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TBS SOUTHEAST OPENS TECHNICAL ACADEMY IN LIBERTY, MS

TBS Southeast, regional mid-sized provider of food service equipment maintenance and repair, now offers formal technical training for apprentice and junior mechanics in newly renovated classroom space adjacent to corporate headquarters in Liberty, MS. The new **TBS Academy**, opened today, gathers staff from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Georgia who will receive 10 days of instruction on carbonated beverage fountain systems, machines that can contain hundreds of components and cost tens of thousands of dollars.

TBS Academy is a private workforce development initiative that seeks to address an industry-wide shortage of skilled labor by offering new and existing company staff intensive, multi-day mechanical training by factory-certified technicians. Instruction will be provided on the repair and maintenance of commercial food service machines including refrigerators, fountain machines, coffee makers, microwave ovens and related equipment.



TBS Southeast owner Kenny Bambarger, a 27 year industry veteran, says finding qualified help is his company's number one hurdle to expansion into new markets. "There's no shortage of potential customers for TBS," said Bambarger. "Our reputation and track record are strong in this industry. But we're having to slow our growth because there simply isn't enough skilled labor to meet demand."

According to the latest Manpower Group talent data*, skilled technicians and mechanics have been among the top ten most difficult positions to fill over the last decade. Furthermore, nearly half of responding employers cite talent shortage as seriously hampering company growth.

TBS Academy Lead Instructor Jason Salazar, along with company management and industry experts will deliver a continual rotation of trainings matched to customer and company needs. Over the first year of operation, they will create a unique curriculum that covers the entire range of required industry skills and manufacturers' certifications for their field. All TBS Academy students, even those without prior experience, receive full salary and accommodations during their training. Continuing technical education and career advancement are available throughout students' employment with TBS Southeast.

Demonstrating a commitment to place as well as people, TBS Southeast chose the small Mississippi town of Liberty for its corporate headquarters in 2014. Liberty's central location and available historic buildings offered a unique opportunity to invest in the company while helping reverse the decline of a long-standing local economy. The space now occupied by the TBS Academy was originally a post office built in 1948.

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*See: <http://www.manpowergroup.us/campaigns/talent-shortage-2015/assets/pdf/2015-Talent-Shortage-Whitepaper.pdf>

