

Fast track to new skills Program that started in Maine churning out machine operators

By Kerri Pepoy, Staff Writer, Sun Journal
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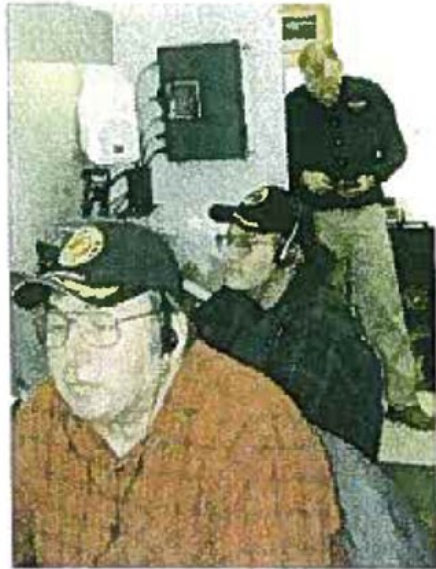


Photo by Abe Kreworuka Leon Burgess and Kempton Smith, Jr. work on computer terminals, while Charles Lincicum directs learning programs in the mobile learning lab.

PARIS - When Jim Osborne found it tough to find a job in Maine, he took a leap of faith.

"This is a whole new field for me," the 43-year-old Bridgton resident said as he worked on a computer-based machine module. "Initially, it was scary."

Being a machine operator is far different from media broadcasting, the field that Osborne worked in for many years. But when he and his wife, Christine, moved to Maine from Montana a year ago to be near her family, the state's job market lacked prospects.

Osborne, a Gulf War veteran originally from Ohio, said he grew tired of "twiddling my thumbs and throwing my resume everywhere." He signed up for a new training program that will teach him to be a machine operator.

"I can't wait to do the actual job," he said.

Chris Wiken, a Sumner resident who was laid off from his job at a log home

