



Skilled workers still hard to find

Rising unemployment still doesn't mean the workers companies need are out there.

By [BRENT BURKEY](#)

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Business is still strong for Gichner Systems Group of Dallastown, with a mix of steady orders and the return for repairs of its military shelters sent to Iraq and Afghanistan.

So the maker of shelters – many similar in appearance to cargo containers – for purposes like mobile military field headquarters, is hiring 60 people immediately and hopes to create more jobs this fall.

With such a large number of Pennsylvanians currently without jobs, hiring managers should be on easy street, with turning good workers away their biggest problem.

But even in this sagging economy, Gichner says it's still hard to find the right set of skills to fill the jobs it has.

Tom Mills, company president and CEO, said the problems seem to come from all over the board:

- Seepage of manufacturing companies to foreign countries has dissuaded people from going into manufacturing and learning manufacturing skills;
- Some Americans have traditionally looked down their noses at jobs that require difficult or dirty work;
- And admittedly sounding like his father and grandfather before him, Mills said young people just don't seem to want to work as hard nowadays or be loyal to a company.

Many "want to work at Walmart because it's air-conditioned," Mills said.

But Mills said the company has hired a full-time training manager to help workers who are hired learn the skills they need.

Currently, Mills said the company is looking for a handful of workers who have welding certification and will train them for aluminum welding.

The company, from there, is shooting to hire half of the needed workers from pools of skilled workers, like those with prior machine shop or painting experience, and half from the pool of unskilled workers, Mills said.

Hiring unskilled isn't ideal, but Mills said he hopes that if there is a silver lining to the recession, it's that the workforce will realize there is no substitute for old-fashioned hard work.

Because especially right now, that's where the jobs are.

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WE'RE HIRING

Gichner Systems Group of Dallastown said it has an immediate need for about 60 employees. More information is available by going to www.gichner.us and clicking on "Employment."

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