

# Phifer Inc. develops ready-to-work program to improve manufacturing workforce in Alabama



To reduce turnover and train better-skilled entry-level workers, Phifer Inc., in West Alabama, uses ACT WorkKeys® solutions to build a skilled regional workforce.

## RESULTS:



**\$2 Million  
reduction**  
in training costs



**25%  
reduction**  
in incumbent employee training time

## WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS USED:



## Reducing entry-level job turnover

### THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Phifer Incorporated is a leader in the insect screen, solar control fabrics, drawn wire, engineered products and designed fabrics industries. The manufacturing company employs 1,200 individuals in West Alabama.

In 2006, Phifer began profiling their entry-level jobs using the ACT JobPro database and ACT WorkKeys to reduce turnover from 14% to 7%.

With data showing that 50% of the region's current workforce is eligible to retire, Phifer needed a robust, scalable system for developing a talent pipeline from entry- to senior-level jobs.

“

Phifer began to use ACT WorkKeys ten years ago to help us cut our turnover in half,” said Russell Dubose, Human Resources Director, Phifer, Inc. “We then used the ACT WorkKeys system to develop our talent pipeline by leveraging the required skills information documented through the ACT job profile process and, working with Shelton State Community College, developed the Ready to Work program.”

### Russell DuBose

Human Resources Director, Phifer Inc.

# WorkKeys® + NCRC® = Ready to Work

## THE SOLUTION

Leveraging what they had learned through job profiling, Phifer partnered with Shelton Community College as well as other regional stakeholders to develop a ready-to-work program to train better-skilled entry-level workers.

Embedded in this program is training on measurements, lean manufacturing, workplace behavior, and the ACT Curriculum, which prepares participants to take the ACT WorkKeys tests and earn an ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (NCRC).

Phifer joined 14 other West Alabama manufacturing employers in supporting these ACT solutions as a common language between education and work as part of the region's Work Ready Communities initiative.

“

We are a proud participant in ACT Work Ready Communities along with our education, workforce and other employers. Together, we are united in leveraging our resources to a common problem and are all seeing the successful outcome of what we can accomplish working together.”

**Russell Dubose**

Human Resources Director, Phifer Inc.

## A skilled workforce

### OUTCOMES

 **40% IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF THE WORKFORCE AS A RESULT OF THE READY-TO-WORK PROGRAM**

 **TRAINING COST REDUCED BY \$2 MILLION IN THE PAST 10 YEARS. INCUMBENT TRAINING TIME HAS ALSO BEEN REDUCED BY 25%**

 **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY INCREASED BY 15% AND NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION INSTRUCTION AND TESTING TIME DROPPED BY 33%**

## Advancing careers, changing lives

Phifer has seen their more senior-level jobs evolve to require higher skills. They now also use ACT WorkKeys solutions to identify current workers who are ready for promotion. Upon completing on-the-job apprenticeships and training, employees have a better job, better wages, and an associate's degree.

## SEGMENT OVERVIEW

West Alabama Works is the primary workforce development organization in West Alabama Workforce Region 3, supporting employers like Phifer, as well as Mercedes-Benz and Michelin. Together with partners throughout the region, they focus on three key strategies — long-term talent pipeline development, immediate hiring needs, and retooling and retraining.

## ACT WORK READY COMMUNITIES



Alabama is proud to have numerous ACT Work Ready Communities, a collection of counties leveraging the NCRC to close the skills gap and strengthen their region's economy.

See what other counties are work ready at [www.workreadycommunities.org](http://www.workreadycommunities.org).