

State Treasurer tours woman-owned manufacturer

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OLD SAYBROOK, Conn. (WTNH) — Kathryn Mica and Theresa Grills-Beranis are two of the newest welders at Sound Manufacturing in Old Saybrook. They know it's not traditionally women's work.

"No it's not. Not yet at least," said Mica with a laugh.



Both women learned to weld through the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative which provides training for jobs in advanced manufacturing like those at Sound Manufacturing which is also woman-owned by the way.

"It changed things for us dramatically," Kelli-Marie Vallieres, President, Sound Manufacturing.

The company is among many employers seeing a surge in manufacturing jobs. Mica used to work in education.

"They pay for some of the expenses so they make it really worthwhile for people who are dedicated to changing their career," said Mica.

"This is a great example of a program that actually works that connects skilled labor for the jobs that we need for tomorrow," said State Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden.

He took a tour of the company and says the state should be investing in workforce development especially in light of new state employment numbers in the manufacturing industry.

"About 35 percent of the employees in this sector are approaching retirement age," said Wooden.

New workers are needed.



Not only does the Pipeline program benefit the employees but it also benefits the companies which didn't always have an easy time filling their positions.

“People would come to the door they'd have no prior experience, not really understand what manufacturing is,” said Vallieres. “Turnover rates were high. Training costs were high.”

Now they come trained, motivated, and seeking a career not just a job.

“It's like a hidden talent I never knew I had,” said Mica.