



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

By Heather Rutz | Lima News

LIMA — Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel kicked off a new effort to promote skilled manufacturing jobs in the state with a visit Monday to American Trim.

Mandel gave a newly created "Ohio Strong" award to three American Trim employees, Chris Hunt, Adam Jordan and Mitch Stearley.

The strength of the state's economy will depend on manufacturing jobs, Mandel said, so he wants to raise public awareness about the jobs and encourage more people to pursue careers in manufacturing and skilled trades.

"We need to be doing everything we can to encourage young people to go into the skilled trades and manufacturing. We're trying to recognize men and women in the skilled trades and manufacturing," Mandel said. "I want to recognize the workers and bring a heightened sense of pride and profile to men and women who are working on machines and putting product out the door."

Mandel said he came to Allen County to kick off of the award because of the county's strong manufacturing history and tradition.

Mandel pointed to a statistics showing mismatches in the labor market. A Bureau of Labor Statistics study shows that 48 percent of college graduates are working in jobs that don't require four-year degrees. Another 600,000 manufacturing jobs are going unfilled across the country because employers can't find qualified, skilled workers.

American Trim selected the three employees because they represented entry-level, mid-level and advanced positions.

Steve Hatkevich, American Trim's vice president of research and development, said the key to remember is advanced manufacturing jobs are helping the company compete against third-world countries.

"Don't underestimate the career paths available," Hatkevich said. "For us, advanced manufacturing is key. It doesn't compete on cost."

A form to nominate an employee is available on the state treasurer's website at <http://www.ohiotreasurer.gov/ohiostrong>.