



## HVAC Industry Meeting Wrap Up

First and foremost, thank you for your interest in developing the workforce pipeline into the HVAC Industry. We want to thank those who were able to attend the meeting to help our region move in a direction that will hopefully create a buzz and interest around this industry.

We truly appreciated all of the candid comments that were given that laid all truths out on the table. The only way we can move forward in building this pipeline to is to listen to the experts in this industry and help guide the direction of training for the future of this industry. The training providers in this region and state are committed to helping companies find skilled and qualified employees.

The ultimate goal of this group is that the voices of the industry people are heard. So, when you speak, we listen! A success story of partnerships like this can be found between West AlabamaWorks and Mercedes. They prove we can overcome large challenges. They began an Automotive Supplier Industry Cluster, and one of their burning issues discovered during the conversation was related to logistics and a need for training. As a result of that meeting, they were able to deliver a solution for logistics training and implement it within one year.

We wanted to take just a few minutes of your time to wrap-up the talking points from the meeting we had on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Top 5 Concerns:**

1. Soft/Employability Skills
2. Lack of Skilled Pipeline of Workers – People aren't interested in HVAC Careers
3. Lack of High School CTE Programs
  - a. Drafting, Blueprint reading, and Measurement skills
4. Perception of Career/Awareness of Career Opportunities
  - a. "What's in it for me?"
5. Train the Trainee
  - a. Lack of transition of knowledge from skilled employees to new employees

### **Top 5 Solutions:**

1. Have company involvement in the High School and Community College Classrooms (Wallace-Dothan (Joe Johnson) & LBW-MacArthur Campus [Opp] (Jimmy Hutto)
  - a. Join Advisory Committees for HS and Community College programs
2. AIDT Ready to Work at Community Colleges for Soft Skills – Wallace & LBW
  - a. Some high schools are beginning to offer this program
3. EITP Grants for Short-Term Training Programs for HVAC Companies
  - a. Grants held through Community College & Workforce Funds
4. Develop Apprenticeships, Internships, and Co-Ops
  - a. Enroll as a Registered Apprenticeship program via USDOL and Apprenticeship Alabama

### **Other Points of Discussion:**

- **Driving Record** – Most companies require their installers and technicians to be able to drive a company truck which will require a clean driving record. Some of the most qualified applicants in the past have not been hired simply due to a driving issue.
- The **path of success in the industry:** installer, service repair, technician, team leader
  - So often, new employees want to jump right into technician status and never work their way through the pipeline of progress
- **Industrial Installers** are a huge need currently. Biggest skillset need is measurement and sheet metal skills

### **Other Potential Solutions:**

- **Review AlabamaWorks Workforce Training Resource Guide** for many options you can utilize.
- Work with **Apprenticeship Alabama** to enroll company as a Registered Apprentice Company.
  - Follow up with Mr. Joe Johnson (jjohnson@wallace.edu) of Wallace and Mr. Jimmy (jhutto@lbwcc.edu) Hutto of LBW to find potential apprentices that are currently enrolled in their HVAC Programs.
- **Work with Southeast AlabamaWorks** to get involved with **High School Career Tech Programs** to hopefully get Construction Programs started, which will have a course related to HVAC. Other courses would lend students' knowledge of electrical, wiring, and basic carpentry skills.
  - Enterprise High School is committed to starting an HVAC program in Spring 2018. They are in search of an instructor! If you are aware of anyone that would be a good fit, please let us know.
- **Utilize Career Coaches in K-12** - <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/cg/Pages/coaches-map.aspx?County=Houston>
  - Career Coaches can steer kids interested in truck driving to the military because they can get the training there for free and will learn other positive skills. Since there is the gap between them being eligible to drive they have to have meaningful work in the interim, so they do not get in trouble. There are no current Class A truck driving programs in high school's due to age, but a Class B program can be implemented rather easily, which would complement the training in high school now, which is more mechanical and automotive and could lead students to your companies for future driving opportunities.
- **Career Centers** - <http://southeastalabamaworks.com/career-centers/>
  - Utilize the individuals and program resources the career centers can offer.
  - Consider an increase in the amount invested for Individual Training Accounts (Scholarships) from \$3,500 to \$5,000, with wrap around services, to compete with the North Florida Career Centers.
- Engage in **Leadership Management Program with AIDT**
  - Bobby Jon Drinkard, Project Manager for AIDT, can help set up and provide the services.
    - AIDT's Leadership Skills I and II programs are two-day courses that focus on basic skills that all leaders need to be effective. Both of these programs have comprehensive tests following the programs that offer the credentials of "AIDT Certified Leader I" and "AIDT Certified Leader II" if the minimum score is achieved.
      - Leadership Skills I major topics include roles and responsibilities, communication, motivation, and teamwork.
      - The Leadership Skills II program builds on concepts discussed in the first program, including personality assessment, conflict management, and ethics. A student must have completed LSI before taking LSII.
    - For more information, please go here: <http://www.aidt.edu/aidt-leadership-development-information/>

- **Train the Trainee** – Invest in programs of training within the company where experienced, veteran leaders take the time to invest and train new employees. This is time and cost intensive, but it's worth the value in creating a long-term skilled employee. Even offer financial and time off incentives to the leaders.

### **Conclusion**

We are at a crucial time for the HVAC industry, and the iron is hot on many levels, so let's strike! Workforce development leaders all over the state are working to rebuild the skilled labor, "blue collar" pipelines that have been crumbling over the past several years. Southeast AlabamaWorks and all our partners are here to help every company and work towards finding solutions.

We cannot do this alone, it will take effort, and more importantly time, on all of our parts. We need company leaders to lead the way as experts to help guide the decisions that are being made on all levels. **Every seat at the table is open! Will you take yours?**