



Theodore Roosevelt High School
Wood Products Technology
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Kent, Ohio 44240
A WoodLINKS USA site

Wood Products Technology Goes International



Kent, Ohio- What do the students in the Wood Products Technology & Cabinetry Program have in common with Finland? Hint: it is not the bitter cold, lack of daylight during the winter months, nor ice swimming. It is a partnership with Mirka Abrasives and the national headquarters located in Twinsburg, Ohio not far from the Roosevelt campus.

“Mirka, a Finnish based company, has 13

regions around the world. The North American region’s main office is here” explained Pete Kern to WPT students on a recent field trip.

During the visit, students were able to not only hear but also see the commitment that Mirka has made internationally to conduct business in a responsible and cost effective manner. Students were treated to a slide show that focused on the diversity of the parent company (KWH) and how logistics is one part that plays a role in the overall business. Senior, Nicole Clark, said “When I found out how Mirka fit in with KWH it said a lot to me about how Mirka gets things done.” Classmate, Jacob Roddie, added “...I was impressed with the fact KWH is in to different industries outside of the abrasive manufacturing world, like the plastic pipe division.”

“The purpose of the recent field trip was threefold in that I wanted to introduce students to yet another local company that supports their program, wants them to succeed in their plans for the industry, as well as demonstrate to students the concepts of manufacturing they had been studying” explained WPT instructor Troy Spear. Not only did the students acquire that information but they also were introduced to yet another employment opportunity. Senior, Mark Spence said “after meeting Matt Hicks, VP of Sales for the U.S., and Mike Gulley, Product

Manager for Abrasives Systems, as well as working with Mr. Kern, it is almost like we have a foot in the door for employment.”

Students saw first-hand the commitment Mirka has to technology even locally, by touring the facilities warehouse. There, they witnessed the automated forklifts that were kept centered in the aisles by a laser guided system. “I thought it was cool how whenever a forklift entered an aisle or section the lights were motion activated and would automatically turn on” explained Avery Quesenberry, a junior in the program.

When asked how such a partnership was forged, Spear answered “I first met Pete at the Fall Tool Sale at Hartville Hardware two years ago. We exchanged business cards and ran into each other again in the spring at the same show and talked some more. Pete



volunteered to come to the school and do a presentation which I had him do last year with the first class of WPT students. This year we talked even before school started and were able to set up this field trip. I can only thank both Pete and Mirka USA for the support of both my students and program they have lent it in such a short time.”

Students were also given a hands-on opportunity in the testing lab. All students were able to work a Mirka[®] CEROS sander. This revolutionary sander is DC powered and was connected to an integrated vacuum system. “While I know I wouldn’t use a sander this way, Mr. Kern put all his weight on the sander to show how powerful it was. It didn’t even bog down. It just kept sanding” Roddie said. He quickly added that “I told Mr. Spear we need to get one of these for us to use at school! It was so nice to use as it didn’t vibrate at all.”

At the conclusion of the field trip, the WPT students were informed that they would have the opportunity to work with Mirka products in the future at school as products were donated for students to sand both bare wood, solid surface as well as finishes. Students are looking forward to working with Kern and another rep from the finishing industry later on in the semester in a hands-on workshop.