

Hello, I'm Andy Wohlrab from W.M. Sprinkman Manufacturing,

W.M. Sprinkman has been in business since 1929 and is family owned business. We have 57 employees in our Elroy facility which is primarily manufacturing and some field service. We are an ASME certified shop, and use local vendors for some of our parts that are made with water-jet cutting technology, C&C lathes and mills, and laser welded jacketing. This installed on our tanks for heating and cooling. Another 63 employees in our Franksville office and shop, they manufacture tanks, re-build used tanks and install systems in the field. The systems include miles of stainless tubing, valves and automation to move both product and clean in place solutions for cleaning the tanks and lines.

When Sprinkman purchased Winchell Welding here in Elroy in 2000 there were 12 employees between the shop and office. Two expansions later and now we are at 57 employees and would like to hire 15 more. We are not the only stainless steel welding shop that is busy so finding experienced help is hard to do. We are in the planning stages of adding another building in Elroy so that we can keep more of the projects in house instead of sub-contracting some parts or complete tanks. When this expansion takes place we hope to add another 15 employees. We have orders that keep us busy into May and some work sold beyond that. Our employees have the opportunity to work 55 hrs a week and have been able to for over a year.

We serve 2 main categories of industries.

- They are Dairy which revolves around milk, cheese, ice-cream and yogurt. Our last 5 years have had a focus with the Greek yogurt market. Some of our customers from WI are Schreiber Foods, Kwik Trip, Grande, Organic Valley, Land o Lakes, and Foremost Farms to name a few. These are 50 gallon to 10,000 gallon tanks and processors.
- Our main business at this time is craft breweries. We custom build tanks to fit our customer's needs. They range from 2 bbl to 635 bbl. Just to put these in prospective a 635 bbl tank holds 20320 gallons of beer almost the same as 4 semi tankers. We build complete systems for all over the u.s and have 2 systems in Maui. A 100 bbl brew house will be made next year for Capital brewing; some of our other customers in the state are Point brewery, WI Brewing, New Glarus, Ale Asylum, Milwaukee and Lakefront Brewing. We bring our experience from the Dairy tanks to the table to offer our customers a system that will make the same batch of beer time after time, and clean ability that goes above and beyond what our customers expect.

I was the shop foreman for 5 years and we split my responsibilities earlier this year. Now I'm taking the time to work on projects like this one and going to schools to help with welding classes and talking with the students about jobs in the area that they may be interested in and don't know exist.

Our plan for expanding our work force has been hiring experienced help and graduating students. We talked about starting a work-study program 5 years ago and now regret not starting it then. Now I'm contacting our local high schools to offer my experience in teaching these students welding techniques and talking with them about jobs in our communities. I don't just talk about our business but give the students some knowledge of companies in our area that they may want to work at after high school.

You may think we only hire welders when in fact we have many jobs in both the shop and office. We hire grinders/polishers, welders, fabricators, maintenance and material handler. In the office we have many different job opportunities. There is secretarial, accounting, drafting, engineering, project engineers, estimating, and material specialist. The office openings aren't as common as the shop jobs as we have very little employee turnover. We have a field service crew that travels to make on site repairs. I don't have a set speech for the students. I normally start out talking about our business and what we do then move on to questions that the students have. After that we move to the shop and I help the students with some welding techniques. I prefer Tungsten Inert Gas welding as 85-90% of our welding is done with a tig welder. I find it is easier to start them with a tig weld without wire to show them the puddle they are looking for. We also use some mig welding in our shop. Being a stainless steel welding shop our shop is very clean and well lit. I look forward to talking with the students. During these times I focus on work ethics. Both in being at work and on time, staying off their cell phones, having an eye for quality is a plus.

Out of necessity we hire inexperienced employees and train them with our methods and work them up the ladder. There are added costs to train them. They may start as a grinder and move to a polisher, from that move to welding and eventually to fabricating. We also have Leadmen in the shop and there are opportunities to advance. Field service jobs have a lead person in charge and give a good opportunity to develop leadership and communication skills with their coworkers and our customers.

We want to work with the local high schools and set up a work study or school to work program. In a perfect world I'd like to see 1-2 students from each of the 5 local schools. They are Royal, Mauston, New Lisbon, Hillsboro and Wonewoc. I look at attendance, grades, and a recommendation from the instructor to hire these students. We start the employees out on a 90 day evaluation schedule. We can tell by then if they have the potential to be an asset to the company.

I'm requesting some guidance in developing a formal program or examples where this type of program has worked well in other communities. Or if there is any cost share funding available for this type of program.

Thank-you for your time