



**News release**

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**Wisconsin Oven, Gateway partner  
in company's innovative training center program**

Wisconsin Oven's connection to Gateway Technical College goes back a generation – and the East Troy-based manufacturer is taking steps to ensure it will continue on to future generations.

In an effort to recruit the next generation of skilled workers, Wisconsin Oven has collaborated with Gateway to offer the Wisconsin Oven Universal Training Center.

Instructors will provide hands-on training to new employees at center on-site at Wisconsin Oven – and, students will receive a \$10 an hour wage during the academy. The reason for creating the academy? Wisconsin Oven needs to boost the number of welders in its workforce, and is looking to this innovative way of doing so.

“We have a need for skilled workers,” says Wisconsin Oven President and CEO Dave Strand. “Our lack of skilled workers has impeded our growth. I know we could create training programs, but training programs at times aren't enough. Our staff is putting in a lot of overtime, and we are at the point of addressing that work-life mix for them.

“We wanted a formal training program where we can bring in potential workers. We pay their wages, we pay for their first semester of a Gateway degree and hope it’s an incentive enough for them to apply to Wisconsin Oven and get hired. They can continue with their degree at Gateway, too.”

Gateway’s training will consist of welding and mechanical assembly skills, and workers who pass the courses – which they will receive at no cost – will receive college credit at Gateway. They will also receive a certificate of completion they can take with them wherever they work.

The situation benefits all: Wisconsin Oven will have a ready and skilled workforce for their operations, while students who complete the training receive solid career training, get paid while they learn, earn Gateway credits and have the opportunity to apply at a solid area employer.

As part of their training, students will provide some work for Wisconsin Oven.

Those who may be most interested in the training are recent high school graduates, unemployed, underemployed workers or those who want to make a career change.

“We are here to provide quality training, to prepare students in the academy for their career,” says Stacia Thompson, program director at Gateway’s Business and Workforce Solutions Division.

“We’re proud to work with Wisconsin Oven. This will help them to prepare for the next step in their progress, and help them to more workers with the skills they need.”

There is also an interesting connection between Dave and Gateway. Gateway welding instructor Scott Rohde will deliver some of the training at the academy. Scott's father, Tom Rohde, was Dave's welding instructor in the late 1980s as he attended Gateway. Dave was a floor sweeper at Wisconsin Oven at the time, and used the welding skills he gained at the college to kickstart his career.

"Tom was really instrumental in teaching me the skills I needed for success at Wisconsin Oven," says Dave. "He gave me self-confidence and kept telling me 'you can do this.'"

Dave has been with the company for 33 years, and has worked at every level – before eventually buying it and becoming CEO and president.

"Gateway has always had a good reputation in our community. The fact that I was a student at a technical college, I know firsthand what the training can do for us."

To enroll, please go to: <https://www.wisoven.com/careers/woc-u>

Gateway Technical College collaborates with communities in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.

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