

- Pressdemocrat.com
- Petaluma360.com
- Santarosamom.com
- Winetravel.com
- PDPreps.com

Search

North Bay Business Journal



Where Good Business Grows

- [Home](#)
- [Lists Online](#)
- [Industry News](#)
 - [Accounting](#)
 - [Banking and Finance](#)
 - [Commercial Real Estate](#)
 - [Construction](#)
 - [Education](#)
 - [Employment](#)
 - [Green](#)
 - [Health Care and Senior Living](#)
 - [Hospitality and Tourism](#)
 - [Insurance](#)
 - [Law](#)
 - [Residential Real Estate](#)
 - [Technology](#)
 - [Wine Industry](#)
- [Events](#)
 - [Upcoming Events](#)
 - [Conference Reports](#)
- [People](#)
- [Photos](#)
- [Commentary](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Contact](#)

September 28th, 2009 04:40am

[Machining apprentice program expanding](#)

By [Loralee Stevens, Business Journal Staff Reporter](#)

 [Print Friendly](#)  [Email a Friend](#)

Dan Sunia, CTMAA president and teacher

Petaluma High boasts top training center; firms sponsor students



Dan Sunia and apprentices view and operate a CNC machine.

PETALUMA – A little-known apprenticeship program that supports a growing machining industry in the North Bay is looking to expand its territory.

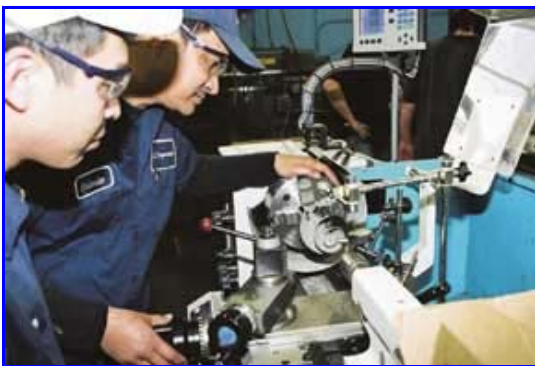
The California Tooling and Machining Apprenticeship Association, operating out of Petaluma High School and serving Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties, is responding to growing demand from machine shops in the East and South Bay, Redding and Sacramento.

“It’s the only apprenticeship program in Northern California,” said association President, CEO and teacher Dan Sunia.

Apprentices are high school graduates that are already employed by North Bay companies, which sponsor them while they spend one night each week earning credentials such as machinist, CNC machinist, mold maker, tool and die maker and maintenance machinist.

“When they complete the program they’ll be commanding salaries that will allow them to head up a household,” said Mr. Sunia.

The most popular credential is CNC machinist. Computer Numeric Control technology is central to the new model of machine shop, which uses computer-aided design and machining technology, software and the Internet to shape metal.



During the first two years, machining association students learn the hands-on basics of cutting and work-holding tools. Then they move into the classroom for advanced applied mathematics, programming, 3-D solid design and the other skills needed by a modern machinist.

“You need to make measurements based on Cartesian coordinates, be able to calculate speeds and feeds, understand overhead and costs,” said Mr. Sunia.

The group boasts cutting edge CNC and CAD/CAM equipment supplied by Haas Automation Inc. The federally credentialed and certified secondary school is also a Haas Technical Education Center, and often a showroom for Haas customers.

“The customers watch young trainees operating the CNC machines, and they’re impressed. It’s fun for students too,” said Mr. Sunia.

The program has been operating for about 15 years, meeting originally in an Agilent Technologies conference room before equipping its own shop at Petaluma High. It was originally a branch of the Maryland-based National Tooling and Machinist Association.

Led locally by Tom Hunt, who, with his wife, Analisa, owns Datum Technology Inc. in Santa Rosa, the chapter decided to go on its own.

In 2008, Mr. Hunt and the chapter board of directors launched the association, with an emphasis on apprenticeships. He passed the helm to Mr. Sunia soon afterward.

“Both Dan and I went through apprenticeship programs, and we want to give back,” said Mr. Hunt.

His long-time plant foreman moved from an operator to his current position after training with the association program, and another young worker is now in his fourth year there.

“When Mike came to work I could see right away he was a candidate. He liked the trade, and he was dedicated to Datum Technology,” said Mr. Hunt.

Employers pay about \$1,500 a year to sponsor an employee, including books and tuition.

An advantage of the program is cross pollination among trainees, according to Mr. Sunia.

“Each comes from a company with different equipment and methods. They share what they know and take back to their companies better ways to do things,” he said.

The association will have its first Web site operating in a month or so. Employers wanting more information can call Dan Sunia at 707-246-4865.

Share and Enjoy:



Tags [Agilent Technologies](#), [CAD/CAM](#), [CNC](#), [CTMAA](#), [Dan Sunio](#), [GCX](#) | Category [Industry News, Technology](#)

[Print Friendly](#) [Email a Friend](#)

[\[Back\]](#)

Comments

2 Comments

1. [September 28th, 2009 2:58 pm](#)

Dan my hat,s off to you you have worked so hard to get this going and it will show results long after you