

Madeleine Meier

Recently, the I86 Innovation Corridor of the Southern Tier partnered with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) to develop a Strategic Workforce Action Plan for our region. Based on data and the opinions of business leaders in our region, there is a threatening shortage of workers to fill trade positions at many companies, specifically that of manufacturing. This is a huge problem, considering that our regional economy is primarily supported by manufacturing plants such as Howell or Hilliard. These trade positions, such as machining or welding, are undoubtedly less coveted in contemporary society; however, this is unreasonably so. In mid-October, a meeting involving business leaders of the region and consultants from CAEL was held to discuss why.

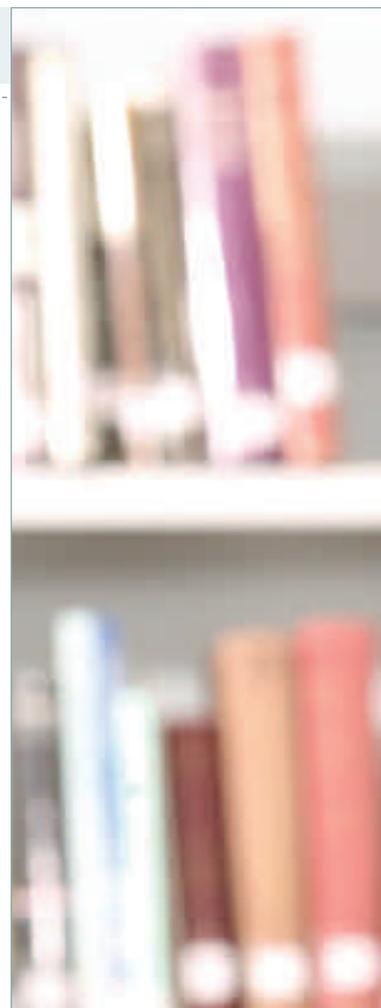
Common misconceptions surrounding trade positions, specifically machining, are the low wages and the dingy conditions. However, studies tend to disprove these conceptions. In fact, contemporary machining demands a highly trained individual who will earn upwards of \$70,000 a year and work in very safe and professional environments. Yet, almost all students believe a college education in preparation for a professional career is the ultimate goal; if a student does not achieve this goal then success is not attained. The truth of the matter is that college is not for everyone, despite the opinions that many administrative adults drill into the heads of students everywhere. A two-year trade school education should be more than sufficient in securing a successful and happy career path for those students who are not quite cut out for college. Not to mention that our community needs people of this character more than ever.

This is the “trade school mindset” that CAEL consultants will bring to our region in order to improve workforce development. With only eight students currently enrolled in Corning Community College’s machining program, there is no doubt that a pipeline for trade workers into our region is needed. A schedule was designed at the meeting in mid-October that outlines the existing plan for the CAEL consultants. In collaboration with regional business leaders, the consultants will plan to expand the workforce source for their companies.

Finding the root cause of the workforce shortage will depend on the “Five Whys” activity discussed at the meeting:

Our community has a shortage of skilled machinists. Why? The training program participation is inadequate. Why? There are not enough students enrolled. Why? Prospective students do not see a future career path for themselves in machining. Why? Guidance counselors, parents and society demean manufacturing? Why? They operate off an out of date mindset. Why? You are a failure if you do not go to college and manufacturing is dirty, dangerous, dull.

With strategic planning and careful analysis, CAEL should be able to revive our region to the thriving economy it once was.



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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PRESIDENT TRUMP'S TAX PLAN

Rocco Scarselletta

As President Trump nears the end of his first year in office, we have seen him take action on many pressing issues such as healthcare and immigration. This week however, president Trump and house republicans unveiled a much anticipated tax plan. President Trump had promised on the campaign trail that tax reform was at the top of his list of priorities and now he is coming through on that promise. President Trump's tax plan is a massive overhaul of former president Barack Obama's plan, but what makes up this new tax plan? Who does it benefit and who does it hinder? What is a tax plan? This article's purpose is to answer all of those questions and many more.

A tax plan is a plan that is usually outlined by the president and made into a bill by congressional lawmakers and details how people and businesses will be taxed. As with most presidents, president Trump has promised tax reform. His way of achieving these reforms is through this tax plan. To start, let's analyze the supposed "winners and losers" of Trump's new plan. The first big winners of Trump's tax overhaul are corporations with high tax rates. If put into effect, the plan would slash big corporations' tax rates by 15%. This would cause the current tax rate from 35% down to 20%. Also, small businesses would have their tax rate decreased to 25%. This is beneficial for two reasons, the first being that it boosts the profits of these companies. The second reason that this cut is beneficial is that it incentivizes businesses to keep their factories in America. This helps boost our economy which leads to nothing but good for the average consumer. One of Trump's sticking points during his campaign was that he would make sure businesses operated in the U.S rather than abroad, and this plan would help Mr. Trump keep that promise. Another group that will benefit from this plan is those citizens who are the heirs to large estates. They benefit from this plan because the plan eliminates the so-called "death tax", or estate tax. This controversial tax is a tax on the property that is transferred after a person dies. Trump's tax plan also benefits high income families and low income families. The plan includes many tax cuts and the elimination of the Alterna-

tive Minimum Tax, a supplemental income tax that is meant to offset benefits high income households could receive. The plan benefits low income households because it doubles the current deduction, thus greatly reducing the amount of income that the government takes.

The "losers" of Trump's tax reform plan include taxpayers in high-tax states and the national debt. How are these groups hurt by



the plan? Well, citizens in high-tax states feel the negative effects of this plan because it eliminates state and local tax deductions, which means people in these high-tax states lose out on the write-off. A write-off is a reduction of somethings' recognized value. This elimination of state and local tax deductions will affect taxpayers in states such as New York and California. Many congressional republicans warned that they will reject the plan if this is not revised. The national debt is projected to skyrocket if this plan is passed, as the plan outlines tax cuts totalling roughly 2.4 trillion dollars. With the debt already soaring to inconceivable heights, many would argue that adding more money on top of this already monumental debt is not a positive. Another possible group of "losers" are those who are on social programs such as welfare. If the plan is passed, the government may have to decrease spending in this area in order to subsidize areas that will be taking hits from all the tax cuts.

In summary, Trump's new tax plan has both positive and negative aspects when looked at objectively. It will be interesting to see if this plan makes it through a sharply divided house and senate, both of which have failed to compromise on other issues this year.

WEST ELMIRA ZONING BOARD DENIES OF MONASTERY TO CONTROVERSIAL BUYERS

Mary Zwirko

Over the past few months, Elmira residents have voiced their concerns to the town zoning board regarding the potential sale of the Dominican monastery on Church Street to a controversial buyer out of New York City. The buyer, Rabbi Sroya Sorcher of the Bronx Jewish Boys, claimed he wanted to purchase the property for use as a Jewish place of study and worship. Citizens were skeptical of the project due to the Rabbi's criminal past supported by evidence from the New York City Department of Buildings which included violations, fines and jail time. Rabbi Sorcher said in an interview, "Our primary target would be the college campuses that have young men and women that are interested in furthering their Jewish studies." However, his company has a history of using spaces which were intended to be dormitories for the homeless. On October 24th, the West Elmira Zoning Board voted to deny the variance which would have allowed the purchase of the property. Although the residents got their desired outcome for now, the Rabbi's organization still has the option to appeal the decision to the state supreme court.

STUDENT OPINION

"Do you think the Bronx Jewish boys program in West Elmira would be damaging or beneficial to our community?"

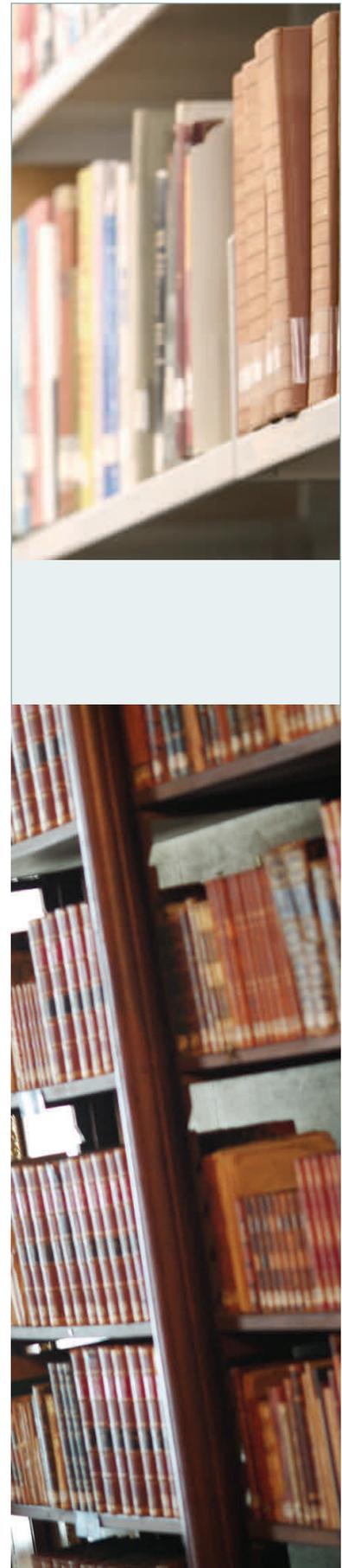
9th grade: I believe that it could be either depending on who is running it and what they are doing. - Alex Welliver

10th grade: I believe that it would be damaging to our community, especially West Elmira, as there are many families living right next to and in the area where the building is located. Putting at risk people in the middle of a highly functioning community would most likely hurt the citizens already residing there. -Olivia Murray

11th grade: I think it could be beneficial as long as the patients are surveilled with great care. Elmira is in dire need of a facility like this. -Rocco Scarselletta

12th grade: if the organization strictly stays a center for cultural and religious education, as it is said to be, the outcome would be very beneficial. However, if it begins to flourish into a high needs shelter questions within the community will arise asking if it will bring more crime and poverty to our already disparaged town.-Collin Edger

Poll conducted by Catherine Craig



COUNTY TO ENTER INTO DEAL WITH GRAVITY RENEWABLES

Andrew Finnerty

At the Chemung County Legislature meeting on October 23, three presentations were given before the panel of county legislators, who then placed a vote on several resolution and authorization requests. One such authorization request was to allow Hydroelectric Utility Remote Metering with Gravity Renewables. Unless one is well versed in the field of Hydroelectric Utility, those words most likely do not mean much. In essence, a private company by the name of “Gravity Renewables” was requesting that Chemung County would partner with the company and help run a hydroelectric plant located in Seneca Falls. The plant that has been in continuous operation since 1915 essentially converts water into energy at an incredibly high “energy conversion efficiency” rate of 75%, and has three full time employees. Gravity Renewables acquired this plant in 2016 and needs the partnership of Chemung County because the plant falls under the jurisdiction of Chemung. This is one of the few plants to be eligible for a partnership like this because the plant was owned and operated privately prior to a change in state legislation and has been “grandfathered” into eligibility. Gravity Renewables would oversee the operation of the plant and the County would only be involved indirectly. The agreement between the County and Gravity Renewables stands for 20 years and is projected to save the County about \$200,000 annually in energy. This is able to work because the plant will generate energy in the form of Kilowatt Hours (kWh) that will cost about 9 cents/kWh, and the county will in turn get back 10-12 cents/kWh that is taken off of the electric bill. So the money being saved is not necessarily tangible, but is in the form of energy. The 20 year agreement has a five year extension possibility if both parties are happy with the agreement at the end of the 20 years. The agreement also has an “out clause” for the County at any time where if the County is not happy with the way the plant is running, they can end this agreement; this however is very unlikely to happen due to the projected success of the plant, and well as past successes of other plants. It will be interesting to see how the plant runs in the next few years and how much money the county will save because of this partnership.

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