

Here is the text from the Greenfield Recorder that was also posted Saturday online:  
[http://www.recorder.com/Headlines/today\\_basic.htm](http://www.recorder.com/Headlines/today_basic.htm)

### **Starrett teams up for training program**

By PAULA J. OWEN, Recorder Staff

ATHOL — Bernie Loraditch of Sterling has been searching for work in the field of electronics test engineering for five years. A graduate of Boston College majoring in math and physics, he said he “just hasn’t found anything.”

Now, through a state-funded program, he’s getting training that might land him a good-paying machinist job at local toolmaker L.S. Starrett Co.

Starrett and Franklin-Hampshire Career Center have teamed up with a state agency to train people with a \$750,000 classroom on wheels filled with the latest technology.

It’s called the Machine Operator Skills Training Program, and Loraditch and nine other participants, some that have been searching for a job for years, are working toward getting jobs at Starrett.

Inside the training center, participants alternate between flat screen computers hooked up to the Internet and mini-training centers that simulate milling machines and turning and machining centers.

The 10 were found through the Franklin-Hampshire Career Center’s satellite office in Orange at the Learning Center and the North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce. Participants can still collect unemployment during the two-week training.

Maureen Donnelly, 38, from Athol, a single mother and the only woman in the program, said it is the only local opportunity for skilled employment she could find.

“For this area, there are not a whole lot of jobs,” Donnelly said. “I took a computer office training course through the career center, but I have not had much luck finding anything in the area for the pay rate I am looking for.” After two weeks of training in math, blueprint reading, mechanical measurement and quality control, computer-aided drawing, computer-controlled milling and turning technologies and programming and machine operation, the trainees get to apply their new skills in the shop for eight weeks of structured on-the-job training. L.S. Starrett pays for the eight-week training.

Personnel Director Joel Shaughnessy said the training is a significant investment for the company and hopes to hire all 10 participants.

“We’re not doing it for them to find jobs elsewhere,” he explained. “We’re doing it to fill jobs with the L.S. Starrett Co.”

Sen. Stephen Brewer, D-Barre, and Rep. Christopher Donelan, D-Orange, visited the mobile training center Thursday afternoon.

Brewer, who said he worked for a few years himself as machinist and whose father was a machinist for 32 years, said filling positions in the skilled trades such as carpentry, machining and fiber optics is becoming increasingly difficult for employers. There are fewer people going into the trades, he said, and vocational schools are having a hard time finding money to stay open.

The pilot program, Brewer said, is training the unemployed to learn sophisticated machines to potentially make \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year. Starrett also offers a four-year machinist's apprentice program.

"The best social program in the world is having a job and pride in having a paycheck," Brewer said.

Charles Lincicum, project manager from Mass. Manufacturing Extension Partnership, who is conducting the training, said this is only the second time the program has been offered in the state. The first was in Westfield, and six out of seven participants were hired by a wire company at its completion.