

Western States Machine Company is hiring to boost ranks by at least 10 percent



Terry Bolser looks over a TITAN Batch Centrifuge at Western States in Fairfield, Thursday, July 20, 2017. Western States, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2017, is an international provider of technologically advanced centrifuges. GREG LYNCH / STAFF
A Butler County manufacturer is hiring to boost ranks by at least 10 percent

Local News

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FAIRFIELD —

Western States Machine Company is looking to increase its workforce by at least 10 percent. The Fairfield-based company is a worldwide supplier of a centrifuge, a device used by both the sugar and nonsugar industries to separate solids from liquids.

Western States fluctuates between the upper 50 to low 60 employees at its 80,000-square-foot facility at 625 Commerce Center Drive, according to Celia Cano-Ramón, the company's human resources manager.

It got its start in 1917 in Salt Lake City, Utah, then sold its plant there in 1925, moving all production and equipment to Hamilton-based Columbia Tool, which would handle all manufacturing while Western States staff focused on design work and sales.

In 1936, Western States entered into a lease with an option to purchase all of Columbia Tool's assets, exercising that option in 1937 and bringing all of Columbia's personnel to Western States payroll.

The company moved to Fairfield in 2013.

Western States looking to hire at least 5 people in the next couple of months, Cano-Ramón said. Positions available include two electrical engineers, a stockroom attendant, a production supervisor and a product manager. Entry level positions start at \$15 an hour.

Cano-Ramón said Western States' hiring push is a combination of growth, employees retiring and employees moving onto other positions elsewhere.

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We asked Cano-Ramón several questions about Western States. Here's what she had to say:

Q: What's the biggest challenge facing your business and others in the industry and how is it uniquely positioned to address that challenge?

A: "Western States' biggest challenge is finding skilled labor and competing with the big companies in the area. We offer a comprehensive benefits packet to attract and retain our employees."

Q: What's the most prevalent roadblock you've encountered when it comes to hiring and what can job seekers do to remedy that situation?

A: "The biggest roadblock we encounter when hiring is competing for the skilled workers with the big corporations around us. It all depends on the mindset of the job seekers and what they are looking for on their next career move: at Western States we strive to make everyone certain that their contributions to the overall well-being of the company are always appreciated. We work as a team and everyone is a critical part of it. Employees are not just a number in the payroll system, but active contributors to the overall success."

Q: Some job seekers are concerned about the limits of advancement within a company. To what degree can your company's employees advance from entry-level roles to become team leaders and department managers?

A: "Western States is a big promoter of career advancement and to help in that, the Company has a tuition reimbursement program that can be used by the employees to advance in their careers or obtain the credentials necessary to move to a different department if desired. We also try to promote from within and the positions are posted internally before we post them to the public. Western States top management has made it a priority to promote from within.

"Over 80 percent of the recent job openings over the last 5 years have been filled from within when internal candidates show an interest. We have also seen an increase in workers who have left Western States employment for one reason or another come back after a short time away."