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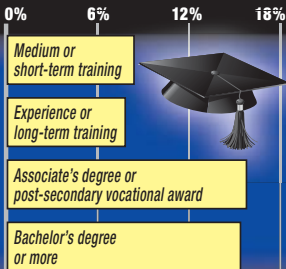
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BENNINGTON COUNTY REGION

January 2014

By the numbers

Projected Employment Growth from 2006–2016 by Occupation's Education or Training Requirement



Source: BLS Occupational Employment Projections Chart by New England Business Journals.

Special Sections

Entrepreneurship

A nonprofit offers networking for busy entrepreneurs; and Green Mountain Coffee Roasters has a plan as competition mounts. **5**

Education

Educating the next-generation workforce is key to the future of the region, so we'll explore the many resources available for training and help with tuition; plus Vermont Tech has earned a high ranking. **9**

Innovation & Technology

Vermont is home to several military equipment firms, and game development has become a big business in the Green Mountain State; solar power is coming to Bennington. **13**



Inside

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Energy solutions	12

Southern Vermont entrepreneurs share their goals for the New Year



PROVIDED

Bryan Campbell, plant manager, helped students learn about Mack Moldings' wide array of services by conducting a tour of the manufacturing progression of the f'real frozen beverage blender. Tasting the shakes was the final stop.

By SARA WIDNESS

The New Year is a good time to revisit not only mission statements, which very often add soul to enterprises, but to think once again about company values.

The *Battenkill Business Journal*

spoke with three businesses in southern Vermont about their resolutions for 2014. These range from a manufacturing company vested in training youth to assume positions in the Green Mountains, to a market that is aiming to be all things to all people, and a

regional development corporation.

Expanding its internship program beyond its heretofore mainly engineering focus is a resolution at Mack Molding in Arlington, which also seeks to expand its business this year. The

Goals: **12**

Southern Vermont firms service the military market

By SARA WIDNESS

What these companies produce isn't for general consumption but for use, among others, by the military. For this reason they enjoy low visibility in Vermont. But in southern Vermont the concentration of companies in production for the military make them a major contributor to employment in the region.

The *Battenkill Business Journal* spoke with Kaman Composites-Vermont and K&E Plastics, both in Bennington, and with Battenkill Technologies, Inc. in Manchester Center about the kinds of work they do. Another company, Plasan North America, was unavailable for an interview.

Approximately a third of the business of Kaman Composites-Vermont, founded some 35 years ago, serves the medical industry. Its work with components and assemblies from carbon-fiber materials produces tables and patient supports for medical imaging, among others, explained Jim Sharkey, general manager.

The other two-thirds of the business applies the same carbon-fiber technology to a range of aerospace components, everything from structural

Production: **15**

What's in a domain name?

By JOY CHOQUETTE

Entire articles have been written on the subject of choosing a business name. This single entity encompasses so many aspects of what one does. It also tells would-be clients or customers what to expect: Is this a fast-paced media outlet, a catering company or a high-end shoe and accessory store? An important part of branding a business, choosing the correct name is essential. Is the same true for

selecting a domain name for one's business? Professionals weigh in on this topic.

Dave Gibson, owner of Propeller Media Works in Burlington, stated that business professionals should first consider whether a domain name is both memorable and concise. "It should also be directly tied to your brand, so if you are creating a new company you will want to make sure that a domain

Domain: **15**



PROVIDED

Dave Gibson, owner of Propeller Media Works in Burlington, says a domain name should be memorable, and work well with the company name.

Energy Solutions

"Turn it on, turn it off!" holiday projects



Q My business is going to be closed from Christmas Day until the day after New Year's, and I was wondering how low I should turn the heat down during that time?

— TH, Chittenden County

A **Paul:** It's always important to have a good "shut-down list" that features daily end-of-business actions like dialing down heat, turning on exterior security lighting, making sure all windows are properly shut and locked, etc., but definitely consider a more expansive energy-saving list for extended breaks like this. To answer your question, a thermostat setting of 60°F will keep pipes from freezing and any temperature-sensitive electronics (either stock or office gear) from suffering damage.

Dan: You can reasonably expect to save two to three percent on heating energy costs for every degree you lower that thermostat, so start there, though there's a lot more to do to save while you are away. Shutting down all non-critical computers, monitors, copiers, and other gear can really help. There are a great many other "phantom" electrical loads you might not notice, so unplug (not just turn off) microwaves, power strips, non-security audio or video equipment, even chargers for cell phones...and clean out and unplug the fridge. If you don't already have one, consider getting a timer than controls outdoor security lighting and turns on any needed interior lights; and if anyone is scheduled to enter the business during the break, make sure he or she knows how to implement your energy-saving procedures.

Q I'll have a few days just before January to reassess my restaurant's lighting. I inherited most of the fixtures from a previous tenant, and many of them don't make tables and bar areas pop the way I want. What can I get done on that front in three days?

— TH, Chittenden County

A **Dan:** A considerable amount! This is one of those great areas in which upgrading to more-efficient bulbs and fixtures can make your business look instantly better and save you substantially on energy costs.

Paul: It used to be that the go-to items for

lighting savings were compact-fluorescent (CFL) bulbs. They consume about 75 percent less energy than incandescents, and last much longer, though are not always ideal for all applications. For interior spot and area lighting, consider LEDs. Made out of clusters of light-emitting diodes, these lamps and bulbs consume even less power than CFLs for the same light output, and that light has a focused, dramatic, brilliant clarity...ideal for bar and dining-table areas. For storage and other staff areas, CFLs might be a better bet.

Dan: LEDs really do have an amazing list of pluses. They turn on at full power instantly (CFLs take time to illuminate fully), can last 30,000 hours or better (which means less ladder time changing ceiling bulbs), emit very little heat, are durable, available in a wide range of color temperatures, are dimmable, and have no flicker. As of January 1, 2014, manufacturers will stop making 40- and 60-watt incandescent light bulbs, too, so now's a good time to consider replacing them.

LED bulbs and fixtures are more expensive at retail, but assessing cost-benefits and directing you toward good lighting design are just a few of our specialties. We have a team at Efficiency Vermont devoted to lighting needs, and offer rebates to Vermont businesses for installing a wide range of new, energy-efficient equipment, including lighting fixtures. We also provide discounts on high-performance, energy-efficient lighting products like LEDs directly to customers through participating electrical distributors. From buying new fixtures to advice on lighting redesign, to finding an EVT-approved distributor or contractor, visit www.encyvermont.com or call 888-921-5990.

Learn More:

Do you have a project in mind or a question about energy usage in your business? Visit www.encyvermont.com/energysolutions.

About Efficiency Vermont:

Efficiency Vermont was created by the Vermont Legislature and the Vermont Public Service Board to strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and help all Vermonters reduce energy costs.

The columnists are energy experts Paul Lambert and Dan Mellinger. ❖

Goals

Continued from 1

two go hand in hand. Through its internships it hopes to bring in high-school graduates to start careers or trades here, thus growing the business with local talent through technicians, skilled labor and machinists.

To this end, last October the company conducted a series of made-in-Vermont days for 90 local students who toured the workshop. Some of these are potential candidates for summer internships.

"We've had a very robust internship program here at **Mack**, mostly geared to college students and mostly to those in engineering. It has been successful. It's our way of showing local talent and local kids interesting, exciting, high-tech jobs here in southern Vermont. We've hired some of these students after they've graduated," said **Jeff Somple**, president of the company's northern operations. "If we want to continue to grow this biz in Vermont, this is where talent is going to come from."

Another resolution is to add a new technology to the company. This could involve a new series of equipment. This goal, said Somple, might be achieved through acquisition.

"This year we acquired a product development in Connecticut that helps keep the business fresh and interesting," he said.

And finally Somple hoped that "in 2014 we can finally understand and resolve health care moving forward for our employees. What is it going to look like? How is it going to be funded? This year we moved to self insurance for the first time. That will prove to have been either brilliant or stupid."

A Manchester Center entrepreneur, Steve Burzon of Garden Arts Company, has just finished a three-year business plan for his 13-year-old business that engages 14 staff in season. He said his resolutions for the New Year are tied in with the plan.

Garden Arts Company is the umbrella for Garden Arts Landscaping, Manchester Fence Company and Garden Arts Fresh Market, launched in 2013. The company also does masonry projects.

His goal for the market is to continue to grow the business as a community market as "a hybrid of a farmers' market, a food-coop, a foods-to-go operation and a grocery store."

"We feel that with the exception of having the right merchandise mix and right number

of SKUs we're right on it," said Burzon. Foods-to-go are expanding daily. His organic and grass-fed beef section "is probably the biggest in this part of the state and we want to continue to grow that."

"The resolution is to be a healthy community market that serves the kind of people who want local food and to serve the local farmer and food producer, giving them an easy and profitable outlet for their goods open year-round, 12 hours a day," he said.

His resolution when it comes to landscaping is "at all costs to resist the temptation to become a great big company, but to focus on the kinds of clients who appreciate really good work in the areas of masonry, trees and shrubs, landscaping, fencing, the highest-quality work, frankly, in the world."

"What we're striving for is a tight, loyal, well-paid creative team," he said, citing his foreman, Rene Navarrete, who has worked with him for 12 years, and his maintenance foreman, Tim Smith, who has been with him for eight years.

"I don't want to jump after short-term opportunities but develop high-end clientele that demands quality work and hopefully get paid a good price for it," he said, adding that the success of his company lies in the quality of his employees and their relationship to the company. "If that's working, everything else works."

His personal resolution is to make time to have lunch with people on his staff and to make time for them when they need a day off and to help them out when needed.

He also wants "to have a company that is a great place for those who deserve to be working here." And he wants to read the *Battenkill Business Journal*.

Peter Odierna's targets for 2014 surround his work as executive director of Bennington County Industrial Corporation.

These include working in conjunction with the Bennington County Regional Commission to introduce natural gas to some industrial users in the area; to bring in at least one business that's currently in the pipeline "across the finish line for the upcoming calendar year," he said; and to continue to work "very hard to promote the health and well-being of companies already in Bennington County."

He noted that some "very good progress has been made on innovative initiatives to support a next-generation workforce.

"I am hopeful that positive trends will continue in 2014," Odierna said. ❖