



## **Livonia-based Storch Products supports MIAT with New machinery, internship opportunities and welding technology classroom**

Storch Products has expanded its financial and operational support to MIAT College of Technology in Canton with a \$15,000 press brake that was delivered to the school in June. This is the latest example of Storch supporting the ongoing training of skilled trade and manufacturing talent in the Metro Detroit area and why the magnet manufacturer and distributor is an industry leader in welding technology.

Its President Matt Carr became an Advisory Board Member for MIAT's Michigan location in 2019. Since then, he and the Storch ownership group have provided a wealth of fabrication support and experience to MIAT and its more than 100-plus students in the Welding Technology Program.

One of the main benefits of Storch working with MIAT is a level of collaboration that is extremely beneficial to both parties. MIAT students can apply for jobs and internships at the Livonia manufacturer, but they are also learning both technical and career skills from Storch's association with MIAT. Carr has already scheduled tours of Storch's plant for MIAT students and hopes his team can serve as a bit of a mentorship role.

Storch uses experienced welders to help make its industry-leading industrial magnetic products, such as magnetic conveyors, and SuperMag a massive magnet used for the collection of hazardous metal debris also known as FOD for Military and Defense. Carr himself began his career as a welder and admits that this skilled trade remains close to his heart.

"We recognize that welding and other skilled trades have not always been seen as a desirable career," Carr said. "We are going to help change that, not only to help MIAT but to help us and manufacturers like us be able to benefit from talented young men and women who see the financial benefits of a welding career along with a sense of accomplishment through tangible work."

The six-foot long digital press brake that Storch donated via a \$1 lease to MIAT can bend flat sheet metal into 3D parts and allows students to participate in the computerized bending of metal, Carr said. Having additional types of specialty skills like press brake knowledge in addition to welding positions these students as highly valuable professionals straight out of the MIAT program.

"The goal is to help students build a solid foundation of fabrication and life skills that go well beyond the weld table," Carr said. "MIAT graduates need to be ready to navigate finding their niche and make an immediate impact in their field of choice due to worker shortages. If Storch can aid in that process, then we all win."

The Welding Technology Program in Canton, began in late 2019 after receiving both accreditation and Department of Education approval, according to MIAT President Jennifer Paugh. From the inception of the Welding Technology program, MIAT had to limit enrollment in the program based on the number of available booths at its Canton campus. As the months have progressed, MIAT has been able to increase its booth numbers, session offerings, and instructor pool to meet the rising interest in the program.

"As quickly as someone graduates the program, another student often replaces their spot in the available welding booth," Paugh said. "This program has become popular for a variety of reasons, but, ultimately, I believe what makes it incredibly attractive is the shortness of the program and the ability to enter the diploma program and, in a matter of as little as nine months, have the training necessary to step into this field confidently."

One of the messages that both Carr and MIAT are trying to communicate to the consumer audience is the potential that a career in welding offers. With a nationwide shortage, the opportunities for advancement are significant. Plus, Carr contends that employers looking to fill open positions can get more creative in their recruiting efforts.

"I'm not sure there is as much of a shortage in workers as there is in creativity to the approach of attracting top talent. Too many employers spend time complaining about the younger generations work ethics or the loss of trade schools rather than rolling up their sleeves and diving in to help. We too once fell into that category. Working directly with MIAT, we found an additional new source for talented welders and graduates skilled in other trades."

Paugh agrees that the market for welders is particularly strong given what MIAT is hearing from other employers.

"The possibilities for a welder who is motivated could be endless," Paugh said. "Even looking at the other programs that we offer with welding components imbedded in them, such as aviation maintenance or energy, you can see the range of possible directions a welder would be able to go dependent on their interest."

Carr is excited about MIAT's ability to quickly advance its curriculum staying current with market demands. He feels there is a sincere level of interest to provide students with the most modern, robust education available to meet the needs of today's manufacturers.

"They can make a decision and implement change quickly to follow market demands and trends which is exciting," Carr said. "Having this type of relationship is a game-changer for us and is giving us a stream of candidates for our own business."

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