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Alabama Technology Network has the most extensive training and service offerings for business and industry, to ensure the best possible source for your business needs. These include continuous improvement, industrial maintenance & technology, environmental health & safety, and leadership & management development.

Our Mission is to provide industry and business the tools, training and resources to excel.

Guidance on How to Return to Work Safely

Most Alabamians have been working from home since mid-March and we are just now starting to see light at the end of the tunnel with Governor Ivey's Safer at Home order that went into effect last week.

The order is the Governor's way of safely opening up Alabama. While we are encouraged to stay at home, beaches are open and businesses are allowed to open based on sanitation and social distancing guidelines. The process of opening back up is not like turning on a light switch. It can be very overwhelming for some businesses who have a lot of questions or might not know exactly how to take the first step in returning to work.

ATN subject matter experts have put together a [Return to Work Plan, a response to COVID-19](#). The plan is to help guide small business and industry in their effort to resume operations and is based on COVID-19 guidance and best practices as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Alabama Department of Public Health and other governmental regulations and guidelines as announced.

While ATN's plan is not a one-size fit all solution, it offers suggested ideas you may wish to consider as your business/industry moves towards reopening. The purpose of the plan is to educate business and industry on the return to work protocols and procedures implemented for safety and protection. While this plan is targeted strictly for COVID-19, you can alter the plan and apply it as a response to any pandemic.

ATN's Return to Work Plan includes:

- Objectives
- Resuming Operations
- PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)
- Disinfection Protocol
- Self-Distancing
- Employee Monitoring
- Signage
- Return to Work Checklist

To contact our subject matter experts who have extensive manufacturing experience in Environmental Health & Safety, Industrial Hygiene and Food Safety, please email returntowork@atn.org. They will be available to answer any questions and aid individual companies with a personalized plan.

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ENHANCING SAFETY THROUGH ERGONOMICS WEBINAR

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW OF ERGONOMICS

May 13th 1:00-3:00PM

Ergonomics is the study of people's efficiency in their working environment. This webinar will give a general overview and introduction of ergonomics, exploring issues and potential solutions.

OVERVIEW OF USING ERGONOMIC ASSESSMENT TOOLS

May 20th 1:00-3:00PM

Prerequisite of Introduction & Overview of Ergonomics to participate

Ergonomic assessment tools are important to ensure that jobs and tasks are within workers' capabilities and limitations. This webinar will look at ergonomic assessment tools, particularly REBA (Rapid Entire Body Assessment) tool, and how to conduct ergonomic assessments.



For questions or to confirm your participation, please email Tim Croley at tcroley@atn.org or Sandy Lee at slee@atn.org.

Whether big or small, the word “sacrifice” was a foreign concept for many of us. If we were not from the “Baby Boomer” generation, we don’t remember (or maybe never heard of) the gasoline crisis of the 1970s, where people could only buy gas on certain days of the week and often had to wait in extremely long lines to get gas.

But sacrificing is a change, a big change. So, in many ways the changes that ATN’s Continuous Improvement team are working through are sacrifices (in a relatively small way). We are changing our solutions (training) to meet the needs of our partners, clients and neighbors. We have delivered a series of webinars to address Root Cause and Problem Solving for a company whose workers are working from home. We are in the process of delivering an online “5S Train-the-trainer” class for a company who can pull people together both at the plant and from their home offices. And we are looking at new online offerings along with improving our existing on-site solutions to continuously improve our ability to meet our customers’ needs.

Contact: Chris Anderson canderson@atn.org
or Sharon Ingle single@atn.org

Benefits of Coaching in the Workplace

- Overcome costly and time-consuming performance problems.
- Strengthen employees’ skills so you can delegate more tasks to them and focus on more important managerial responsibilities - such as planning.
- Boost productivity by helping your employees work smarter.
- Develop a deep bench of talent who can step into your shoes as you advance in the company.
- Improve retention; employees are more loyal and motivated when their bosses take time to help them improve their skills.
- Make more effective use of company resources; coaching costs less than formal training.

Alabama Technology Network can provide Supervisor Coaching training for your team.

Contact: Jeff Graham jgraham@atn.org

I don’t know about the rest of you, but this downtime has been a time of rejuvenation for ATN. More often than not, technology changes so quickly that we cannot keep up. The Industrial Maintenance and Technology group has been taking this time to give our courses a facelift and to even create new ones. We are now not only offering our Siemens 300 PLC course using Step 7 but also using TIA portal! We are also working on a more blended format for some of our hands-on courses and would welcome your input. If we are not allowed into your facilities over the next few months, we are considering shipping our training equipment to you and teaching over video conference. Use the contact information below and let us know what you think about video conference training. We look forward to hearing from you!

Contact: Jeff Lankford jlankford@atn.org or
Gina Webb gwebb@atn.org

ATN Would Like to Welcome Our New Employee, AMANDA RIALS

Amanda Rials will serve as Project Engineer - Food Safety with ATN. Based in Opelika, she will work to develop and administer training as well as provide technical assistance to food and food allied manufacturing organizations.

Rials has over 20 years of experience in food safety and quality while working in the food industry.

Prior to joining ATN, Rials was the Senior Manager in Food Safety Quality Assurance for Tyson Foods, Inc. and responsible for Supplier Management. While there, she gained knowledge and experience developing and managing food safety and quality operations in both USDA and FDA facilities.

"We are extremely proud to have Amanda on our team, said ATN Executive Director, Keith Phillips." "She is the best person for the position and we are excited for her to start implementing the new ATN Food Safety Program, so we can assist food manufacturers in the state."

A graduate from Auburn University, Amanda Rials holds a degree in Poultry Science with a minor in Agribusiness. When not hard at work keeping the food supply chain safe, she enjoys riding her bike, volunteering with the Junior League and being an active board member at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, one of the largest big cat sanctuaries in the U.S.

Welcome, Amanda!

When Business is Slow

Nobody likes business to be slow. If you're in a fast-paced world like manufacturing, seeing your machines or employees idle can drive a person insane. If you're used to your production line working to capacity and suddenly business slows down, it can be a frustrating time.

Down-time can actually provide a good opportunity to refocus before driving forward again. It offers time to take inventory, get a little creative and do some renovation, literally and figuratively. Those three simple things can have big cybersecurity rewards.

Just like with most projects, the first step in cybersecurity is knowing what you are working with. Two kinds of assets are critical: (1) any equipment that has a computer chip inside, including things like cell phones, robot arms and of course, computers, and (2) information.

Creativity - most people don't think creativity and cybersecurity go well together, but those people are straight up wrong. Cybersecurity is a world of "what-ifs." It's storytelling, designing and creating. While looking through your inventory of information and equipment, ask yourself, "what if somebody wanted to steal it?" and "what if it was messed up, broken or incorrect?" Tell yourself a story.

Renovating - there are two things in cybersecurity that people tend to put off until it's too late. These two things can have the biggest, most immediate impact. People put them off because they are tedious and often interrupt normal workflow... 

The Robson Company, Helping Fight the Fight Against COVID-19

When the COVID pandemic hit, The Robson Company, an injection molder & toolmaker in Vinemont, AL, were one of the first organizations to produce face shield frames, on a production basis, in the country.

Chris and Debi Robson, owners of The Robson Company, answered a request from the humanitarian group, Huntsville Fighting COVID, to mold the frames.

After receiving the request, Robson was able to create the face shield mold in 10 days, and from then on, the machine has stayed on for 24 hours a day except for Sunday.

The Robson Company has supplied frames for the entire state of Alabama. At last count, Robson, has produced 40,000 frames, 33,000 which have been free. Chris Robson said humbly, "we didn't make a dime from them but made millions in the joy of serving so many that needed this immediately."

Just last week, Lab218 and The Robson Co. decided to team up. Robson is now the exclusive frame supplier to Lab218.

While Alabama continues to fight the fight against COVID-19, not only do we want to thank first responders and healthcare workers but also The Robson Company and businesses alike, who are willing to give so much. For more information on The Robson Company and Lab218, visit www.robsonco.com/frames and www.lab218.com.



INSIDE THE NETWORK

Click the map to learn more about each ATN location including staff and contact information.

How Can ATN Help You

ATN links industries and businesses with resources from our network of universities, colleges, businesses, and government to deliver mid to high level training, technical assistance, and engineering services that are needed to be more efficient, more productive, and more competitive. We partner with the two-year colleges (ACCS), The University of Alabama, Auburn University, and The University of Alabama in Huntsville to deliver solutions and resources that are strategically located throughout the state to provide local points of contact. ATN offers the solutions you need, contact us today at atninfo@atn.org.