

ROSE CUSTOM CABINETS, INC..

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Mr. Brian Gordon - Director
Three Rivers Education for Employment System
1215 Houbolt Road
Joliet, Illinois 60432

Dear Mr. Gordon,

My name is Lori Rosenberg and I am the Vice President of Rose Custom Cabinets, Inc. I am writing this letter in support of Mark Smith's industrial technology program at Reed- Custer High School 249 Comet Drive, Braidwood, Illinois 60408. I met Mark at a woodworking fair in Rosemont and learned more about his Industrial Technology Program 6 years ago.

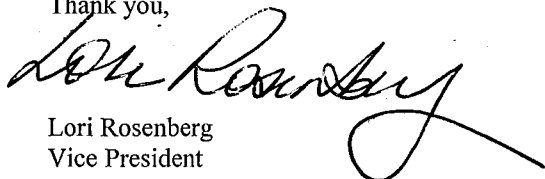
I entered the woodworking business since 1989. I went to college and law school, but in 1989 I took over the growing business end of my husband's small custom cabinet shop. My husband Brian did not attend college; he took a woodshop class in high school and found his future there. After high school in 1979, Brian started work as an apprentice carpenter for builder and within 4 years he chose to start his own carpentry company. After a few successful year in carpentry, Brian saw a demand for custom build cabinetry and Rose Custom Cabinets, Inc. was born. He started off in a small garage with 1 helper and over the next 36 years we have built a very successful business. Today, we have a 25,000 square foot state of the art cabinet shop with 28 employees. We also own 2 other companies that we have developed to compliment our wood shop. With no college degree my husband has built 3 very successful companies.

The biggest obstacle all our businesses face is the lack of skilled trades people. Many of our employees have worked for us for 20+ years; and many of our most skilled craftsmen are retiring. Our employees are retiring and we are unable to find new, younger employees to either learn from them or replace them as they retire. I have tried over the years to speak at local high schools who have all replaced their industrial arts or shop programs about the critical need for trades people. All skilled trades are suffering; we are facing major skilled labor shortages. This country, especially Illinois is in urgent need of future carpenters, cabinet makers, electricians, plumbers, tile setters, welders & painters. A college degree is not a guarantee of success. Many students cannot afford the cost of college; especially with no guarantee of a great job after graduation. BUT, if a high school graduate is willing to work hard and learn a skill, they can not only get a great job with a solid future, but those willing to do the work can earn far more than those "business school or college graduates", who start their careers with huge college debt.

Our cities and communities infrastructures are crumbling or decaying. The older skilled trades are retiring and since 2005 we have not been training new apprentices. There is a major lack of future skilled workers; and so the salaries' of skilled hardworking tradesmen is skyrocketing. The few younger employees we have trained have told me that they have no college debt, they did not want to sit in stuffy office, they love working with their hands, and their salaries are more than most of their college graduate friends. Mark's program is one of the very few in this State that is giving students an opportunity to succeed, while providing them with a great foundation to start their careers.

Thank you for taking the time to understand my perspective about the Reed-Custer High School's industrial technology program. I think the program is an essential and beneficial program for our nation's youth and the health of Cabinet making and all trades. I wish there were more high schools with the foresight to rebuild all trades in our Country.

Thank you,



Lori Rosenberg
Vice President