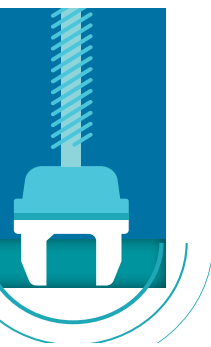


2015 Top Manufacturers

IN THE NORTH BAY

CATEGORY: MIKE HAUSER MANUFACTURING LEADERSHIP AWARD



Datum's Hunt honored for apprentice program

'It has always been my personal passion' to train the next generation

BY GARY QUACKENBUSH
SPECIAL TO THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

SANTA ROSA - The 2015 Mike Hauser Manufacturing Leadership Award is being presented to Richard Hunt, president of Datum Technologies, for his role in creating the four-year Machinist Apprenticeship training program 23 years ago that has resulted in 150 graduates to date.

Many of these graduates are now working in high-level positions at various manufacturing companies throughout Sonoma County. Currently, there are 45 apprentices enrolled in the program and more will be recruited for classes beginning this fall. Average salaries for seasoned journeymen machinists coming from this apprenticeship who are working in the industry today has approached or exceeded six figures.

Hunt spent 16 years working in management at HP and has been involved directly or indirectly in the trade for almost 50 years. He is also chairman of the seven-member board of directors of what is known today as the California Tooling and Machining Apprenticeship Association (CTMAA).

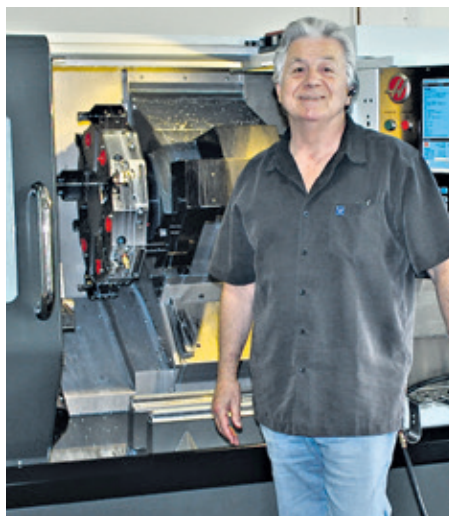
This board consists of local executives, representatives from SRJC and manufacturing company owners. The board acts as a steering committee involved in curriculum development, the hiring of apprentice instructors, performing apprentice evaluations each semester and in conducting annual graduation ceremonies.

"The mission of the CTMAA is to help local manufacturers attract, hire and develop highly skilled and certified machinists, tool makers and CNC operators who contribute to the success of their businesses, as well as to train next generation machinists," Hunt explained.

"Our vision is to be the prime-mover and source of both technical and vocational assistance to bridge the gaps between the school systems, employers and deserving young people who are willing and able to fully participate in the apprenticeship program."

In 1993 five founding members came together to form this apprenticeship, including Pete Johnson of HP, Rudy Hirschnitz of QME, Bob Levinson with Sonoma Precision, Anne Galvin (Galvin Precision) and Hunt, who at the time was with Aspen Precision Technologies.

"Collectively, we recognized that there was a serious lack of qualified machinists to support the growing needs of Sonoma County manufacturers, so we came together and developed a strategic plan to train machinist apprentices in Santa Rosa," Hunt said.



GARY QUACKENBUSH FOR THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Richard Hunt, principal with Datum Technologies, Santa Rosa

"We began by partnering with the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the National Tooling and Machinist Association (NTMA). Hewlett Packard graciously offered their training facilities to us at their Fountaingrove site."

The first apprenticeship instructor was Richard Vera, who was also an educator at SRJC. In addition to teaching in the apprenticeship program, Dan Sunia was hired as the Petaluma High School Machine Tool Technology teacher in 2001, an event that started the long-standing relationship with the Petaluma Adult School.

In October 2001, the Sonoma County group spun off from the NTMA San Francisco Bay Chapter and became the California North Bay Chapter of the NTMA (CNBC) with a separate Unilateral Apprenticeship Committee serving the five North Bay counties of Sonoma, Marin, Napa, Solano and Mendocino.

That year, classroom instruction and training was moved from HP to the Petaluma High School shop. In coming years, this shop was upgraded with new CNC equipment from HAAS Automation (lathe and mill) and new engine lathes were added. Local manufacturers have donated support equipment that has increased the training center's capabilities. This shop is recognized as a HAAS Technical Education Center and has received many accolades as one of the best high school machine shop programs in California, according to Hunt.

In 2009, this program was restructured as a 501c 6 Non-Profit Unilateral Apprenticeship Program and the name was changed to the California Tooling and Machining Apprenticeship Association (CTMAA). The CTMAA's relationship with the California Department of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) continues to evolve. The next step was to expand this program to 10 counties working in partnership with

Laney College, Chabot College, DeAnza College and the Santa Rosa Junior College.

Today there are six apprenticeship categories (machinist, mold maker, tool and die maker, CNC machinist, maintenance machinist and CNC machine technician). The four-year program consists of 576 hours of related and supplemental instruction, classroom instruction and 8,000 hours of on-the-job training with a sponsoring company.

At the completion of the four years, the graduating apprentices receive journeyman certificates in their respective apprenticeship categories from the California Division of Apprenticeships, and a certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeships. Furthermore, apprentices receive National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) accreditation for machining projects competed during their tenure in the program.

The Department of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) has recognized the CTMAA apprenticeship program as the "standard" for machinist apprenticeship training and has asked the CTMAA to expand its program into 46 California counties.

"We have been working on the expansion plan for over a year with the goal of creating a franchise model that would allow the CTMAA to establish regional sub-chapters under its broad umbrella," Hunt added. "Eventually we would like to move the program from Petaluma High School to the SRJC campus. We're witnessing a resurgence in on-shoring of work that has previously been sent overseas. We still need skilled tradesmen to do what machinists do and to help re-establish the made-in-America label on our products."

Hunt has been a small business and manufacturing company owner in Sonoma County for almost 25 years. During his career and personal involvement with the CTMAA his company has sponsored more than 10 apprentices. At Datum Technologies, four current employees have either completed the apprenticeship or are still in the program. Datum's shop supervisor and shop leadman are CTMAA alumni and the company's manufacturing engineer was a program instructor.

"I personally served in a machinist apprenticeship in the Norfolk, Virginia, shipyards. My father and brother were also machinists," Hunt recalled. "While many go to college only a few get a degree or work in their degree fields. I always remember the advice my father gave me as a young man. 'Son, you need to get yourself a skilled trade. Once you have it, no one can ever take it away from you and you will always have the ability to get a job and have a career.' It has always been my personal passion and philosophy to pass this advice on and to be involved with training the next generation."