

CORD

---Collaborative Organizations Responding to Dislocation

October 1, 2011

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"Combining two career fields, I feel I have numerous opportunities..."

---Michael Ewers

TWO DEGREES BETTER THAN ONE FOR MICHAEL EWERS

Obtaining an associate degree in Electromechanical Technology would be enough for many. But combining that with a Business Management degree would open up many more occupational opportunities, and that is just what Michael Ewers has planned for his future.

"I enjoy school now, but I used to actually hate school," he explained. "It was very difficult losing my job, but in the long run, it may have been the best thing to happen to me," he added. He maintained a 3.54 GPA at BTC.

In fact, on his first day back to school he had an algebra class. "That was one of my easiest classes in high school," he said. But when the instructor directed the students to place their books under their seats after reviewing the syllabus, administering a test, Michael got a 64%. "That was a wake-up call for me—I ended up getting an A in that class," he smiled.

He's now attending Concordia University twice a week, where he plans on earning his Bachelor's degree in Business Management in December, 2012, after having graduated from Blackhawk Tech in May, 2011 with an Associate Degree. "My goal is to manage a production line," he said.

Michael, a Clinton High School graduate, was employed at Stoughton Trailer from 2003-07, when work started drying up. He left and worked at Avid Pallet Co., a Hendricks Holding Company, as a production supervisor, but when GM shut down and Chrysler slowed due to the economy, the company was severely affected, and Michael was again looking for work.

"Supporting my wife and four boys created some real hardships," he said. "I wouldn't have had the nerve or motivation to return to school, but the WIA Dislocated Worker program provided the resources to allow me to do that, and it has been a real blessing."

Cyndi Pohl, Michael's most recent Case Worker, knew he would succeed. "He's a very eager, motivated individual, as evidenced by his educational and occupational successes," she said. "He even pursued his work search prior to his BTC graduation, which led to his quick placement immediately after completing his degree.

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TWO CAREERS—MICHAEL EWERS (Contind. from Pg. 1)

“With my prior education, experience, and combining of two career fields, I feel I have numerous opportunities...”

---Michael Ewers

It's not that Michael is performing his duties at normal speed. He's doubled up on his Concordia classes to allow him to earn his degree in a quicker amount of time, attending from 6-10 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In between he attends his kids' football games, and by the way, did we mention he's now also back working as a Maintenance Mechanic at Stoughton Trailers? He was hired a week after he completed his BTC classes.

“The management aspect of my future career is very important to me,” Michael said. “With my prior education, experience, and combining of two career fields, I feel I have numerous opportunities to either continue in my current position, enhance promotional opportunities, or have doors open for other opportunities should they arise,” he explained. For someone who disliked school earlier in his life, Michael Ewers has completed an ‘educational transformation!’

OVERCOMING AN EMPLOYMENT GAP

Given our tough economic times and lack of employment opportunities, many individuals have been unemployed for a lengthy period. Even though it is not your fault, this does not look good on an application or resume. How do you overcome this disadvantage? There are several ways to help mitigate this situation and to better address these gaps. They include the following:

- **Stay Active in Professional or Even Service/Civic Organizations.** Attend their meetings, learn related or new skills (which can be used on a resume), and interact to expand your network.
- **Volunteer in Community, School and Civic Organizations.** You'll not only be helping others, but will be expanding your network, and can provide appropriate activities for your resume while out of work.
- **Keep Your Resume File Updated.** Keep track of new skills learned and appropriate experience. Be sure to keep good records—not writing it down when it occurs often allows it to slip past your memory.
- **Create a Small Business and Work Even a Few Hours a Week.** Often this may tie in with a hobby or personal activity you enjoy—edit a newsletter, make crafts, design or build websites, paint, repair or build, prepare food, etc. The sky is the limit. It also shows initiative.
- **Keep Your Skills Current.** The way technology changes so rapidly today, skills become obsolete literally within months. So keep up your skill base, especially in highly technical fields.
- **Consider Changing Careers.** These pages of the CORD Newsletter have consistently highlighted people who have completely switched careers and have been successful. Most involve training. Now may be the time to take that first step!
- **Consider Part-Time Work.** If possible, work within your field. If not, consider changing to another field.

“Volunteer...you'll not only be helping others, but will be expanding your network....”

With proper pre-planning and action, you can confidently and positively respond to a hiring manager when he asks, “What have you been doing these past five years?” You can excitedly tell him, “Quite a lot. I'd like to tell you!”

STACY DOWNING FINDS THE RIGHT JOB FIT

It may have taken a while, but Stacy Downing has finally found a job and company she loves to work for. A dislocated worker laid off from Milprint, Inc. of Lancaster in October, 2007 along with 40 others (including her husband and mother), Stacy utilized WIA Dislocated Worker funds to return to school. She graduated from Southwest Wisconsin Technical College in May, 2009.

However, initially there wasn't much available in the Medical Coding Specialist field, so Stacy, who with her husband have two young children, worked as a Sewing Machine Operator at Lands End to 'help make ends meet.' Then in July, 2010, she finally landed an excellent job in her field at Associated Balance and Hearing Clinic, LLC in Boscobel.

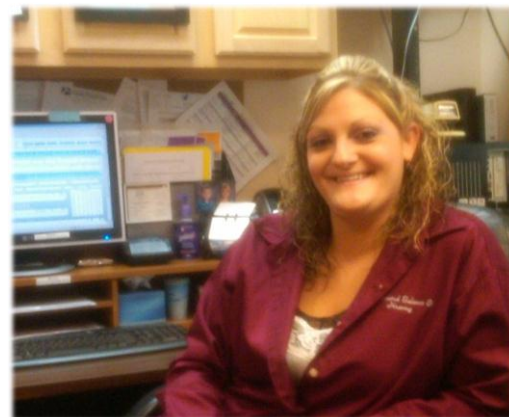
"I love what I'm doing and this is an excellent company to work for," she said. "But if it wasn't for the WIA dislocated worker funds, I couldn't have done it." The WIA funds paid for all of her educational needs such as tuition, books and materials, but even with that help, she needed to take out a student loan for the other day-to-day expenses, which she is now in the process of paying back. "I'm so grateful for the help—it allowed me to graduate and even maintain an overall 3.8 GPA," she smiled.

STACY WORKS IN A SMALL OFFICE

As the Medical Billing/Receptionist/Marketing Manager for Associated, the now-27-year-old Stacy has important responsibilities, especially since the office is small with only four other employees. "But I love the work and interaction with my co-workers and the customers," she added. Associated provides a variety of hearing and balance healthcare services, including hearing assessments and rehabilitation, education, and counseling. They also dispense advanced hearing aid technology and related devices to suit all types of hearing loss and lifestyles.

But Stacy also hasn't ruled out more schooling. "Perhaps when I get more financially stable I'll consider it, but I love what I'm doing now and am very satisfied with my current position," she said. It took a bit of time, but Stacy Downing is now working at a job that she truly enjoys.

"I love what I'm doing, and this is an excellent company to work for."



"If it wasn't for the WIA dislocated worker funds, I couldn't have done it."

---Stacy Downing



FOODSHARE CAN HELP YOU!!

Consider applying for Foodshare benefits. Call Rachael Sheets at the Rock County Job Center at **(608) 216-7227** or **(608) 630-1181**. Foodshare is a tax-funded food assistance program that can be used either temporarily or long-term, as needed. Find out if you qualify—call Rachael today!!

CHECK OUT THESE OPPORTUNITIES

There are several **Dislocated Worker** workshops that may be of interest to you (even if you are not in the WIA program—these are open to all). Call the Rock County Job Center for information or to schedule a session—Julie Funk at (608) 741-3462 or 741-3447 to register. Or you can also call (608) 741-3578 to register. For SWTC, call Brian Kitelinger at (608) 822-2339.

All Classes listed here are at the Rock County Job Center as listed.

Dislocated Worker Orientation	Mon., Oct. 3, 1-4 p.m., Rm. K
Resume	Mon., Oct. 3, 9-10:30 a.m., Rm. C
Interviewing	Mon., Oct. 3, 10:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. C
Choice, Change & Adjustment	Mon., Oct. 3, 1-3 p.m., Rm. C
Literacy Council Computer Basics	Tue., Oct. 4, 9-11 a.m., Rm. B
Ability Profiler	Tue., Oct. 4, 12:30-4:30 p.m., Rm. B
Change, Choice & Adjustment	Wed., Oct. 5, 1-3 p.m., Rm. B
Job Club	Wed., Oct. 5, 1-3:30 p.m., Rm. C
FutureTrac (at Southwest Tech)	Wed., Oct. 5, 5-7 p.m., Rm. 490
Basic Budgeting & Tracking Expenses	Thu., Oct. 6, 1-2 p.m., Rm. H
FutureTrac	Thu., Oct. 13, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Rm. K
Success Skills Training I	Fri., Oct. 7, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. J
Java & Jobs	Fri., Oct. 7, 9:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. C
Raising Healthy Eaters	Fri., Oct. 7, 1-3 p.m., Rm. K
Resume	Mon., Oct. 10, 9-10:30 a.m., Rm. C
Interviewing	Mon., Oct. 10, 10:30 am-noon, C
Choice, Change & Adjustment	Mon., Oct. 10, 1-3 p.m., Rm. C
Literacy Council Computer Basics	Tue., Oct. 11, 9-11 a.m., Rm. B
Ability Profiler	Tue., Oct. 11, 12:30-4:30 p.m., Rm B
Job Club	Wed., Oct. 12, 1-3:30 p.m., Rm. C
Basic Budget. & Track. Expenses (Contin)	Thu., Oct. 13, 1-2 p.m., Rm. H
Java & Jobs	Fri., Oct. 14, 9:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. C
Raising Healthy Eaters	Fri., Oct. 14, 1-3 p.m., Rm. K
Resume	Mon., Oct. 17, 9-10:30 a.m., Rm. C
Interviewing	Mon., Oct. 17, 10:30 am-noon, C
Choice, Change & Adjustment	Mon., Oct. 17, 1-3 p.m., Rm. C
Dislocated Worker Orientation	Mon., Oct. 17, 1-4 p.m., Rm. J
FutureTrac (at Southwest Tech)	Mon., Oct. 17, 9-11 a.m., Rm. 490
Literacy Council Computer Basics	Tue., Oct. 18, 9-11 a.m., Rm. B
Ability Profiler	Tue., Oct. 18, 12:30-4:30 p.m., Rm B
Job Club	Wed., Oct. 19, 1-3:30 p.m., Rm. C
Success Skills Training II	Fri., Oct. 21, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. J
Java & Jobs	Fri., Oct. 21, 9:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. C
Raising Healthy Eaters	Fri., Oct. 21, 1-3 p.m., Rm. K
Resume	Mon., Oct. 24, 9-10:30 a.m., Rm. C
Interviewing	Mon., Oct. 24, 10:30 am-noon, C
Choice, Change & Adjustment	Mon., Oct. 24, 1-3 p.m., Rm. C
Literacy Council Computer Basics	Tue., Oct. 25, 9-11 a.m., Rm. B
Job Club	Wed., Oct. 26, 1-3:30 p.m., Rm. C
Understanding Credit & Use It Wisely	Thu., Oct. 27, 1-2 p.m., Rm. H
FutureTrac	Thu., Oct. 27, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Rm. J
Java & Jobs	Fri., Oct. 28, 9:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. C
Raising Healthy Eaters	Fri., Oct. 28, 1-3 p.m., Rm. K
Dislocated Worker Orientation	Mon., Oct. 31, 1-4 p.m., Rm. J
Resume	Mon., Oct. 31, 9-10:30 a.m., Rm. C
Interviewing	Mon., Oct. 31, 10:30 am-noon, C
Choice, Change & Adjustment	Mon., Oct. 31, 1-3 p.m., Rm. C

DON'T FORGET ABOUT ROCK COUNTY LIBRARY COMPUTER CLASSES

The Arrowhead Library System offers a full complement of computer classes at all levels. They're offered in Janesville, Beloit, plus Clinton, Evansville, Edgerton, Milton and Orfordville. Call and ask which one might best fit your needs!

OCTOBER 2011

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NOVEMBER 2011

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"One way to keep momentum going is to have constantly greater goals."

---Michael Korda

The CORD Newsletter is designed to provide helpful information and tips to area dislocated workers. Have comments or ideas for stories?

Contact the editor:

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or call (608) 741-3463