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## Indiana's new manufacturing jobs require specific skills

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[Cat Andersen](#)/Eyewitness News

Indianapolis - It's estimated that by 2012, 4,000 new manufacturing jobs will open up in central Indiana. The problem is finding people to fill them.

The Frac Tank could be described as one big red job machine. The tanks are used to store thousands of gallons of water for oil and gas drilling. [Wabash National](#) won a contract worth millions to build them.



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"We're going to be needing a lot of skilled welders to assemble and put these products together," said Tim Monahan, senior vice president of human resources, Wabash National.

Wabash National anticipates hundreds of jobs that pay \$13 to \$15 per hour, plus benefits.

"About every four feet, you're going to have a ten foot vertical weld that goes from the bottom all the way up to the top," said Brent Yeagy, vice president and general manager of Wabash National. "We'll have roughly 100 associates that will be employed initially to build 300 Frac Tanks."

They're contracted to build 2,500 of the tanks over the next five years. The test will be to find enough people with the skills to put them together.

"A lot of times people don't realize they have to have special skills," said Monahan.

Experts say the days of getting a job right out of high school at a manufacturing plant are fading fast. Robots are replacing those assembly line jobs. Now you have to have some special skill or certifications which require anywhere from six months to two years of training. Experts say these middle skilled workers are in short supply.

"It doesn't have the interest from the younger folks that we've seen in the past," said Monahan.

If Indiana's manufacturing workforce continues to shrink, it's going to be harder to persuade companies to set up shop in the state and offer contracts to employ Hoosiers and generate tax revenue.

"I think because we've fallen on hard times as a region over the last ten years, I think we've had less and less interest through our schools and through the younger work forces because they don't see it as stable as maybe some other careers," said Monahan.

Not Oscar Medina. The Ben Davis High School student sees manufacturing from an entirely different perspective.

"It's not just hands on work. It's more mathematical scientific. You work more with robots and computers," said Medina.

Medina is taking a course called Advanced Manufacturing at Ben Davis High School. He's learning it's beyond assembly lines and car parts. The course covers the basics on lasers, biofuels, wind turbines, computer chips, music and pharmaceuticals. Jobs in those fields require a range of skills from six-month certifications to advanced engineering degrees and pay anywhere from \$30,000 to hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

"Maybe someday I might be putting hover crafts together. Something that you just can't imagine," said Medina.

Medina says he doesn't see robots as a threat which will take away jobs from people. He sees them as motivation to get a higher education. One day he'll be controlling the robot, programming it to do the heavy lifting so that he doesn't have to.

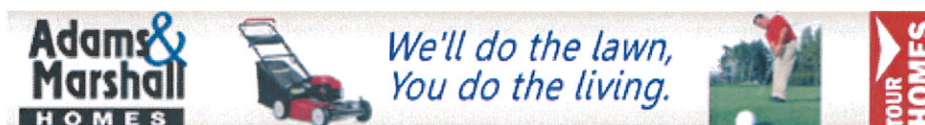
That advanced manufacturing course is new at Ben Davis High School and they're enrolling students now for the next semester. It's all part of an initiative by the state and CEOs of manufacturing companies here in Indiana. They know they need a solid workforce to attract new business to Indiana and grow the state's struggling economy.

#### Further reading:

[More information on Advanced Manufacturing education programs and jobs](#)

[Advanced Manufacturing course at Ben Davis High School](#)

[Jobs at Wabash National](#)



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