

CAWS Program
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Rehau
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Rehau is an international German company that deals with polymers and manufactures automotive parts for GM, Nissan, Toyota, BMW and Mercedes. They also produce pipes in their construction sector for radiant heating, drinking water, and rainwater. During my week at Rehau, I was able to observe many different departments and understand their respective roles within the company and how the different departments come together as a whole to make this plant a positive work environment.

From my personal observations during the week I spent there, this is a great company to work for and most of the people we met had been there for about ten years or since the opening of the plant in 1996. All of the employees we observed were hard-working individuals who ensure their work is acceptable and are very knowledgeable in their assigned area. Employees label the supervisors as caring individuals, who always try to accommodate their needs when circumstances occur. This proved to be true throughout my week of observation, when working with the supervisors and employees in each department. They seem to be very caring individuals.

I learned a great deal from the employees and now know that more is produced at Rehau than just German car parts. I understand their expectations when hiring employees and their effort to recruit students out of high school into apprenticeship programs. They are active in the "Keeping it Real" program and are strong advocates of students staying in school until they graduate. This is vital to our community and the youth who might not know these opportunities exist, regardless of whether they choose to pursue degrees. I met young adults who are working with Rehau full-time while attending night classes at Wallace State Community College. There seems to be a great deal of opportunities for advancement, providing employees with a sense of security and an eagerness to succeed. The company also offers many incentives for its employees such as a car-pooling with a parking spot up front, a zero mistakes incentive, company picnics, as well as many others.

I can apply some of the concepts I observed, such as team work, metric conversions, communication skills, environmental safety and recycling, and interview

skills into my everyday lessons in my classroom. Although I am a certified German teacher, I also teach some survival skills in my classroom. Everyone is not college bound, but there are some skills I can pass on while teaching the culture and language that apply to everyday life and interactions with others. There are degreed and non-degreed people working under one roof at Rehau and they are all working toward the same goal. It's kind of like working at a school, all teachers are working toward the same goal of graduating students.

My students need to know why learning German can be important, whether pursuing a degree or not. Rehau sends the majority of their employees to Germany at some point to train at the German Rehau plant. Basic German vocabulary and speaking skills serve the students well in those situations.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit at this plant and the efforts made by the employees to make our week hospitable and take the time out of their busy work schedules to explain their jobs to us. I learned a wealth of knowledge and gained insight into certain roles within the plant, where I had no prior knowledge. I hope that the Chamber of Commerce, Wallace, and the industries within Cullman continue this partnership with the teachers, so that we may educate our students not only through our subject matter, but also through our newfound knowledge of the industries and businesses in our area. The CAWS program, their sponsors, and teachers are all working toward one positive goal: graduating students and ensuring a more stable future.



Checking out an area in the Color Lab