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AJAC & Skills Inc. Open House: Creating a Highly Skilled Precision Metal Fabrication Workforce

Celebrating Launch of AJAC's First Precision Metal Fabrication Apprenticeship Class at Skills Inc.



AJAC instructor and Skills Inc. employee, Greg Hartman (left), trains AJAC apprentice and Orion employee, Tom Barlet (right), on a press brake.



AJAC instructor and Skills Inc. employee, Greg Hartman, discusses a project with the apprenticeship class.

SEATTLE, WA-April 29, 2014 – The [Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee \(AJAC\)](#), [Skills Inc.](#) and the [City of Auburn](#) are hosting an open house on Wednesday, April 30, 2014, 10:00-11:15 a.m. at Skills Inc. Auburn South Facility, 425 C Street NW, Auburn, WA. These organizations are celebrating the launch of AJAC's inaugural [Precision Metal Fabrication \(PMF\)](#) Apprenticeship Class taking place at Skills Inc. Auburn South Facility. A Precision Metal Fabricator cuts, bends, forms and assembles metal parts, and creates specialized components for products such as aerospace parts, medical devices, etc.

This is AJAC's **first** apprenticeship class hosted at an employer's facility. AJAC and Skills Inc. are giving area [aerospace and manufacturing apprentices](#) the opportunity to take their evening class directly in a workplace environment and earn credit through South Seattle College (SSC). In January 2014, Skills Inc. opened its classroom doors one evening a week to its employees and area companies. Traditionally, these classes are hosted by a community/technical college or high school and taught by AJAC instructors. AJAC's two year [PMF apprenticeship program](#) combines college-level classroom instruction with supervised on-the-job training (OJT) experience.

Media representatives who would like to attend can contact Lisa Van Dyke at 206-764-5832 or lvandyke@ajactraining.org.

Open house agenda:

- **10:00–10:20 a.m.** – Tour Skills Inc.'s Auburn South Facility and check out the hands-on training apprentices are receiving during AJAC's first PMF Apprenticeship Class.
- **10:20–10:50 a.m.** – Join AJAC and Skills Inc. for cake and refreshments to celebrate this partnership and network with area employers, apprentices, elected officials, workforce development representatives and the Skills Inc. team.
- **10:50–11:15 a.m.** – Hear from speakers: **Skills Inc. CEO** Todd Dunnington, **AJAC Interim Executive Director** Demetria "Lynn" Strickland, **Auburn Mayor** Nancy Backus, **General Manager for Auburn Site, Boeing Fabrication** Mark Ross and **AJAC Apprentice and Orion Industries Sheet Metal Technician** Miley Molstad

“AJAC is excited to partner with Skills Inc. to create new training opportunities. This results in additional career pathways and contributes to a more skilled workforce in the Precision Metal Fabrication industry” said [Demetria “Lynn” Strickland, Interim Executive Director](#). “Skills Inc. works with the community including persons with disabilities to grow and expand their talents. Developing new and innovative ways to host our apprenticeship classes enables AJAC to continue addressing the current and near future skills gap. This partnership with Skills Inc., South Seattle College and our employers, allows us to provide the new workforce generation with the skills and knowledge necessary for Washington State to remain competitive in the aerospace and advanced manufacturing industries.”

“Skills Inc.’s new joint venture with the Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC) will provide training for aerospace sheet metal mechanics—a trade that is in short supply. The two-year apprenticeship is a proven method for skill development,” stated Todd Dunnington, Skills Inc. CEO. “Opening our facility to AJAC is an example of our commitment to developing future talent. When we work together and focus on creating jobs, while meeting industry needs, we create economic development and a lasting impact in the community.”

“We are thrilled with our partnership. Auburn used to be known as rail town and now we are known as an aerospace town and this program is a perfect fit for our city.” – Nancy Backus, Mayor

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The [Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee \(AJAC\)](#) is a statewide, state-funded, non-profit organization that develops and implements [Washington State registered aerospace and advanced manufacturing apprenticeship programs](#). [Apprenticeship](#) combines supervised on-the-job training (OJT) experience (93% of the time) with college-level classroom instruction (7% of the time). The programs are industry-driven and offer aerospace and advanced manufacturing employers the opportunity to build a well-qualified and experienced workforce.

[Skills Inc.](#) is a 99% self-sufficient non-profit organization whose mission it is to create and maintain a stable, rewarding place of work, where persons with disabilities contribute their skills. Their primary source of revenue is through the sale of products and services in an open, competitive marketplace and have become one of Washington State’s largest aerospace suppliers—specializing in machining, assembly, and sheet metal fabrication. They also provide technical services and business solutions to a number of customers in the technology and commercial sectors. Over 60% of their 500+ employees have a self-identified disability.

The [City of Auburn](#) for over 120 years has been providing visitors and residents with the opportunity to discover why this town is like no other. Auburn is the land of two rivers, home to two nations and spread across two counties. Located between Seattle and Tacoma in the shadow of Mt. Rainier, Auburn is the perfect place to work, play and spend a lifetime. It is a warm, embracing community where people still stop to say hello. Auburn is a community rich in history where you'll find new businesses mingling with old, and a historic downtown getting acquainted with a new, modern facade.