

Ronald Blisard

Good morning. I am Ron Blisard, Director of Administrative Services at KME Fire Apparatus. I serve as Chairman of the Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board. I am a member of the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board and serve as an Officer on the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board Association.

As the Director of Administrative Services at KME, I am involved in all aspects of personnel from screening applicants to showing some where the door is! KME Corporation is the third largest manufacturer of fire trucks in the United States and

number 3 on the list of the Top 50 Employers in Carbon County. KME employs approximately 800 highly skilled individuals which has a major impact on the local economy.

Finding qualified, trained employees is a constant problem facing the company. Many applicants lack any training in the trades. The demand for welders, electricians and machinists exceeds the current applicant pool and will continue to increase as the incumbent workforce retires and the economy is re-energized.

KME works closely with Carbon Career & Technical Institute to encourage students enrolled in

the trades to look at a career at KME. Internships are offered to students.

I mentioned that I am the Chairman of the Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board. The Board's role is to plan and oversee federal, state and local funding to Workforce Development Programs within a designated area. The Board oversees the CareerLink sites. KME utilizes the services of the CareerLink in Carbon County.

As a member of the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board, I have the opportunity to interact with Board Members from throughout the State. Members are appointed by the Governor and the Board serves as a private sector policy advisor.

I believe my time spent with both Boards is beneficial to my employer and to Carbon County. I have worked at KME for over four decades and have seen many many changes within the workforce.

To meet the changing conditions, companies need to redefine and adopt new technologies and production processes to increase efficiency. KME has participated in the Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership which has provided some funding to retrain our incumbent workforce.

Manufacturing contributes more than any other sector in Pennsylvania's economy.

In conclusion, I would ask this group to support any and all programs, especially Workforce

Investment Act Programs that provide assistance to residents in need of Employment and Training and also assist employers to be more competitive in this Global Economy.

Thank you.