

## Hiring Climate Update

Applications are streaming in to ESI. In fact, ESI is on track to receive more than double the number of applications than in 2019.

Total applications:

2019: 825

2020: 1,596

2021: 1,591 to-date

With that kind of increase, why aren't more of the needs being filled? To-date this year, ESI clients have had a net gain of over 65 employees.

Below are the top reasons applicants do not make it from an applicant to an employee. They...

- do not return a call
- cannot pass a drug test or refuse to take one
- have a pending criminal case or a criminal history not suitable for work with ESI clients
- want higher starting wages than ESI clients offer
- have had multiple chances with ESI clients previously



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## What it Takes to Start a New Business

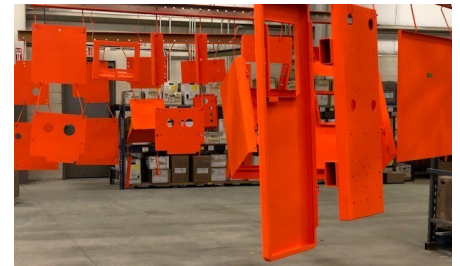
The list of ESI clients is growing. Sometimes, new clients come from the purchase of established businesses. Occasionally, a new client comes from an existing client when an area of work is split off into a new business. Other times, clients are new businesses built from the ground up. In any scenario, it is a lot of work with many moving pieces. To learn more about starting a new business, let's use Garison Coatings, LLC. (GCL) as an example.

A 225,000 square foot building was purchased in 2020 in Evart, MI. The aspiration for the facility was for it to house several new businesses, which originally included Patriot Steel Works, LLC, (steel laser cutting) and Duram Mfg., LLC (assembly). As a complement to those businesses, powder coating services were added with the addition of GCL, whose services are much like those offered by Alpena's Coating Concepts, Inc.

From the point of conception to now, much coordination and planning has taken place to get the proposal for GCL completed and approved, and to prepare the building, space and employees for operation. Multiple equipment vendors were contacted, quotes were received and modified as needed. The right space within the building was identified and mapped out. Equipment and supplies were ordered and installed. Employees with diverse knowledge, skill sets and talents were assembled, hired and trained. A tremendous amount of coordination happened between the vendors, contractors, new employees, and other stakeholders. Supply chain issues were worked through, which was a bigger challenge in 2020 and 2021 than in other years. Technology was set up so GCL can access and create invoices, vendor lists, purchase orders, and more. Credit terms were established with vendors. The checklist was long.

When ESI asked Pete Nowak (V.P. Operations for Mid-West Innovators, Inc., Mid-West Mfg., Inc., Coating Concepts, Inc., GCL, and administrator of this project) what it takes to start a new business, in addition to the physical work, he said, "It takes a lot of persistence coordinating, communicating and following up with responsible parties. Building trust with people and finding those who will do what they say, is important. Assembling a team with the collective competencies that are needed to be successful is a challenge, but is key to success. Training the team appropriately is very important. That all takes time, diligence and persistence, along with patience."

Next time you see a new client added to the ESI client list, you'll have a better understanding of the process and work that went into getting it there.



## Leadership Training Opportunity: Not Just for Those Currently Leading

Starting in September, ESI is offering a series of leadership workshops. More information can be found on the flier that was distributed - simply ask your leader if you want to learn more. Or email [becca.aikens@kabu.net](mailto:becca.aikens@kabu.net) to request a copy of the flier.

These workshops are not just for those currently in a leadership role, or those new to a leadership role. They are for anyone who is on a path to a leadership role in the future.

Topics of the workshops include:

- Emotional intelligence
- Understanding people
- Managing vs. leading
- Communication
- Coaching vs. discipline
- Conflict resolution
- Problem solving
- Effective meetings
- Training

Workshop dates:

- September 8
- September 29
- October 20
- November 10

Each day has a morning and afternoon session option.

## It is Not all Metal for ESI Clients

Walk into most of the ESI client's shops and you will see metal. People forming and cutting it, hauling it, grinding and deburring it, powder coating it, and assembling it.

Building material handling equipment is not just about metal. Head to Steel Craft, Inc. and you will find metal and another product that is used frequently in the equipment that ESI clients sell, engineer, and build. UHMW, or Ultra High Molecular Weight Polyethylene is strong, versatile, relatively light weight, and offers high abrasion, impact, and wear resistance. It is used for many purposes but specifically for ESI clients, it's uses include chain guards, wear strips, and to keep materials moving smoothly on conveyors.

UHMW comes in a variety of options including sheets (pictured) and rods, many colors, and in different grades like anti-static, oil-filled, glass-filled, FDA compliant, and x-ray detectable.



The material is processed with tools that are the same tools used in woodworking - chop saws, routers, planers, and table saws.

Production of equipment by ESI clients goes far beyond metal. UHMW is a valuable and popular resource that is used in many of the products ESI clients provide their customers.

## Opportunities to Increase Your Competencies

With the transition to competency – based handbooks (see the article in the June edition of Equipped), team members of ESI clients are now asking how they can improve their competencies. One of ESI's goals is to educate about, and develop, avenues for competency development.

One existing way to improve your competencies is through further, formal, education. In Alpena, you've heard of Alpena Community College as an excellent option for furthering your competencies. Another great choice, and one that works in partnership with ACC, is Northwood University (NU).

NU offers programs in business, such as management and finance. They have Bachelor and Master level programs, as well as an MBA program. They understand that their students have busy lives outside of the classroom and require flexibility to expand their education.

Key points about NU that may make it an attractive option for team members of ESI clients: Classes run eight weeks. Fully online options are available. Flexible opportunities to allow students to view instruction on their own time. Students have an advisor from start to finish of their Northwood experience. A 3+1 partnership exists with ACC (take most of your classes at ACC but earn a Bachelor's Degree). A physical presence in Midland, MI (where NU is located) is not required. NU can award college credit for work experience. NU accepts transfer credits. Class sizes are kept small. Most ESI clients offer a tuition reimbursement program.

View more information about NU at [northwood.edu](http://northwood.edu). ESI will continue to present information on resources to improve competencies. Improved competencies deliver added value to your employer, and greater rewards for you.

## Your Health Matters!

A health message from USI, ESI's health insurance broker.



## The Health Benefits of Volunteering

Many people are searching for opportunities to reconnect with and help individuals and organizations hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### How Volunteering Benefits You

Volunteering doesn't just benefit people in need, it may also benefit your mental health. The emotions tied to making others feel better through volunteering are essential to overall well-being. Research has shown that volunteering can:

- Lower risk of depression
- Offer a sense of purpose
- Keep you physically active
- Reduce stress levels
- Support longevity
- Establish new relationships

Older volunteers tend to receive the greatest health benefits. Volunteer activities can strengthen social ties and prevent feelings of isolation. The experience of helping others leads to a sense of greater self-worth and trust. Studies have also shown that the physical action of giving one's time has a positive impact on one's overall health, with volunteers reporting better physical health than non-volunteers.

### How to Get Involved

While the pandemic restricted many volunteer programs, nonprofit organizations are starting to reopen their doors to volunteers. To get involved, check with your local schools, libraries and food pantries to see how you can help. Organizations like the American Red Cross, United Way, VolunteerMatch and AmeriCorps also have many volunteer listings based on geographic location, skill set, and personal interests.

If in-person opportunities are not yet available, remember you can continue to give back to your community in other ways:

- Call someone to offer support
- Send a care package
- Make a monetary donation, or donate food or clothing

SOURCES:  
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318000000> *Volunteering and health: helping people change lives*  
<https://www.healthline.com/health/volunteering> *Volunteering can be good for both mind and body*

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## 2355 Exterior Improvements

When 2355 (previously K-Mart in Alpena) was purchased, part of the re-zoning approval by Alpena Township included a commitment to improving the exterior of the facility/space.

That work has now begun.

If you have been past the facility recently you may have noticed Ren-Tech Industrial Corp. employees hard at work preparing and painting the exterior of the building. This will brighten it up and improve the aesthetics.

In the near future you will also see landscaping improvements, new, more efficient lighting in the parking lot, an improved parking lot surface, painted light poles, and new signage for the building.

The work was expected to be completed sooner than the last quarter of 2021, but the pandemic, difficulty in finding contractors, and the rate at which the inside of the building was filling up, pushed things back.





## Contact ESI

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# Thousands of Volunteer Hours

On page three of this publication, you read about the health benefits of volunteering. The impacts of volunteering go far beyond our health. ESI learned that hundreds of team members of their clients spend thousands of hours every year volunteering. The impacts on the communities in which ESI clients are located and in which their team members live are tremendous, and in some cases, the volunteer efforts make a difference around the world.

Some people volunteer in ways that are directly connected to their work. Consider Brian Konieczny and Nick Kowalski (pictured right, both with Sigma Industrial, LLC) who are co-chairs for the Posen Robotics Team. This gig, which is equivalent to a full-time job several months out of the year, allows them to help youth experience science, technology, engineering, and math in ways they otherwise wouldn't be able to.



Others volunteer for things that aren't directly related to work, but help to make a better community for everyone. Matt Muszynski (NorthAmCon, Inc.) coaches youth baseball teams and can usually be found lending a hand at most other community events. Lee Waterson (ProCal Innovations, LLC) is the Treasurer for the Thunder Bay Area Firefighter's Association and a volunteer firefighter/MFR. Gary Rex (Northwood Solutions, Inc.) has been a Ducks Unlimited Volunteer for more than 20 years, and is currently in a Treasurer role. Dennis Vesotski (ProCal Innovations, LLC) assists regularly with maintenance for Norway Ridge and Chippewa Hills trails. Leslie Davis (InnovaTech Solutions, Corp.) has a long list of places she volunteers, from Alpena County 4-H and Jesse Besser Museum to the Alpena FFA and the Ossineke United Methodist Church Youth Group. Jackie Fisher (ProCal Innovations, LLC) also volunteers for many different organizations including as a member of the Board of Directors of the Posen Chamber of Commerce the Posen Ladies Auxiliary VFW Post 7804, and is very involved in the activities of those organizations. Bradley Przeslawski (Northwood Solutions, Inc.) is the master mind behind the Thunder Bay



River Costume Run/Walk event. This is an event he began to raise funds to donate to various children's groups. He has since recruited help from other ESI clients, such as Ryan Styma (Triton Innovation, LLC). Brad isn't the only one who spearheads a run. Dave Hornick (pictured left, InnovaTech Solutions, Corp.) is also responsible for a race as he is the organizer of the Tunnel to Towers 5K run/walk. He is very proud that the 2021 event will feature steel from the World Trade Center.

While many volunteers keep their volunteering local, others volunteer in other places around the globe. Robbie Conley (Triton Innovation, LLC) has been on mission trips to places like Honduras. She combines her experiences in youth ministry and as a paramedic to help others. She said you will experience no greater joy than doing something for someone who has no way to repay you. She holds tight to the idea of being the change she wants to see in the world.

There are plenty of others within ESI clients who volunteer. All of their giving is appreciated and makes a positive difference. If you want to volunteer but don't know how or where, feel free to send a message to Jackie.krawczak@kabu.net and someone will help connect you with volunteer opportunities and ideas.