

# employees tout center's training role

by BRENT CHILDERS, Editor

*Gary Treece several years ago decided to return to school.*

Five years later he is appreciative of the learning opportunity and the benefits he has derived from the education. Treece didn't return to community college to finish a high school education or enroll with a distance learning site provided by



Gary Treece



Left to right, Bobby Lowrance, Dewayne Bault, Kandy Evans and Pauline Pannell, are participants in the center's leadership training program.

numerous universities these days.

In fact, Treece didn't have to travel much farther than the place he has worked for more than 10 years – Pharr Yarns in

Treece is now certified as a Grade I technician with the Gaston County textile employer.

Treece says his foray back into the education setting began in his role as a ring

*"It's a tremendous assist to the textile industry,"*

McAdenville.

Because of workplace training programs offered by the Textile Center in Belmont,

spinner fixer as he began seeing some of the new technology that was being placed

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"I want to take this opportunity to thank the entire staff at the NCCATT for the many contributions they make to the textile industry as it strives to meet the challenges of today's global marketplace. It is important that all of us in the industry work together in the spirit of cooperation if we are going to survive. This includes the fiber industry, the machinery industry, the textile companies and the academic community.

Locating our equipment in the NCCATT's labs provides an excellent atmosphere for training the mill associate on how to operate, fix and maintain what is becoming even more complex equipment. It also creates a wonderful opportunity for our customers to do product development work that is critical for their survival, as they move away from commodity products. Of course the center's main mission of education and training people for the textile industry is continually changing. We have had Murata associates attend classes in everything from carding, spinning, weaving and knitting to advanced computer courses and have always been pleased that our time and money was well spent.

Murata realizes the value of this industry resource and we express our thanks to all those involved in ensuring the center's success and the continued success of textile manufacturers and their suppliers."

**William M. Gray**  
General Manager  
Murata



"Let me take this opportunity to let you know how much Parkdale appreciates what the Textile Center has and can do in the area of training our associates. The programs you provide have helped our company keep a leading edge stance, especially in the areas of technology, quality management, and new hire and seasoned associate yarn and manufacturing training.

Our industry is caught up in the most volatile times as concerns unfair trade agreements, imports of foreign goods and the deterioration of textile jobs. We recognize the efforts you and all the staff of the Textile Center are providing in developing good, solid training programs to help not only Parkdale, but our entire industry.

We cannot say enough about your development of programs and use of your facilities in regards to research and development and testing to enable us to save time, with quick results and timely information being the key to our effectiveness in staying one step ahead of our competition in this global market."

**Diane Stanley**  
Corporate Director Human Resources  
Parkdale America

into operation at Pharr.

As a maintenance employee, he says he had a natural curiosity about some of the complex machinery he saw in operation.

"I remember going and just watching one of the new air jet spinners, wondering how in the world air could spin yarn," he says.

Understanding how the machinery worked was daunting enough and Treece says the thought of understanding it well enough to service the machine was pretty much unthinkable at the time.

But then he was made aware of a technician training program offered by Pharr through the Textile Center.

The program offered by the textile center contains five levels of training and is designed to be completed over a five-year period. The employee is eligible for pay raises following the completion of each level.

After completing his Level 3 training, Treece was informed by Pharr that he was going to be sent to air jet school.

Treece says more than half of the knowledge needed to service the air jet spinners is related to electronics and his learning experience has been a rewarding one.

"I would have never attempted it on my own," Treece said. "Every maintenance person

should have the opportunity to go through the school. I feel very confident on the job.

"I appreciate the opportunity to go through this."

Treece said the training not only gave him the tools he needed to advance his skills as a technician, it also allowed him to increase his earning capacity.

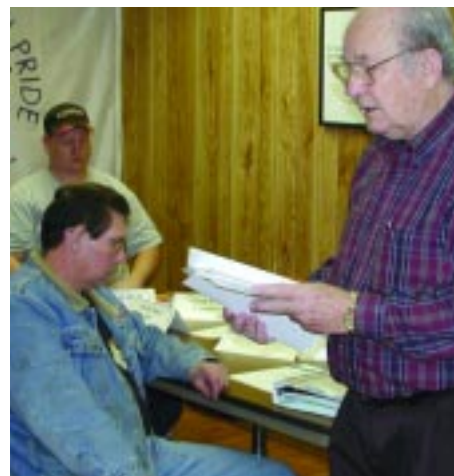
"I got my fifth-level raise," he says.

**KANDY EVANS, BOBBY LOWRANCE, DEWAYNE BAULT, AND PAULINE PANNELL** are supervisors at various locations within Pharr Yarns textile manufacturing facilities. They all agree that managing employees today requires different concepts and principles than in the past. A work environment in which employees are meeting productivity goals is the desired goal.

Managers must have the skills needed to create that environment.

The Textile Center provides that training through several venues of programs

The four Pharr supervisors are among a group of 24 employees at the company that in February began the center's Development Dimensions International (DDI) Leadership Series. They are among the approximate 100 Pharr employees who will have completed the training by the end



*Textile center instructor Bill Boiter on site at a training session with Pharr employees*

of this month. Since 1997, Pharr has sent more than 1,800 employees through the center's various training program.

DDI Leadership Series courses include Helping Others Adapt to Change, Guiding Conflict Resolution and Facilitating Improved Performance. The goal of the training is to strengthen the employees' leadership skills, allowing them to provide support to the company by understanding how to resolve situations encountered in

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*Celebrating 125 Years of Continuing Innovation*

"The Textile Center has provided a valuable training service to Glen Raven over the years and has an eye on the future in terms of the evolving nature of the domestic textile industry and its needs going forward.

**Allen Gant, Jr.**  
**President**  
**Glen Raven Custom Fabrics, LLC**



**GROVER INDUSTRIES, INC.**

Grover Industries has been pleased to have hired several employees who received training at NCCAT. We also believe the testing facility is important for our company as we continue to try to find the most cost effective way to serve our customers.

**James A. Harry**  
**Grover Industries, Inc.**

everyday interactions.

Like most of the center's training programs, the DDI Leadership Series is configured to meet individual companies' specific needs. Through an optimal mix of classroom and Web-based training, online performance support and on-the-job learning experiences, the program meets the special needs of the company.

Industry executives know that their managers, especially those on the front lines, are the single most important ingredient in building a high-performance workforce. The goal is to have leaders who can drive results, develop high achievers and get everyone on the same page.

Evans, Lowrance, Bault and Pannell all believe the center's DDI program better prepares them for meeting their roles as managers.

"In any management role, you have to be able to deal with people," says Evans. "This training shows us ways to better do that."

As Bault notes, there may be different ways to handle any given employee situation that may involve some type conflict. "It (DDI training) shows you the right way."

Bault says he has learned to look at both sides of the equation and to "get all the details before you jump."

"You can't deal with two people the same way," he adds.

Pannell says another important aspect for her is the fact the training gives her the needed insight into the one-on-one relationship-building skills that managers need. And equally important to her, says Pannell, is that the training gives her more confidence in making the decisions required of managers.

Lowrance says that he has been through similar training programs with other companies but that the Textile Center's training has been the most thorough, especially the follow-through aspect of the training. "They keep refreshing the training," he said.

In an interview with the four Pharr employees, it was evident that the training they were each involved in had several other benefits in addition to those employed in their individual roles at the company.

Each employee expressed a gratitude to the company they are employed with for giving them an opportunity to develop their leadership skills. "If they didn't care about us, we wouldn't be here," says Bault.

They also expressed an equal apprecia-

tion to the Textile Center and its training staff – which they said not only made the training a learning experience but an enjoyable one. "I think it's great," says Evans. "They (center staff) do a great job."

In today's highly competitive global environment, there's a degree of uncertainty in just about any manufacturing sector. If any group of employees has grown accustomed to that fact, it's the North Carolina textile industry employee as thousands of jobs in that sector have been lost due to pressure from low-wage production at foreign locales.

And while each of the four supervisors say they are grateful to be employed with a company that has positioned itself to remain competitive, they still experience a degree of anxiety when they hear an announcement of yet another plant closing.

But it also was evident that such anxiety has lessened by the fact they are more confident in their ability to gain employment elsewhere because of the training they are receiving.



Textile center instructor Sam Buff on site at a training session with Pharr employees.

"My job is leaving," Bault speaks hypothetically. "What do I know other than textiles. At least I know that the skills I've learned here will benefit me if my job were to go elsewhere."

**IT'S THE CONFIDENCE DEVELOPED** in an employee's job skills as well as confidence in their self-esteem that Mel Collins, Pharr Yarns' industrial relations manager, has found rewarding in observing the center's training programs at work over the years.

Collins says he has seen people who have been out of the learning environment for 20 years who may be intimidated by the

thought of returning to a classroom setting.

The fact that the Textile Center's staff is made up of textile industry personnel – people that can relate to real-world situations found in the manufacturing environment – helps the employee overcome some of that initial trepidation.

Once the employee begins the training and finds a Textile Center training staff that is there to give the employee individual attention, Collins says the employee almost inevitably begins developing confidence in their learning ability.

"People want to learn," Collins says.

Somewhat of a chain reaction begins, he notes. The employee becomes more confident in the learning environment. As the instruction advances, the employee becomes more confident in their job skills and with that comes a more productive employee. In turn, the employee is eligible for pay level increases thus bettering his or her earning capacity.

All that is what Collins refers to as the "human asset" of the Textile Center's training.

"It's been a terrific program for us," he says.

From the technical skills training to programs that "train the trainers," Collins says Pharr Yarns has found "tremendous success" with the Textile Center's training programs.

Whether helping companies raise the bar on the quality of their maintenance work or assisting managers to adapt to the changes in today's workforce, Collins says the training programs offered at the Textile Center play a critical role in helping companies compete in today's global marketplace.

"It's a tremendous assist to the textile industry," he says.