

Metal products company donates equipment to vocation center

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MT. VERNON — Local manufacturing students will soon be manipulating even more metal thanks to a new equipment donation and cooperation from an area college.

Officials at Mt. Vernon Township High School's Area Vocation Center recently learned that the center would receive an Alliant vertical mill for the manufacturing program from Bennett Metal Products at no cost to the school. Ranken Technical College in St. Louis has also agreed to repair the mill and ship it to the school free of charge.

In addition to Mt. Vernon, the AVC offers job training in a number of fields to high school students from Waltonville, Wayne City, Woodlawn and Webber Township. Assistant Principal and AVC Director Rob Knutson called the donation "a nice, pleasant surprise."

Knutson said, "As you can see, these two partners have gone to great lengths to help see that Mt. Vernon Township High School's AVC manufacturing program not only maintains but continues to grow and excel in providing



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training and equipment to Jefferson and Wayne county juniors and seniors."

According to Knutson, the donation was brought to his attention by manufacturing teacher Jason Patterson. "One thing we try to do is get

our instructors involved in the industry," he said. When Patterson was discussing possible contributions of scrap steel to the program and job placement for students, Bennett representatives offered the mill to the school.

"The more tools we have, the more students will be able to work the tools one-on-one," Patterson said.

Vertical mills are used to shape metals in various ways, such as planing, slot cutting, drilling, and routing. "It makes the big chunks littler," Patterson joked. He said Ranken would deliver the mill to the school on April 27.

Knutson added, "I cannot begin to tell you how much Mt. Vernon AVC appreciated Bennett Metal Products donating this mill to our manufacturing program. The fact that Bennett Metal donated and shipped this mill to St. Louis for free so that it could be refurbished is impressive. In addition, Ranken Technical College having its students completely restore the mill and bring it back to Mt. Vernon Township High School is fantastic."

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4/2007