

# Advanced Manufacturing/Integrated Systems Technology Employment Report

## Paul Bargo

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**P**aul Bargo found out in December 2004 that the Springfield, Ohio manufacturing plant he worked for would be closing and moving its facilities out of state. The shut-down process, he was told, would begin right away and be completed by April.

Bargo admits he didn't see it coming. Although the company had closed three other facilities as cost-cutting measures, he thought the plant in which he had worked as a maintenance electrician for more than seven years was solid.

The Bargas began cutting back expenses right away, even though Christmas was right around the corner. With two daughters in college, in addition to everyday bills, they knew things would be tight.

Bargo also knew it would be an uphill battle finding employment in Dayton-Springfield's job climate. Twenty-two percent of the area's manufacturing jobs were lost in just three years, between 2001 and 2004.

He began applying for jobs, but with no luck. Adding insult to injury, Bargo even helped his company move to its new facilities out of state, all while also searching for a new position for himself.

When he hadn't landed a job by the time the plant finally closed, Bargo knew he needed help. He had heard about the Advanced Manufacturing/Integrated Systems Technology (AM/IST) program for laid-off manufacturing workers offered at

Sinclair Community College in Dayton, and thought it sounded like just the thing to make him more marketable for the area's changing job market.

Sinclair's lead AM/IST instructor, Joe Florence, said manufacturing jobs today are more technological and involve multiple systems working together. A strong knowledge of integrated systems is what many employers are looking for, he said.

“Our students are better equipped to compete in today's job market,” Florence said. “They leave the program with the skills they need to get a job in today's manufacturing job market.”

Bargo agrees. “Manufacturers aren't looking to increase hiring of manual labor anymore,” Bargo said. “What employers are looking for are people to maintain the equipment they have. They want to increase the output of their automated equipment, and they need techs with good AM/IST skills to do that.”

Bargo said Sinclair's 200-hour AM/IST course was a good one. He honed his skills in hydraulics, pneumatics, relay logic, valves, mechanical gears, and, especially important to him, PLCs, or programmable logic controllers, a system in which Bargo was very interested.

“PLCs run the automated equipment,” he said. “I had been around PLCs in

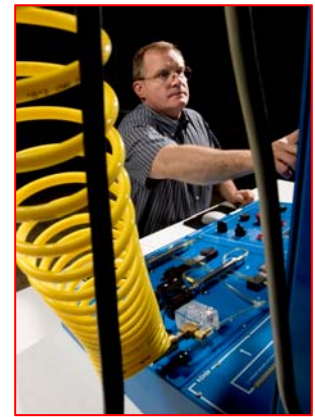


Photo courtesy of Dayton Daily News, Photographer Ty Greenlees

previous jobs, and this was something I wanted to stay involved in.”

Shortly after completing the course, Bargo applied for a maintenance technician position with Fuel Systems, LLC, in Springfield. He got the job.

The plant manufactures fuel tanks for International Trucks, and Bargo is now responsible for the maintenance of all the equipment. He said Sinclair's AM/IST program definitely helped him not only get the job, but also to perform well in the position.

Bargo's supervisor at the plant, Maintenance Manager Brian Boyd, said Fuel Systems interviewed quite a few applicants for the position, and Bargo's recent AM/IST training gave him an edge in the hiring process.

“His job is to troubleshoot machinery - electrically, mechanically, the whole realm,” explained Boyd. “Every item he learned in the AM/IST program, he uses. It was absolutely helpful. He had past experience, but to see that he got some additional formal training meant a lot to us.”

Boyd said that, based on his experience with Bargo, he might seek out other AM/IST graduates for future employment with Fuel Systems and would definitely look more favorably on candidates who had taken the training.



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