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**MANUFACTURING**

## From Shop Floor to Classroom

*How some teachers spent their summer vacations: manufacturing*

This summer 11 teachers from Connecticut technical high schools have taken part in a new internship program with local manufacturing companies. The 160-hour program, organized by the Connecticut Business & Industry Association's (CBIA) Regional Center for Next-Generation Manufacturing, allows the teachers to experience firsthand the environment of working in a high technology setting while learning new skills and knowledge to pass on to their students in the upcoming school year. CBIA PR Manager Nancy Andrews explains that the teachers were matched with particular manufacturers based on what they were interested in learning about.

Rebecca Marra, who teaches at Platt Technical High School in Milford, decided to intern with the North Branford-based Pennsylvania Globe Gaslight Co., which manufactures outdoor lighting systems. "It was an opportunity to improve my skills and re-familiarize myself with the industry," Marra says.

Last year Marra assigned her students a project involving assembly configuration. This year, following her experience at Pennsylvania Globe, she will have her students draft components for sheet



**Platt Tech's Marra interned with with Pennsylvania Globe Gaslight.**

metal using CADD (Computer Automated Drafting & Design) software. "I'm constantly coming up with new projects for my students to do," she says. One thing Marra says she learned this summer was the importance for educators to become aware of evolving industry standards, as technology is always advancing. "It's a way

for us to keep our knowledge from becoming stale and outdated."

David Andrade, a teacher at Central High School in Bridgeport, spent a month interning at Alinabal Inc. of Milford, a custom manufacturer of mechanical and electromechanical hardware

components. Andrade, who teaches AP Physics and EMT classes at Central, hoped to burnish his skills and knowledge for a new pre-engineering class he will teach this fall. He also will incorporate some of his newly won knowledge into his physics classes. Andrade's experience included observing and helping the company to design hardware products on the computer. "It was a great experience," he notes. "I was able to do more than I thought I would."

Explains Alinabal Vice President of Administration Bruce Bickley, a 33-year company veteran, "We decided to host the internship program because there has been a lack of a bridge between a high-school environment and a manufacturing environment, and we wanted to help bridge the gap."

— Marina Cella