

## EXOTHERMIC REDEFINES WORKFORCE DIVERSITY



Kenilworth, NJ- Exothermic Molding Inc. celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year. This small independent specialty plastics fabricator has weathered the many changes in both the nation's economy and shifting technologies. At the end of the day, according to Exothermic's President, Paul K. Steck, "It's still all about people. Without the right well trained workforce, you will not succeed."

Steck should know. He and his staff have hand-picked a highly motivated workforce all the way from the shop floor to each department head. Exothermic prides itself on its commitment to hiring a diverse workforce. Its staff includes Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans and Caucasians. But it goes beyond that.

Exothermic has also embraced reentry programs, inviting the formerly incarcerated to join its workforce in cooperation with organizations like the Urban League of Union County. According to Steck, "This has proven to be a win-win. We have offered a fresh start and a second chance to these individuals, and they

have contributed to our growth." Cathy Waters, head of the 10-year-old Reconnections Program at the Urban League screens candidates for employment, matching them with the company's needs. "This saves companies time and money," she noted. "Paul Steck's company sought those with a good work ethic desiring long-term employment with advancement opportunities."


Over the course of four years, the Urban League Reconnections program has placed more than 10 formerly incarcerated individuals on staff at Exothermic Molding. Prior to placing her clients, Ms. Waters conducted an on-site visit and toured the company. Her impressions were very favorable. She remarked on Exothermic's concern for safety and "Was impressed with how motivated the employees were," along with Paul Steck's commitment to giving people a second chance—even when they made mistakes."

"It's all about creating opportunity for your people," relates Steck. "The company has a long history of promoting from within its ranks with on-job-training of soft and hard skills."


Eric Scott has worked with Exothermic continuously since his HS graduation in 1979 (42 years) and is our Shop Foreman. James Patnaude is our Operations Manager and started

with the company as a Spray Painter.

Most recently, Exothermic conducted a top to bottom review of its pay scales as part of a Focal Point Review conducted by Creative Workforce Solutions in Florham Park, NJ. Susan Brocaglia, President of Creative Workforce Solutions explains, "We looked at everyone in the company, comparing them to the market and brought them up to the prevailing market wage. We also switched everyone's review date to the same date. We further standardized their reviews, so everyone gets reviewed with the same set of criteria. Pay increases are therefore not tied to fluctuations of the business. This levels the playing field." The result: across the board wage increases for all of the company's non-management staff. The company's entry level employees now receive \$15 per hour. Paul Steck asserts, "Having a good HR advisor (like Susan Brocaglia) is extremely valuable during these difficult times for finding and retaining a productive workforce."

In addition, Exothermic continues its committed to promoting from within and has a growth track for talented, motivated new hires. According to Steck, "Next steps will include a path to career progress, with financial incentives for employees that perform well." 

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