

▶ **What is Transportation, Warehousing & Logistics?**

This field is experiencing critical shortages, providing new opportunities for workforce development professionals to place their clients.

▶ **Keep on Truckin’**

CJC explores some of the possible factors behind continuing driver shortages to learn more about potential opportunities, as well as any drawbacks that may exist for job seekers in this industry.

▶ **Today’s Warehouse Worker**

Warehouse occupations at both large and small facilities are in high demand in this growing field.

▶ **DSC Logistics**

The HR field manager for these busy warehouse facilities talks to CJC about the types of workers they hire.

FRONTLINE FOCUS:
DEVELOPMENT
FOR WORKFORCE
PROFESSIONALS

▶ **Bridging the Gap: TWL Training Program**

This article highlights three examples of training programs that focus on high-demand occupations, such as truck driving, warehousing and automotive technology. According to industry experts, individuals entering these fields can expect outstanding pay and benefits, along with opportunities for advancement.

▶ **Up Close & Personal**

When Parish Green first started working in warehousing, he never imagined that one day he would become co-owner of a Chicago company that has been in business for 18 years.

▶ **UPS Hiring Part-time Package Handlers**

UPS is always looking to add more part-time package handlers to its sorting facility in Hodgkins, Illinois.

▶ **Conference on Careers in Transportation**

City Colleges of Chicago and the Chicago Workforce Board host the “Going Places: Careers in Transportation & Logistics” conference on November 8, 2005.

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► What is Transportation, Warehousing & Logistics?

Most of us are somewhat familiar with the industry sector known as transportation, warehousing & logistics (TWL). We've also heard that this sector is experiencing critical skills shortages. In fact, the U.S. Department of Labor projects that transportation and warehousing employment will increase 21.7 percent over the 2002-12 period.¹

This is welcome news to workforce development professionals looking for new opportunities to place their clients in a field that has many job openings. What may not be so apparent is how to determine which TWL jobs are the best fit for entry-level workers, or even where those jobs exist in the Chicago region.

In an effort to define and simplify this complex industry, CJC has researched some of the entry-level, high-demand occupations that offer good pay and career advancement, such as truck drivers, automotive mechanics, forklift operators and school bus drivers.

It's important to note that because of technological advances within the industry, many TWL occupations require some degree of specialized training. The good news is that there are vocational programs in Chicago offering short-term, hands-on training courses, which are outlined in this issue.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the **transportation and warehousing sector** (as classified by that agency) includes industries providing transportation of passengers and cargo, warehousing and storage for goods, and even scenic and sightseeing transportation.² As you can imagine, this encompasses a vast array of occupations – everything from air and rail workers to forklift operators and package handlers. Specifically, the demand for truck transportation and warehousing services will expand as many manufacturers concentrate on their core competencies, and contract out their product transportation and storage functions.³

Chicago has dominated the North American transportation and distribution arena since the 1850s, and in the past 20 years, it has become the major crossroads of America's global trade, according to World Business Chicago (WBC), a not-for-profit economic development organization promoting metropolitan Chicago.⁴

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¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Industry at a Glance, "NAICS 48-49 & 22: Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities."

² Industry at a Glance article.

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2004-05 Edition, "Tomorrow's Jobs."

⁴ "Transportation & Distribution: Transportation Hub and Distribution Capital of North America," 26 Oct. 2005

“Chicago is the transportation hub of North America ...,” says Rob Hoffman, director of business development for WBC, explaining that our city excels at all modes of transportation, but especially road and rail. “Chicago is the only place in North America where all six major rail lines intersect,” he says.

The field of **logistics** is another growing career area -- however, it is important to point out that logistics is *not* an entry-level occupation for someone without a college degree. Logistics professionals manage and coordinate activities to ensure an effective and efficient flow of materials and information. They are responsible for such activities as strategic planning, forecasting and inventory control.

Manufacturing vs. Warehousing



There is a common misconception that manufacturing jobs and warehousing jobs are the same, but they're actually quite different. **Manufacturing** pertains to producing or assembling parts or products, and includes such jobs as welders, tool grinders and machine operators. **Warehouses**, by contrast, are facilities designed for rapid redistribution of consumer goods. Warehousing positions include order fillers, forklift operators and shipping & receiving clerks. Having said that, however, some manufacturers do have their own on-site warehouse areas where

products are stored for later shipment.

Where Are the Jobs?

Although TWL is a booming industry with excellent pay, it's worth noting that there is a disparity between where the greatest numbers of jobs are located and where the workers live. Typically, the mega warehouses, trucking companies and big industrial parks are located in the far suburbs, where there is an abundance of land.

If you're considering placing a job-seeking client with a company located in the suburbs, there are some options for individuals who don't own a car. As an example, UPS in Hodgkins, Illinois, has made great strides in collaborating with Pace, the suburban transit agency, to ensure that UPS employees have round-the-clock transportation that drops them off right at the company's front door. This may be a trend to watch for with other suburban companies. (See more about UPS' hiring practices in the article "UPS Hiring Part-time Package Handlers.")

In addition, Pace offers a vanpool program, which allows individuals who work in the suburbs and who share similar schedules and routes to commute to work in a van that is owned, insured and maintained by Pace, but driven by a vanpool participant. Each rider pays a low monthly fare based on distance and number of vanpool participants. (Van routes and passenger pick-up locations vary.) To learn more about Pace's Vanpool Incentive Program, visit: www.pacebus.com. ■

► Keep On Truckin'

The trucking industry in Illinois is on the move. The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) projects that 38,000 truck drivers (in the “Heavy and Tractor Trailer” category) will be needed in 2012 – a more than 15% increase from the 33,000 drivers employed in 2002.⁵ At the same time, the trucking industry is continuing to face worker shortages. A recent *Crain's Chicago Business* article explains that the industry has been enduring these shortages for years.⁶ CJC explored some of the possible factors behind the driver shortages to learn more about potential opportunities, as well as any drawbacks that may exist for job seekers in this industry.

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) projects that 38,000 truck drivers will be needed in 2012.

George Billows, executive director of the Illinois Trucking Association, a non-profit trade association that represents trucking companies, as well as independent owners and operators, attributes the shortage, in part, to a population of aging drivers. “The average age [range] of drivers [today] is in the mid- to upper fifties, so they’ll be retiring. In ten years, the [trucking] industry will be short about 120,000 drivers [nationwide],” he says.

Others believe the driver shortage is related to salaries. A report by The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago⁷ relates the findings of a transportation forum held in May 2004, during which trucking executives asserted they could not find enough qualified drivers – a problem they attributed to low wages. These executives further speculated that they would have to substantially raise trucking rates in order to increase wages.

Rob Hoffman, director of business development with World Business Chicago, a not-for-profit economic development organization promoting metropolitan Chicago, views the situation differently. He emphasizes that truck drivers *are* paid well, but, in spite of that, there is still a 100 percent turnover rate in the industry. Part of the reason is that truck driving is not your average nine-to-five job, according to Hoffman. “It’s a way of life,” he says, adding that drivers typically endure long absences from home, and that first-time truck drivers usually have to start out with long-distance trucking jobs until they build up seniority at a company. “You don’t get to spend a lot of time with your family,” says Hoffman.

“The truck driver is the last link in, frequently, a very long global supply chain.”

In addition, Hoffman says customers have higher expectations, which creates more stress for drivers. “There’s a lot more technology... a lot more pressure [for drivers] to meet deadlines... The truck driver is the last link in, frequently, a very long global supply chain,” says Hoffman.

⁵ Illinois Department of Employment Security, 2002 - 2012 Occupational Employment Projections, Cook County.

⁶ Sandra Jones, “Jobs 2012: Temps and Techs,” *Crain's Chicago Business*, 4 Oct. 2004: p. SR2

⁷ The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago, *Root Causes for Critical Skill Shortages in Transportation, Warehousing and Logistics*, July 2004.

He says that 85 percent of freight is moved by truck, and there are more than 200 truck terminals in the greater Chicago area.

Billows says the high turnover rate has been misrepresented. “The turnover is more of a contractual issue,” says Billows. “[Independent drivers] who own their own trucks hopscotch around the country,” he says. “They take on one assignment, finish it, and then go on to the next one... They’re going from one company to another, based on where the jobs are,” he explains. “They’re not leaving the [trucking] industry to pursue other [careers].”

By comparison, Billows says that most truck drivers who are hired as permanent drivers for one company usually work there for years. “This is a wonderful time for anyone who wants a challenging and exciting career. It’s a ‘people’ business,” says Billows, explaining that when truckers make their deliveries, they meet many individuals, such as consignees and shippers. He adds that salaries also remain competitive.

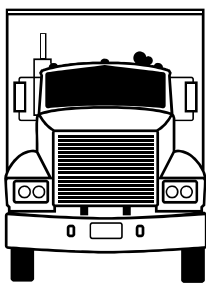
“The trucking industry has always been one of the leaders in pay,” he says, explaining that new drivers can make between \$35,000 and \$40,000 their first year. He says there is an especially big demand for over-the-road or “long-haul” drivers, who are often gone for days at a time; he says there’s also a “decent” demand for local drivers.

“This is a wonderful time for anyone who wants a challenging and exciting career.”

Curtis Colin, a veterans employment representative with the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), says many of his clients don’t want the long-haul jobs because they’d rather stay close to home and drive the local routes. Colin has found that most local routes go to drivers with seniority, but there are exceptions. “I’ve got one trucking company that hires for a Chicago-to-Milwaukee route and back [in the same day]. That’s a good job for candidates,” says Colin.

Patriot Act/Hazmat Endorsement

Since September 11, the rules and regulations pertaining to a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) have become much stricter. “Illinois is one of the toughest states in the country [regarding] our CDL rules and regulations,” says Terry Montalbano, CDL administrator for the Illinois Secretary of State. This is especially true for drivers who will be hauling hazardous materials, such as gasoline, paint and even blood.



Drivers who plan to haul such materials must have a Hazmat (“Hazardous Materials”) endorsement on their CDL. According to Montalbano, an individual has to go through a number of steps to obtain that endorsement, including being fingerprinted for a background check and filling out a threat assessment form, which asks for detailed information about your employer, where you live, etc. “It’s a snapshot of your life,” says Montalbano.

The Patriot Act, along with other legislation passed after September 11, has made obtaining or renewing a Hazmat endorsement even more difficult,

especially for job seekers with any type of criminal background. There is now a long “list” of disqualifying felonies, under federal law, which could potentially bar someone from getting a Hazmat endorsement, ranging from violent to nonviolent crimes. Though there are provisions in the law that allow someone to appeal a disqualification decision or, in some cases, request that restrictions be waived, it is uncertain how easy it will be for an individual to navigate through the system. “We’re following this closely to see how the implementation of these standards is playing out,” says Roberta Meyers-Peebles, co-director at National H.I.R.E. Network (“H.I.R.E.” refers to: **H**elping **I**ndividuals with criminal records **R**e-enter through **E**mployment), a national clearinghouse for information and an advocate for employment policy change.

“Illinois is one of the toughest states in the country [regarding] our CDL rules and regulations,” says Terry Montalbano, CDL administrator for the Illinois Secretary of State.

The Hazmat endorsement is especially significant because it enables CDL holders to earn a considerably larger salary. As well, employers may be more interested in hiring a driver who has a Hazmat endorsement, since he can haul any materials without restrictions.

“It’s definitely a plus to have the Hazmat endorsement,” says Meyers-Peebles. “[With the Hazmat], you’re not limited in any way.”

For more information on Hazmat laws, visit www.hirenetwork.org, or go to The National Employment Law Project’s website: www.nelp.org.

For individuals applying for a non-Hazmat CDL, the rules are not quite as stringent, but certain requirements still apply. You must be 18 years of age to apply for a CDL license to drive in-state, and age 21 to cross state lines. The main physical requirements include good hearing and 20/40 vision with or without glasses or corrective lenses. Be aware that all CDL computerized tests, as well as road and skills tests, are administered in English only.⁸

Also, keep in mind that although no criminal background check is conducted for a non-Hazmat CDL, certain things such as a suspended or revoked license will prevent someone from obtaining the CDL. In addition, Montalbano points out that a criminal offense will show up on a person’s driving record if the crime was committed with the use of a car. For example, if an individual robbed a bank or sold drugs using a car, those offenses will appear on the driving record, according to Montalbano.

In addition, new federal provisions are cracking down on all CDL holders who are convicted of violating traffic laws while operating *any* type of motor vehicle. For example, if a CDL holder is convicted of violating a traffic law with his personal vehicle, that conviction now goes on his CDL driving record, according to Montalbano. In the past, personal motor vehicle convictions only showed up on a personal vehicle driving record. ■

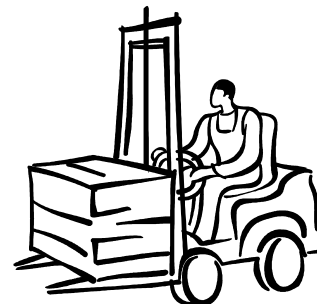
⁸ “Illinois’ CDL Test Requirements and CDL Endorsement Test Info”
<<http://www.testquestionsandanswers.com/cdl/illinois.html>>, 26 Oct. 2005

► Today's Warehouse Worker

In decades past, warehouses were little more than desolate storage centers filled with dusty crates and boxes. Fast-forward into the 21st century where many of today's warehouses are high-tech operations filled with bustling activity 24 hours a day. They employ a variety of workers to keep shipments moving – everyone from order fillers and shipping & receiving clerks to forklift operators and supervisors. Modern warehouses are often stacked to the ceiling with consumer goods labeled with bar codes, and workers rely on hand-held scanners and forklifts with built-in computers to find what they need among a vast sea of pallets.

The warehousing and storage industry is projected to grow rapidly at 28.6 percent through 2012.⁹ According to a recent *Crain's Chicago Business* article, Chicago is the second largest warehousing and storage market in the country, behind New York/New Jersey.¹⁰ Large warehouses (typically those over 100,000 square feet) have become the norm, and some are even five to ten times that size. "Forty-four percent of industrial buildings in Illinois are dedicated to warehousing.... [It's] a huge business here," says Rob Hoffman, director of business development for World Business Chicago, a not-for-profit economic development organization promoting metropolitan Chicago.

Many companies are finding it difficult to manage the sheer size of warehouse facilities, so they are turning to third-party logistics management firms to handle that for them. In fact, among Fortune 100 companies with warehousing and distribution operations, 82% hire an outside source to handle those functions.¹¹ One such operation is DSC Logistics, based in Des Plaines, Illinois, which handles such functions as warehousing and transportation for Fortune 100 companies (See the article on DSC Logistics in this issue.)



While large warehouses are likely to offer more employment opportunities, that's no reason to completely overlook smaller companies, some of which have their own on-site warehouse facilities. Winzeler Gear is a manufacturer of plastic gears, located on the outskirts of Chicago in Harwood Heights, Illinois. The company employs about three workers for its 4,000 square foot warehouse. Similar to the larger warehousing facilities, owner John Winzeler says that his company's warehouse has become highly automated, so he looks for people with good computer skills.

Smaller companies may also offer employee training opportunities not always found in larger facilities. Keith LeCompte, HR manager at the manufacturing company Quality Control

⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2004-05 Edition, "Tomorrow's Jobs."

¹⁰ Bob Tita, "All Roads Lead to Chicago," *Crain's Chicago Business*, 15 Aug. 2005: 18-19.

¹¹ Also from Tita article.

Corporation (also in Harwood Heights), says that the company trains its forklift operators. “If [a job candidate] has a valid drivers license, we can train him,” says LeCompte.

Warehouse occupations are obviously in high demand, so what specific abilities does one need to ensure a successful career in shipping and receiving? The Greater West Town Training Partnership (GWTP), which runs a shipping and receiving training program, suggests that an ideal candidate is someone who:

- Is detail-oriented.
- Computer literate (or willing to learn).
- Alert and constantly aware of workplace safety and hazardous material.
- Physically fit (able to lift up to 75 lbs.
- Has excellent critical thinking skills.
- Can perform a number of different responsibilities.

GWTP states that the starting pay for individuals in shipping and receiving generally falls between \$8 and \$12 per hour, with an average rate of \$9.29 an hour. Bob Fittin, director of training for GWTP, emphasizes, however, that this is a fast-paced career track with room for advancement. “We have people who started at entry-level and moved up to supervisory positions,” says Fittin. (One such individual is Parish Green, whose impressive career journey is profiled separately in this newsletter.) ■

► DSC Logistics

Many companies produce and ship large quantities of goods all over the world on a daily basis; however, they are finding it increasingly difficult to manage the sheer size of warehouse facilities. As a result, these businesses are turning to third-party logistics management firms for help. In fact, among Fortune 100 companies with warehousing and distribution operations, 82% hire an outside source to handle those functions.¹²

One such source is DSC Logistics, based in Des Plaines, Illinois. DSC works with the food and consumer goods industries, as well as electronics and healthcare accounts, among others. We spoke recently with Linda McCahill, HR field manager at DSC, about the types of workers they hire for their busy warehouse facilities.

Q. *How many warehouses does DSC have in Illinois?*

A. We have two warehouses. One is in Des Plaines, and the other warehouse is in Elwood (near Joliet) at CenterPoint Intermodal Center (an industrial park). Our clients include Unilever (whose brands include Hellman's mayonnaise); Turtle Wax; and Yamaha (the division that produces keyboards, drums and guitars.) The warehouse in Elwood is huge – you've never seen so many jars of mayonnaise or racks of guitars and drums!

Q. *What kinds of entry-level workers does DSC employ?*

A. Forklift operators are the only entry-level jobs. DSC requires that a candidate have six months' experience as a forklift operator or [certification] from a training program.

Q. *How many forklift operators are employed at DSC?*

A. The Elwood location has approximately 150 forklift operators, and the Des Plaines warehouse has about 40. We're always looking to fill forklift operator positions at both warehouses.

Q. *What types of individuals do you look for?*

A. People who have a stable work history, a good attitude ... and a [strong] work ethic.

¹² Bob Tita, "All Roads Lead to Chicago," Crain's Chicago Business, 15 Aug. 2005: 18-19.

Q. *What are some of the skills you look for in forklift operators?*

A. We look for at least 6 months of forklift experience, along with computer knowledge, basic math skills like addition and subtraction, and visual speed, which is needed to identify bar codes [in the warehouse].

Q. *How would someone apply for a forklift position?*

A. They have to come in to fill out an application and take an assessment test, which checks math, visual and speed [capabilities], as well as a written forklift test.

Q. *What is the starting pay for forklift operators?*

A. Typically, it's \$10 per hour and includes benefits.

Q. *What are the hours?*

A. There are three shifts: 6:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.; 2:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.; and 10:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m.

Q. *Is there a career path for forklift operators at DSC?*

A. Yes. A forklift operator can advance to a lead forklift operator, and then to a supervisor position. At the supervisory level, though, you do need a bachelor's degree. (DSC offers tuition reimbursement to those individuals seeking to continue their education.)

To learn more about DSC Logistics and available positions, visit their website at: www.dsclogistics.com. ■

► Bridging the Gap: TWL Training Programs in Chicago

With all the excitement being generated about hot careers in transportation, warehousing & logistics (TWL), many workforce development professionals are just as eager to learn about job training programs that will prepare their clients for different careers in this rapidly expanding industry.

Fortunately, there are a number of specialized training programs offered in Chicago to help individuals make the transition from a beginner to a skilled professional.

This article highlights three examples of training programs that focus on high-demand occupations, such as truck driving, warehousing and automotive technology. According to industry experts, individuals entering these fields can expect outstanding pay and benefits, along with opportunities for advancement.

Trucking, School Bus Drivers, Forklift Operators & Railroad Sector

Olive-Harvey College, whose main campus is located at 10001 S. Woodlawn, on the city's Southeast side, is already well-known for the **CDL (Commercial Driver's License)** program it launched six years ago. The accredited six-week program features classroom instruction, along with on-the-road training, which enables students to earn a Class "A" CDL. (Class "A" allows an individual to drive a commercial truck and certain other vehicles.)

"[The program] covers every aspect of commercial truck driving... including parking, maneuvering and defensive driving," says Joanne Ivory, newly appointed executive director of the transportation, warehousing & logistics program at Olive-Harvey. "[Students] drive on streets and expressways," she adds. At the end of the program, students must pass a written test and a driving test, both administered by the Illinois Secretary of State. Restrictions apply to individuals with certain types of criminal backgrounds. (For more on this topic, see the article, "Keep on Truckin'," in this issue.)

While salaries vary within the trucking industry, Ivory says that starting pay can be "upwards of \$40,000 [per year]."

In spring 2006, Olive-Harvey will offer an expanded TWL program with training courses for **school bus drivers** and **forklift operators**. In addition, the college has tentative plans to add a training program on the **railroad sector**. "We're looking at all aspects of the [rail] industry," says Ivory, referring to such jobs as signalers, conductors, engineers and rail maintenance yard workers. The school has also implemented a new TWL bridge program designed to help students make the transition to the college-credit TWL courses.

"[The program] covers every aspect of commercial truck driving... including parking, maneuvering and defensive driving," says Joanne Ivory, newly appointed executive director of the transportation, warehousing & logistics program at Olive-Harvey.

The school bus driver program, in particular, will help fill a significant regional employment gap. “There is a tremendous demand for school bus drivers in Illinois,” Ivory says. The school bus program will be similar to the standard CDL program at Olive-Harvey, except that students will receive a Class “B” CDL.

It’s worth noting that most school bus driver positions are only part-time (usually consistent with the start and end of a school day) and typically don’t offer medical benefits. However, Ivory says these jobs still provide attractive incentives. “[A school bus driver] usually starts out making a minimum of \$10 an hour, and he [receives] six or seven paid holidays and even vacation time,” she says.

Cinda Meneghetti, state director of pupil transportation for the Illinois State Board of Education, says that such incentives vary, depending on the school district and the individual bus company, but acknowledges the city probably offers the best packages.” ...There is more competition for school bus drivers in Chicago... so there will be better pay and incentives...,” says Meneghetti.

Curtis Colin, a veterans employment representative with the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), has referred candidates for school bus driver positions.

He suggests a way for drivers to earn additional pay. “[School bus drivers] can also drive a charter to make more money,” says Colin, explaining that schools need charter buses to transport students on such outings as field trips and other school-related activities.

State law is very strict when it comes to background checks and other pre-employment conditions for school bus drivers. Among other things, individuals must be 21 years of age or older and possess a valid driver’s license that has not been revoked or otherwise disqualified in the three years immediately prior to the date of application for a school bus driver permit. Applicants must also successfully complete a medical exam, including drug screening, and they have to pass an Illinois fingerprint-based criminal background check. Ivory says that the background check is conducted in order to screen for specific criminal offenses, including drug convictions, aggravated assault and crimes against children. Offenses such as these will immediately disqualify someone from becoming a school bus driver.



It’s also important to note that an individual who is applying for a CDL of any kind must be able to read and understand English because the Illinois Secretary of State administers all CDL tests in English only.

Olive-Harvey provides open access to adults seeking post-secondary education, regardless of an individual’s personal background. For questions regarding any aspect of the TWL program, as well as enrollment and financial aid issues, call Olive-Harvey’s Department of Workforce & Community Education at: **(773) 291-6291** or call the general number at: **(773) 291-6100**.

Automotive Technology

Gone are the days when an auto mechanic could figure out what was wrong with a car simply by lifting the hood. **Auto technicians**, as they're referred to today, have to be computer savvy in order to keep up with the latest technological advances. "Cars are computers on wheels," says Harold Santamaria, automotive instructor and newly appointed automotive coordinator at Truman College. He says that car manufacturers add new features every year, such as radios with touch-screen functions, as well as navigational systems.

Truman recently implemented an automotive bridge program to help its adult education students make a successful transition to the college-credit Automotive Technology program. The bridge program includes a recruitment/orientation process with an overview of the automotive field, along with industry terminology, education and training requirements, career opportunities, and a 32-hour Automotive Bridge course with separate sections designed to meet the needs of ESL and GED students.

Armando Mata, dean of the adult education program at Truman, points out that all of the college's adult education classes are free, including the ESL and GED courses, as well as its automotive and healthcare bridge programs. "The primary reason students come here is to learn English and get their GED," says Mata.

Auto technicians, as they're referred to today, have to be computer savvy in order to keep up with the latest technological advances. "Cars are computers on wheels," says Harold Santamaria, automotive instructor and newly appointed automotive coordinator at Truman College. "[Students] drive on streets and expressways," she adds.

Santamaria says that not being proficient in English can be a detriment to those seeking careers as auto technicians because they're often required to look up instructions on a car manufacturer's website and comprehend technical information. "Being able to read and follow directions [is important]," says Santamaria. "[Technicians] need excellent communication skills, above-average mechanical aptitude and good manual dexterity."

Students at Truman get hands-on training on "as new a car as possible," according to Santamaria, who worked as an automotive technician for twelve years before becoming an instructor. "It's a very good field to be in right now," he says, "You don't get dirty as much [as in the past]." Starting pay is also very competitive. Santamaria says technicians employed at a dealership can start out making \$13 to \$14 per hour. They usually work about 40 hours per week, and most dealership employees belong to a union.

Santamaria recalls one particularly ambitious automotive graduate who had made some mistakes in life, but went on to find great success despite the odds. "[The student's] parole officer would drop him off right in front of the school," Santamaria recalls, which he knew was probably embarrassing for the young man. So, Santamaria asked the parole officer to allow the student to come to school on his own, and Santamaria kept track of his attendance in class.

After completing the intensive program, the young man graduated from Truman with high honors and an advanced certificate in automotive technology. He eventually accepted an on-the-spot job offer from a dealership. Santamaria estimates that the young man's starting salary was between \$35,000 and \$40,000 per year, and expects that within eight years or so, he could be earning between \$70,000 and \$100,000. "He has made a remarkable turnaround," says Santamaria. "All he needed was someone to believe in him."

While industry demand is high for automotive technicians, individuals with poor driving records may have a hard time finding employment in this field. For example, if a person has received even one DUI (driving under the influence offense) during his lifetime, that may be enough for an employer to refuse to hire him. "[A DUI] will haunt you for the rest of your life," says Santamaria. Having a suspended license can also be an obstacle. The reason technicians need clean driving records is that they frequently test-drive the cars they work on; someone who has a bad driving record poses a risk to his employer. Santamaria says that students in Truman's automotive program are advised early on about these barriers, so they can decide if it is the right field for them.

Truman's main campus is located at 1145 W. Wilson Ave. Like Olive-Harvey, Truman provides open access to every adult seeking post-secondary education, regardless of his/her background. For more information on Truman's automotive training program, as well as admissions criteria, contact the Adult Education department at: (773) 907-4350. For general information on adult education classes, visit Truman's website at: www.trumancollege.edu.

Shipping & Receiving

Greater West Town Training Partnership (GWTP) launched its **Shipping & Receiving Training Program** in 1996. As of June 2005, more than 400 students have graduated from the program. "Our training [prepares] people for an entry-level position.... We want [students] who are looking for a career," says Bob Fittin, director of training for GWTP.

Modeled after GWTP's successful Woodworkers Training Program, the Shipping and Receiving Program prepares trainees with a broad base of skills needed for entry-level positions, including warehouse workers, forklift operators, inventory specialists, material handlers and more.

"We're giving people a broad range of experience in different areas," says Fittin. During the 12-week program, students get hands-on experience at the center's training facility, where they learn how to operate a forklift and use a hand-held scanner, among other things. "We have three forklifts on site," Fittin points out.



Among other things that the staff members look for when interviewing a candidate for the training program is someone who has shown initiative in trying to secure a job, pursue a GED or even take on volunteer work. "We look at a range of factors," says Fittin.

As part of GWTP's application process, candidates are required to list any felony convictions. This information assists the school in placing students in suitable jobs and work environments. "There are some industries, such as healthcare facilities and airports, where an individual with a felony conviction wouldn't be able to work," says Fittin. "A significant portion of our [program] is made up of ex-offenders," he adds.

It's critical to point out, however, that the GWTP facility is located in a building that also houses a charter school attended by minors. Therefore, according to state law, anyone whose criminal history includes a sexual offense against a juvenile cannot take part in any of GWTP's training programs. Fittin says that GWTP can refer such individuals to other vocational training facilities.

Modeled after GWTP's successful Woodworkers Training Program, the Shipping and Receiving Program prepares trainees with a broad base of skills needed for entry-level positions, including warehouse workers, forklift operators, inventory specialists, material handlers and more.

The goal of the Shipping & Receiving Program is to place students in full-time jobs once they've completed training. Fittin says the school strives to place graduates in companies that are within the Kinzie Industrial Corridor or other parts of the city.

"We have a loyal base of companies we work with," says Fittin. "We try to place people in jobs they'll be able to get to without an excessive amount of commuting."

GWTP is a nationally accredited, state-certified vocational training school located on Chicago's Near West side at 2045 W. Fulton St., in the Kinzie Industrial Corridor. For more information on the Shipping & Receiving Training Program, call: **(312) 563-9028** or log on to: www.gwtp.org. ■

► Up Close & Personal

Name: Parish Green

Position: Co-owner and warehouse supervisor

Employer: American Duvet, Inc.

When Parish Green first started working in warehousing, he never imagined that one day he would become co-owner of a Chicago company that has been in business for 18 years.

“It’s way beyond my wildest dreams,” says Green, 34, a co-owner and warehouse supervisor at American Duvet, Inc., a wholesale supplier of down and feather products to the interior design industry, located in the Kinzie Industrial Corridor on Chicago’s Near West side. “We get products from [other] companies and re-sell them direct to the interior design industry,” Green explains.

Green graduated from the Shipping and Receiving Training Program at Greater West Town Training Partnership (GWTP) in 1999. Prior to that, he worked for RPS (now FedEx Ground), where he started out loading and unloading trucks, and eventually became an area trainer. After three and a half years with the company, he was ready for a change. He knew that additional training could lead to more job opportunities and better pay. (For more information on GWTP, see the article, “Bridging the Gap,” featured in this issue.)

Along the way, he’s learned the importance of keeping customers happy. “It’s having what [customers] want, when they want it,” says Green.

After graduation, Green went on several interviews, but decided to accept an offer from American Duvet because he felt the company would offer the best opportunities for advancement. “It seemed like a good fit, with the opportunity to learn more on the job,” says Green. “[The owners] were going to teach me the ins and outs of warehousing.” He’s been with the company for six years.

He adds that the time he spent at GWTP prepared him well for his job. “[The training] touched on a lot of things that I do [at American Duvet].”

Green started at American Duvet as a warehouse worker, filling orders and handling shipping and receiving. As time went on, he continued to take on more responsibilities at the small, but busy, company. “Once you’re familiar with the terms [of the industry], it’s not hard to fill the orders,” says Green. He adds that his willingness to learn new things helped him advance. “I always had a good work ethic,” he says.

Owners Maryanne Bostwick and Diane Martin (who died, unexpectedly, in a recent car accident), were planning to retire and wanted to turn their beloved company over to someone they trusted. “They took me under their wing and showed me how to run a warehouse,” says Green.

Green was named co-owner of American Duvet in March 2005, and has since become more involved in making decisions for the company, including what trade shows to participate in and which products to feature.

Green enjoys the detailed nature of his job and likes being independent. "No one's looking over my shoulder," he says.

He also supervises two employees, coordinates and attends six to eight trade shows per year, handles customer service calls and oversees product inventory. Along the way, he's learned the importance of keeping customers happy. "It's having what [customers] want, when they want it," says Green. That's no small task, considering American Duvet stocks pillows in 80 different shapes and sizes, along with comforters, down blankets and a small line of sheets.

Green typically works from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., but if it's a particularly busy day or there's a trade show coming up, he may work late or even on a weekend. (He's been a salaried employee for three years.)

"In the morning, I check my computer for [online orders]," says Green, adding that he spends more than half his day on the computer, checking inventory, placing orders and running reports. "We're shipping and packing most of the day," he says. Although he's certified to operate a forklift, Green says he doesn't use one very often because their products are lightweight. Packages are shipped out via UPS, FedEx or a messenger service. Green enjoys the detailed nature of his job and likes being independent. "No one's looking over my shoulder," he says.

At the end of the day, Green fills any last-minute orders, then counts up the receipts and turns them over to Maryanne, who still handles the company's finances. Green, however, is learning about that side of the business in preparation for Maryanne's retirement in two years. When she retires, Maryanne will likely sell her portion of the company to another party, but details have not been finalized. Green will maintain his position as co-owner.

Bob Fittin, director of training for GWTP, says that Green is an excellent role model for other trainees at GWTP, as well as the community. "[Green] exemplifies the type of individual we serve," says Fittin. "He's a credit to his community." Green is also a member of the advisory board for GWTP.

In an effort to further advance his career training, one of Green's goals is to possibly pursue an associate's degree in transportation, warehousing & logistics. However, he plans to stay with American Duvet for a long time. "I enjoy getting up and coming to work every day," he says.



► UPS Hiring Part-time Package Handlers

UPS is always looking to add more part-time package handlers to its sorting facility in Hodgkins, Illinois, according to UPS recruitment manager, Bob Difino. At 1.5 million square feet, Difino boasts that the Hodgkins sorting facility is the world's largest, with approximately 6,000 package handlers.

Fortunately for interested Chicago-area job seekers, there is a reliable and convenient mode of public transportation to shuttle employees to and from the Hodgkins facility. In fact, that was a top priority for UPS. "We partnered with Pace and CTA to create a comprehensive transportation network, so that everyone has an opportunity to work here," says Difino. There are several designated pick-up points in Chicago where employees can board a bus that will take them straight to the UPS facility in Hodgkins. Difino says that UPS also offers employees monthly bus passes at a reduced rate. (Additional information on bus schedules will be provided to candidates during the interview process.)

UPS offers four different work shifts, and the bus schedules coincide with the start and end times of each shift, so that employees won't be left stranded. "Over 40 percent of our daily workforce comes in on public transportation," says Difino, adding that he particularly needs package handlers for the "sunrise" shift, from 4:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Starting pay is \$8.50 per hour, with a 50 cent increase after three months.

"We offer the most competitive pay, the best equipment and the best benefits in the industry," says Difino. Part-time workers are eligible for medical benefits after 40 days, along with dependent healthcare coverage and vision/dental benefits further into their employment. Be advised that UPS package handlers are dues-paying union members.

In addition, the UPS "Earn and Learn" program offers college tuition assistance to all employees. "UPS is a promotion-from-within company," says Difino. "Even our CEO worked as a part-time package handler." (For more information on jobs with UPS, visit: www.upsjobs.com.) ■

► Conference on Careers in the Transportation & Logistics Industry

City Colleges of Chicago and the Chicago Workforce Board host the “Going Places: Careers in Transportation & Logistics” conference on November 8, 2005. The conference will be held at Harold Washington College (30 East Lake Street, Chicago).

The goals of the conference are to:

- Provide concrete examples of the many ways in which technology is used to organize and execute the worldwide movement of products.
- Hear employer’s views on future jobs, employment opportunities and necessary job skills for entry level and advanced positions.
- Alert counselors, advisors and faculty to the many types of jobs in Transportation, Warehousing and logistics (TWL), the education needed and the ways in which employees and employers work together to advance individual careers through employer supported education and training.
- Identify new learning modules to be developed and incorporated into existing or new courses in TWL or related disciplines.

RSVP by November 1, 2005 (seating is limited):

Nancy Kramer, (312) 553-3190, nkramer@ccc.edu or register online at:
<http://hwashton.ccc.edu/goingplaces/index.asp>

For more details please view the **Conference Invitation** or **Online Registration** on that web page. ■

Program Assistant Linda Joyce is the writer/researcher for CJC’s Industry Insider. Linda has more than a decade of experience working as a free-lance journalist for such publications as Chicago Tribune, Pioneer Press, and Today’s Chicago Woman. In addition, she spent seven years working as a media relations specialist for some of the top PR agencies in Chicago. Linda has a B.A. in Marketing Communications from Columbia College.