



DePaul Industries Honored for Heart of the Workforce Training

Congratulations to DePaul Industries, named 2009 Food Processor of the Year by the Northwest Food Processors Association Education and Research Institute! The award recognizes DePaul's new "Heart of the Workforce" or "HOW" training initiative, an innovative program created to help solve food processors' staffing shortages for skilled and semi-skilled workers. This issue looms as a major challenge facing the food processing industry in the next five to 10 years.

According to CEO Dave Shaffer, the HOW program evolved from listening to the needs of DePaul's customers in the food processing industry and leverages DePaul's food packaging and temporary staffing operations. The HOW training has three tiers geared toward entry-level, semiskilled and skilled workers. The first tier prepares workers in the basics of entry-level food production, including workplace readiness, workplace safety, food safety and food handling. Trainees complete 35 hours of coursework and earn four credentials: a Workforce Readiness certificate from the Oregon Department of Education; an OSHA-approved Workplace Safety Program certificate from the Oregon Education Association; the State of Oregon food handler license; and certification in AIB good manufacturing and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point processes.

Employers are already responding positively to the HOW value proposition, which pledges higher worker productivity, safety and retention. To date, 30 individuals have completed the first tier entry-level training and all are currently fulfilling temporary staffing assignments. Most of the job assignments range from 3 to 6 months, and some will lead to regular full-time positions.

In all, a dozen food industry employers have signed memos of understanding to utilize HOW graduates. DePaul is encouraging these companies to forecast their anticipated staffing needs at all levels to ensure that a sufficient number of individuals are trained and job ready when needed. DePaul expects to train 150 to 200 individuals within the next several months and anticipates employment opportunities for over 300 people this year.

For more information about DePaul Industries, please visit www.depaulindustries.com.