

## New woodwork apprenticeship program Focus of Dec. 10 Webinar

By Rich Christianson December 03, 2020



Kelly Victor-Burke, president of Burke Architectural Woodwork, with Logan Leinbach, the nation's first Woodwork Manufacturing Specialist apprentice.

LIVONIA, Mich. – She already did the heavy lifting and now Kelly Victor-Burke, owner of Burke Architectural Woodwork, is prepared to tell other woodworking companies how they, too, can set up a federally recognized apprenticeship program.

Victor-Burke will discuss her three-year quest to create the framework for the Woodwork Manufacturing Specialist apprenticeship program in a free Woodworking Network webinar, *Grow Your Own: Training Your Future Skilled Woodworkers*, scheduled for 2 p.m. EST, Thursday, Dec. 10. The new apprenticeship category, registered this past summer with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), combines cross-training candidates in CAD, CNC, project management and other skills valued by the woodworking industry.

Like most U.S. woodworking companies, Burke Architectural Woodwork has been challenged to hire qualified employees for the shop floor. In the search for a solution, Victor-Burke was initially put off by the idea of establishing a formal apprenticeship program thinking they were only meant for union shops, were too expensive and would be too restricted by DOL rules. She learned otherwise through her research and contacts she made along the way.

Victor-Burke will explain why she believes the time and energy she invested to develop the Woodwork Manufacturing Specialist apprenticeship program was well spent to develop a long-term talent pipeline. She will also discuss the potential economic benefits for both employees and employers and how she has already implemented the program in her southeast Michigan millwork shop. She will conclude her presentation by highlighting a day in the life of Logan Leinbach, the nation's first registered Woodwork Manufacturing Specialist apprentice.

Victor-Burke will be joined in the webinar by two individuals who assisted her in developing the registered Woodwork Manufacturing Specialist apprenticeship program. They include:

Janene Erne of the Workforce Intelligence Network of Taylor, Mich., will focus on how the DOL-registered apprenticeship framework can be implemented by union and non-union shops across the country. She will also discuss how the framework can be tailored to a company's specific needs.

Mark Smith, woodworking instructor at Reed-Custer High School in Braidwood, Ill., will address the importance for woodworking businesses to develop strong relationships with their local high schools and community colleges to boost students' awareness of career opportunities including internships and apprenticeships. Smith will also discuss the role social media plays in helping schools and businesses communicate with one another through words, pictures and stories.

Harry Urban, publisher of Woodworking Network, will moderate the webinar, which is sponsored by Casadei-Busellato.

Attendees of the webinar will have a chance to ask questions. They will also gain access to a variety of helpful documents including the Woodwork Manufacturing Specialist work process and contact list of state and regional offices of federal apprenticeships.