

Business BLOCK PARTY

Connect with your EGV business neighbors quickly and easily!

Meet Your Neighbor: A Manufacturer on a Mission

How one EGV business connects with the next generation and makes the most of internships

Kris Kerin, general manager at [Bley LLC](#) in Elk Grove Village, is on a mission to turn young people on to manufacturing as a career. And he's tireless in his efforts.

At career fairs hosted by local high schools and community colleges, Kerin works to change perceptions often shared by students and their parents — that manufacturing jobs are low skilled and low paying.

"I'm able to sleep better at night knowing I've tried to get to young people to consider a career in manufacturing," says Kerin. "I need someone to take my job over someday."

YOU CAN HANG YOUR HEAD HIGH

Kerin is hoping to change lives as well as minds.

“The mindset is that you have to go to college if you want to be successful,” he says. “But college isn’t for everyone. I tell people that manufacturing is a profession with lots of opportunity. You can hang your head high.”

To drive his point, Kerin points to his own career path. The son of an engineer, he more or less fell into manufacturing.

"I graduated from high school not knowing what I wanted to do," says Kerin. "I found a machinist apprenticeship where I was involved in everything. I started out on the floor, worked my way up, and ran my first shop when I was 25."

THE "WIN-WIN" OF INTERNSHIPS

Kerin's personal mission is an extension of Bley's overall commitment to developing the next generation of manufacturing leaders.



Looking for interns?

Here is a starter list of some great sources to contact.

- [Illinois workNet](#)
- [Illinois Pathways](#)
- [Erie Neighborhood House](#)
- [Symbol Training](#)
- [Harper College](#)

While its greatest need is to recruit highly-skilled workers to operate its state-of-the-art technology in contract machining, CNC machining, machine building, and engineering, Bley is proactive about bringing young people in to see and experience modern manufacturing.

The company hosts tours for area high school students and have hired interns through several avenues. At Bley, interns benefit from a formal program designed to make the most of their time as part of the Bley team.

"We make sure they get good hands-on, real-world experience," says Kerin. "We get to see their capabilities, and they get to see what options are available. It's win-win."

DOES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT WEIGH ON YOUR MIND?

Watch our video on the Block Party tab of the Collaboration Boards to learn how you can get involved with a program at Elk Grove High School that's steering teens toward manufacturing.

Want to talk to Kris about Bley's experience with different intern placement resources?

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