



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three photos are attached.

Caption is provided below the release.

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Trainee program at Baker College
helps manufacturers 'grow own employees;' info meeting March 1

State funds available for employers who sponsor students

CADILLAC, Mich. – Northern Michigan manufacturers in need of additional high tech talent are invited to a March 1 informational meeting about an innovative training program offered by Baker College and administered by the State of Michigan Talent Investment Agency (TIA), according to Mark Lagerwey, director of extension programs and services for Baker College of Cadillac.

“Manufacturers can essentially ‘grow their own’ employees through this program,” he said. “After a three-year school-work rotation by the student, the sponsoring manufacturer gains a well-trained and known employee with the state providing grants to defray the costs.”

The program trains students to become mechatronics technicians, responsible for the maintenance of integrated automation production systems. It is part of the Michigan Advanced Technician Training (MAT²) Program, an early initiative of Gov. Rick Snyder based on the German model of an apprenticeship that blends a traditional classroom setting with on-the-job training.

The employer’s sponsorship includes the associate program tuition, which may qualify for a MAT² tuition reimbursement grant if the sponsor registers the MAT² employee with the Department of Labor apprenticeship registry.

The March 1 informational meeting is 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Baker College Center for Transportation Technology, 4800 S. Morey Road, Lake City. Reservations are required because lunch will be provided.

Speakers include MAT² program state leaders Sammie Lukaskiewicz, deputy director, marketing and strategy with the Michigan Department of Talent and Economic Development, and, from the State of Michigan Workforce Development Agency, Valerie Jemerson, MAT² specialist, and Mary Lynn Noah, industry talent project manager.

Attendees will also hear from employers and students who have been involved in the Northern Michigan program and Terry Vandercook, director of operations for Northwest Michigan Works!

The deadline for manufacturers to sponsor one or more students in the third cohort is Wednesday, March 15. Lagerwey said that 13 companies are already sponsoring 22 students in the Baker College program. The first cohort will graduate spring 2018.

“Throughout the state, manufacturers are facing a tight labor market because of a widening skills gap and an aging workforce,” Lagerwey said. “Both negatively impact businesses in Northern Michigan. MAT² allows employers to create a pipeline of talent uniquely qualified for their businesses.

Employers can sponsor their own employees or select students who have applied to the program. The students attend college and work at the sponsoring companies in recurring eight- and 16-week intervals for three years. At graduation, the students will have earned an associate degree in mechatronics and are committed to stay with their sponsoring employer for two years.

Baker College’s Cadillac campus is the only Northern Michigan school to offer the MAT² mechatronics program. Two colleges offer it in the Detroit area.

For more information about the MAT² mechatronics program, contact Joshua Fenner at 231.876.3032 or joshua.fenner@baker.edu or visit www.baker.edu.

The largest private college in Michigan, Baker College is a not-for-profit higher education institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Founded in 1911, Baker College grants doctoral, master’s, bachelor’s and associate degrees, as well as

certificates in diverse academic fields including applied technology, business, education, engineering, health science, information technology and social science. Baker College has on-ground campuses throughout Michigan and offers online programs that can be completed 100 percent online without ever visiting a campus. In 2016, the Online Learning Consortium recognized Baker College Online with the OLC Quality Scorecard Exemplary Endorsement, the highest ranking for online higher education programs. For information, visit www.baker.edu or follow Baker College on Twitter, @bakercollege, or on Facebook, www.facebook.com/bakercollege.

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Caption for three photos

Baker-MAT2 1-3 jpegs - Baker College students in the apprenticeship-eligible mechatronics associate program learn electrical, mechanical and electronic skills used in manufacturing. Tuition is paid by sponsoring manufacturers that provide employment for the students while attending college and upon graduation.