. Many of the members have worked there for over 20 years–making them part of the “family.” The Machinists Union has built a strong working relationship with Monarch.

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Federal Stimulus Dollars Boost Hanford Employment

Federal stimulus dollars are pouring into the Hanford clean-up, creating thousands of jobs for the Tri-Cities.

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, $6 billion in new funding was provided to the Department of Energy to accelerate environmental cleanup work and create or save thousands of jobs in 12 states. The DOE allocated nearly $2 billion of that funding specifically to the Hanford site.

The stimulus allocation has roughly doubled the $2 billion annual budget for cleaning up Hanford, which still contains great amounts of nuclear waste from the Cold War, when it was one of the nation’s prime suppliers of atomic material for nuclear warheads. So far, about $224 million of the stimulus dollars have been spent. It’s intended to last for about two years, and estimates are that the stimulus will result in upwards of 4,000 new or saved jobs at Hanford.

As the work force at Hanford has expanded, so has the need for specialized training to equip the new workers with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their work in a safe and effective manner. This translated into additional training courses at the highly-acclaimed Volpentest HAMMER Training and Education Center. A primary reason for HAMMER’s success has been Work Trainers — bargaining unit employees who are experts in their fields and share their knowledge while instructing their co-workers. Work Trainers also serve as mentors for their peers as they work side-by-side in the workplace. The Machinists Union has several members who serve as Work Trainers at the Center — helping to prepare new workers to safely work on the nuclear reservations.

IAM Local 1951 President Ken Howard, who serves as a HAMMER Work Trainer, noted, “Hanford is one of the few places to train their own workers on site. That is a testament to our Work Trainer Program. It is great to see a buildup of new faces on the site. Nearly every bargaining unit here has seen their numbers grow thanks to the federal stimulus dollars — including Machinists Union members.”

Senator Patty Murray recently visited the HAMMER Center to see how some $1.96 billion in stimulus funds are being spent and observed a class at HAMMER where new employees were learning how to correctly seal up clothing to protect them against hazardous substances during cleanup work.

Earlier this year Department of Energy’s Environmental Management Assistant Secretary Dr. Ines Trasy also toured the site to observe to see the outcome of stimulus funds. She also sat in on several of the HAMMER training courses and recognized the value in this unique program.

The hiring at Hanford has spilled over into the rest of the community, creating demand for retail goods and leading to a tight market for rental housing. The result? Benton and Franklin counties had some of the state’s lowest unemployment rates in October, at 5.7 and 6.3 percent, respectively. The statewide average was 9.3 percent that month, and nationwide, joblessness was at 10.2 percent. Hanford employment is expected to peak in 2010.

Monarch Machine Goes That Extra Mile for Members

Monarch Machine has been in business since 2001 and specializes in welding and metal fabrication. They have been providing services to the Hanford site for over 32 years in the welding machine shop. “Instead of laying people off, they found other things to keep us employed,” said member Dan McVicker, who has worked at Monarch Machine for over 32 years in the welding shop. “Instead of laying people off, they found other things to keep us employed — it wasn’t welding work, but it kept us busy.”

“We have good pay and benefits, and we have a good working atmosphere. The work is different all the time since we don’t make production parts — making it more interesting and challenging,” Dan added.

Member Mike Saari has worked at Monarch since 2001. After he was injured on the job, Monarch paid for his education. “I really enjoyed it. I’m also the safest person for the company,” said Mike. “I also volunteered to be the Union Steward a few months ago. I became Steward in 2004, has been a delegate to the District 751 Council and Washington State Labor Council since 2001. After he was injured on the job, Monarch created a project manager position for Mike Saari after he was injured on the job a few years ago. I still weld on area jobs to keep my hand in the shop and I have learned the business end, as well. I purchase material, work with customers, get jobs lined up and have it in a very family-oriented company. The bosses are more like your dad. They always want us to better ourselves at work and provide a continuous learning. They provided a Christmas bonus for our families and hand out hats and shirts. That is why people stay so long — a Union machine shop with good pay and benefits and a great atmosphere.”

The goodwill at this company is paying off. Monarch Machine has been recognized by IAM President Ken Howard for its efforts to help members back on the job. They have a program to help members who are injured and unable to work.

Howard Appointed Eastern Washington Staff Assistant

Ken Howard has been named to District 751’s Staff Assistant/Organizer for Eastern Washington effective January 4 to replace Ed Rittenberg, who retired in 2009. He will be based out of Richland.

In his new job, Ken will assist the Union’s Eastern Washington Business Rep Steve Warren, in providing support to Union members with contract enforcement, handling grievances and negotiating contracts.

Ken’s assignment will cover a lot of miles and includes Hanford, Tri-Cities, Yakima, Goldendale, Roosevelt, Wenatchee, Quincy, and Pendleton, Oregon.

Ken has been a member of District 751 since 1983, when he hired on as a light-duty mechanic at the Hanford site. He became a Steward in 2003. Local 1951 President in 2004, has been a delegate to both the Washington Machinists Council and Washington State Labor Council and has worked various organizing drives.

Ken has also been active in other ways to help the Union. Since 1989, Ken has been a delegate at the HAMMER Center, and the site coordinator for both the IAM and International Chemical Workers Union since 1998. In this capacity, he developed valuable organizational, communication and presentation skills, as well as dealing with multiple employers and coordinating efforts with other Unions at the site.

It was that experience — working with several different employers and labor Unions at the HAMMER Center — that gave him the edge over other well-qualified candidates, District President Tom Wroblewski said. “We needed a strong person to assist Steve Warren in covering our widely spread-out Eastern Washington territory. Ken has the right mix of skills for this important job,” Wroblewski said.

As the workforce has become more educated, technical, and diverse, I have learned how to engineer new ways of solving problems by being able to look at unique situations from others perspectives, from workers to upper management. All of these skills will help in my new position,” said Ken.

Ken is up for the challenges of his new position. “Will I have a learning curve? Absolutely,” he said. “This is going to be fun. I’m really looking forward to it.”

2010 IAM Scholarship Competition

The IAM Scholarship Competition is open each year to members of the IAM and their children throughout the U.S and Canada. Scholarships for a bachelor’s degree or a two-year vocational/technical certification are determined in a competition among eligible applicants that is judged by an independent selection committee.

Awards to members are $2,000 per academic year for a specific period from one to four years leading to a bachelor’s degree or a two-year vocational/technical certification.

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Awards to Children of Members are: College – $1,000 per academic year, renewable each year until a bachelor’s degree is obtained or for a maximum of four years, whichever occurs first. Vocational/Technical School – $2,000 per year until certification is reached for a maximum of two years, whichever occurs first.

For complete 2010 Scholarship Competition Guidelines, visit www.goiam.org/iamscholarship. NOTE: Completed Application Packets must be postmarked no later than February 26, 2010.

From the Officers of Local Lodges 86, 1123, and 1951, and the Business Reps, Officers & Staff of District 751

Season’s Greetings