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## Welding

Continued from page 7

Sean Moran, Director of the American Welding Society's District 3 office said students who learn on the state-of-the-art equipment are well-suited for the professional world. Not only are they proficient and familiar with all the bells and whistles of the new equipment, but they understand the basics that allow them to be able to work with any equipment an employer has to offer.

Additionally, students who learn on the newer equipment can drive employers to make that leap to upgrade their existing equipment, thus allowing for more output.

"One thing about manufacturers is they want to make welding easier for the welder and make them work smarter, not harder," Moran said.

Currently, 38% of Lehigh Valley welders are younger than 35. To an extent, the Lehigh Valley is replenishing the skilled workforce, but there is a need for more, especially with a growing number of manufacturers in the Lehigh Valley.

LVEDC is committed to creating and executing regional strategies that help the Lehigh Valley maintain a competitive workforce and talent supply. It does so through the LVEDC Education and Talent Supply Council, a partnership of regional educational institutions, major employers, and economic development and workforce agencies.

Among that council's accomplishments in 2019 were hosting Lehigh Valley's first-ever internship summit, hosting a new networking event for young professionals, creating a new Lehigh Valley Hot Careers Guide, and gathering workforce data and talent pipeline research from regional educational institutions.

For Jordan Everett, a 4th level welder and senior at Southern Lehigh High School, the LCTI welding program has allowed him to achieve his childhood dream of following in his father's footsteps as a welder. Upon graduation, Everett will work full-time at Schlosser Steel in Hatfield, Pa., where he is currently working part-time.

"When I learned they had a welding program here, I knew it was perfect for me," Everett said.

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