

Students learn about career opportunities

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Caption

SYCAMORE – Ryan Hernandez, a DeKalb High School junior, said he was impressed by the ingenuity and inventions workers at SK Hand Tools in Sycamore use to manufacture various tools.

One such invention developed by workers significantly reduces the time it takes to assemble a ratchet, which Hernandez found interesting. DeKalb senior Bryce Comer also was impressed by how quiet and cool the building was in comparison with other factories he has visited.

SK Hand Tools was one of the stops a group of more than 40 DeKalb students made as part of the Assemble Ur Career Tour, an annual event to educate students on career opportunities in manufacturing, assembly and other lines of work they might not have considered.

Students from Sycamore and Rochelle Township High School students went on their own tours of local companies Wednesday.

Gene Fogle, industrial workforce coordinator for the DeKalb/Ogle Workforce Development Consortium, said Thursday's event was one of two major tours the organization puts on during the school year, the other being the [Heavy Metal Tour](#) during the fall semester.

"Students know about becoming teachers, doctors and lawyers, but they might not know what else is out there," Fogle said. "So it's our job to show them."

Fogle said that 60 percent of jobs available today did not exist 10 years ago.

"Technology will change and you have to prepare yourself, be educated, flexible and learn every day," he said.

After the tours, DeKalb and Sycamore students met at the DeKalb County Farm Bureau building, where Chris Blumoff of the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center discussed a variety of career opportunities and explained that careers students may want today might not be the ones they end up in tomorrow.

Anita Zurburgg of the DeKalb County Community Foundation also gave a presentation about soft skills and essential skills that will help students in any career field.

Outside of the two main tours of the year, Fogle said he goes around DeKalb and Ogle counties to help students with resumes, cover letters and interview skills.

"We do a lot of things to prepare the youth to enter into the workforce," Fogle said.