

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Carmeuse Lime & Stone Trains 43 Thanks to Skilled Trades Training Award**

Carmeuse Lime & Stone in Rogers City Michigan is the largest limestone quarry in the world. They work closely with Michigan Works! conducting Talent Tours, participating in National Manufacturer's Day, and attending Career Expo's for middle and high school students from the surrounding communities. In 2017, Carmeuse was recognized as Region 3's Employer of the Year, and is dedicated growing their business and supporting the Northeast Region.

For the past 100 years, CLS Calcite Operation has been and continues to be one of the largest and most competitive employers in northeast Michigan. In order to maintain their place within the lime and limestone industry, they need to be sure that they are sustainable by not only operating their existing locations in the most efficient ways possible, but by also investing in them and their employees. Carmeuse realizes that it is vital that they provide their employees with on-going training, not only to benefit the company as they develop and expand, but to also ensure that they have highly qualified and skilled employees available to keep their plant running and operating at maximum efficiency.. Over half of Carmeuse's workforce of 120+ employees has less than 8 years' experience on the job. They rely heavily on their On-the-Job training guides and on-going, external training opportunities to help develop these individuals as quickly as possible. The rebounding economy, low unemployment rate, and increased competition amongst similar industries has made recruiting individuals with the required skillsets and/or experiences increasingly difficult. As a result of difficult recruiting efforts, Carmeuse often looks for individuals who are "trainable" and a good "fit" so that they can develop them after they've been hired. While Carmeuse is committed to developing and training their employees, they find that professional and condensed training programs are costly. Through past STTF funding, Carmeuse has been able to put a large majority of their workforce through welding courses and other basic training. In 2018, they sought additional STTF funding, with hopes to be able to expand to the next level of training and offer additional, more specific, technical/maintenance trainings.

With help from Michigan Works!, Carmeuse was able to secure \$33,840 in STTF awards in 2018. They utilized these funds to train 23 existing employees and hire 20 new employees, including 1 veteran. The average wage for the new hires was \$19.41/hr. Carmeuse values STTF funding, stating these grants make it possible for them to capitalize on a larger number of training opportunities that may otherwise be delayed or non-existent.

Carmeuse HR Generalist Erika Comerford reports, "There is an increased demand for employees who have not only a certain level of skillset, but also applicable work experience, a good work ethic, and motivation. With the shortages in the labor market and high demand for skilled trades, recruiting based on skillset has become increasingly difficult. With having funding and programs in place like STTF to be able to train employees to our specific line of work, we're able to focus our recruiting more-so on drive and motivation, and less on skillset. This approach allows us to be able to secure employees like Isaac who is proof that with the right attitude and willingness to learn, can become be a versatile, top-notch employee if given the right opportunities."

Isaac Kowalski was one of the current Carmeuse employees who was able to take the welding course thanks to this year's STTF award. This training enabled him to advance to the next tech level in the millwright group at Carmeuse, resulting in a pay increase and additional job duties.

Isaac states, "It was a good opportunity to get exposure to a lot of different materials and types of welding."

Comerford agrees, "Isaac had an excellent variety of applicable work experience that gave him a great base-line for employment at Carmeuse. Although it was not directly specific to the mining industry, he had knowledge of conveyor systems, and experience in operating equipment. More importantly, however, he drive, motivation, and discipline. Upon hiring in as a full time employee, Isaac took full advantage of the training opportunities available to him. He was able to advance to a tech 1 level in his current position in a year! Although the welding course was not directly applicable to his current position, it has allowed him to advance in tech level/pay in other departments where he's needed which makes him an even more valued and versatile asset within our organization."

*Photo credit Jeffrey Thomas Idalski*

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