

WATR Center Graduates Find Numerous Employment Options

In Aerospace manufacturing, it's always a struggle to find well-trained, qualified employees. One avenue Everett-based Jamco America, a Commercial Aircraft Interiors company, has taken is to turn to the Washington Aerospace Training & Research Center (WATR) to hire top-quality aerospace employees.

"We are very pleased with the skills our WATR personnel have been able to display," said Mike Rayner, Jamco America director of Operations. "We currently have WATR graduates on our staff, and they have all shown good comprehension for the work, as well as the importance of quality being a big part of what they do." Shawn Panek, manager of Aircraft Modification Manufacturing, shared that he believes WATR Center schooling makes it easier to transition to Jamco or anywhere in the aerospace field. "All my employees that have come through the WATR Center are top notch. They're motivated and have great attention to detail and quality," said Panek. "They have been great additions to our team!"

Getting WATR Center graduates to apply and accept employment presents challenges to small and medium-sized manufacturing employers. Often students attend thinking of a career at Boeing. The WATR Center finds that their enrollment fluctuates with Boeing's plans for employment, even though sometimes when employment at Boeing is not available, there are still many employers hiring WATR Center graduates. While Boeing does offer a great career, Jamco America and other employers also offer careers that some employees find to be a better match.

Current WATR graduates at Jamco America

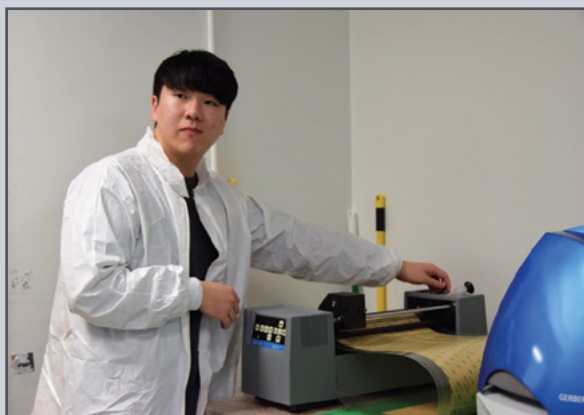
Kyle Hedgecock

Kyle Hedgecock was in construction and between jobs. He took his niece to a career fair at Lake Stevens High where he spoke to a representative who recommended the WATR Center. At WATR, Kyle took Tooling, Quality Assurance, Composites and Electrical and made Honor Roll. Kyle chose Jamco as his best option with a good benefit package and stable environment.



Ki Song

Ki Song wanted to get into aerospace and knew graduates of the WATR Center. Ki did online training followed by hands on Mechanical Assembly, giving him a good foundation. He was employed but searching for a better fit when he saw Jamco on the job site Indeed.com. Ki chose Jamco because it gave him an opportunity to use his skills in a smaller company with a great environment.



Henry Ryu

Almost seven years ago, Henry Ryu wanted to enter the aerospace field, but he found companies were looking for experience he did not yet have. He attended the WATR Center to learn what aerospace companies wanted. WATR teaches skills and tools needed to enter the field with confidence as well as promoting the positive attitude the industry needs and expects.



Jae Yoon

Jae Yoon came to the US from Korea during an economic recession. Despite his experience as an engineer, work was very hard to find. A friend encouraged Jae to go to the WATR Center. It was an opportunity to restart his career by taking Mechanical



Assembly. Jae chose Jamco because of its size, hoping to learn and work his way up. He was hired as an Assembler. Three months later, he transferred to Technician. Five months later he accepted a Flammability Engineer role. Jae sees the WATR Center as a good place to open doors and Jamco as a great place to learn and grow.

About the WATR Center

The WATR Center, managed by Edmonds Community College through an operating agreement with AFA, was created to address the needs of the aerospace industry, according to Larry Cluphf, WATR's executive director. WATR is unique in that it takes just 12 weeks for a person to get trained in specific skills necessary for jobs with suppliers. Besides assembly mechanics, WATR trains people in electrical assembly, tooling, composites, and quality assurance. In addition, they provide customized training for businesses. Currently, the Center works with over 110 aerospace suppliers like Jamco to provide qualified candidates. Since August of 2010, over 1800 graduates are now employed, thanks to the training received at WATR. ▲



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