

## New machine lab will help students compete for jobs

\$769,000 in funds helped refurbish lab

By Kaitlin Goslee WWLP  
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Students at Franklin County Technical School had been using outdated equipment to learn machine technology skills for years, but not anymore.



TURNERS FALLS, Mass. (WWLP) - Precision manufacturing is one of the region's fastest-growing industries, but students at **Franklin County Technical School** long had to learn machine skills using equipment that was in some cases more than 50 years old. Now, students are finally being given the modern tools they need to compete in this field.

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Franklin Technical High School has a brand new precision machining training facility that is now opening its doors to adult students as well as its high school aged ones.

Superintendent of Franklin County Technical School District, James Lavery, said that the adult program is an intensive one.

"It's 220 hours, over 12 weeks. And it's also tied into the private sector, where they're going to be providing them with additional training on site," Lavery said.



More than 760 thousand dollars was brought in through state funding and private funding to upgrade the workshop and update 50 year old machines students formerly learned on.

Maxwell Pellerin, a senior student at the school, started working as a machinist last summer.

"But going out to work it was just a totally different experience, it was nothing like I'd done here before," Pellerin said. The old manual equipment Pellerin learned on not only didn't adequately prepare him to work on modern machines, but was also why students had so little interest in the machinist program that it almost shutdown.

"And now they walk in, and this year alone it's become the number one program of interest for the kids because it's cutting edge technologies, machines are run by computers, and the kids are fascinated by that," Steve Capshaw, President of Valley Steel Stamp Inc., said.

Capshaw, credited with securing the funding for the project, also told 22News precision machinists, who make things like landing gear components for jet fighters, and turbine blades are in high demand, but are not being hired because of a lack of modernized training programs offered in the Pioneer Valley.