

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Wind turbines generate Michigan job hopes

Christina Rogers / The Detroit News

Manistee, Michigan --Not long ago, MasTech Manufacturing's future looked almost hopeless.

The latest auto industry problems had nearly stopped production in the factory. The plant, which made high-tech machinery for car and truck plants, was limping by with only five workers. Parts orders were drying up.

But today, the huge, two-story factory is producing something else. It is making wind turbines to meet a fast-growing demand for this renewable power source. MasTech has restored its workforce to more than 40 employees -- hiring many former auto workers -- with plans to grow.

"If we didn't have these wind turbines," said John Holcomb, the plant's manager, "we wouldn't be here talking today. The doors would be closed."

The small factory is located in Manistee, Michigan. This town was once famous for salt mining and lumber mills. But, things have changed. Now, the factory is helping bring about manufacturing changes. State officials hope changes like this will help Michigan become a major producer of wind turbine parts. These are needed for the country's growing number of wind farms.

Adapted from: Wind Turbines Generate Michigan Jobs Hopes. 18 July 2009 Detroit News website.

<http://www.detnews.com/article/20090507/BIZ/905070406/Wind-turbines-generate-Michigan-job-hopes>