



## **LAKE COUNTY COMPANY HYDRAFORCE RECOGNIZED AS A TALENT INNOVATOR**

*The partners of the Lake County Workforce Ecosystem honored HydraForce with the inaugural Talent Innovator Award for its exemplary workforce development strategies at Lake County Partners' Big Event*

**Lincolnshire, Illinois, June 1, 2018** — Lincolnshire-based HydraForce, a manufacturer of the highest quality hydraulic cartridge valves, manifolds and electro-hydraulic controls for the heavy equipment and material handling industries, has been selected as the inaugural winner of the Lake County Workforce Ecosystem Talent Innovator Award. The award recognizes a local employer that is implementing creative strategies to attract, retain and develop their workforce.

The Lake County Workforce Ecosystem is a strategic partnership between Lake County Partners, Lake County Workforce Development, the College of Lake County, the Lake County High Schools Technology Campus and others to work with leading employers to identify and address critical workforce needs.

After working with hundreds of local employers over the last few years, the Workforce Ecosystem partners saw that many companies had developed truly advanced talent development programs that were worthy of recognition. In response, the partners created the Talent Innovator Award, which was presented to HydraForce at Lake County Partners' Big Event, the county's largest gathering of business and civic leaders held on Friday, June 1<sup>st</sup>.

"The more companies we talk to, the more we hear that access to skilled talent is critical to business growth. Our talent base in Lake County is one of our biggest competitive advantages, and the Workforce Ecosystem exists to make sure that we're enhancing that advantage by focusing on the business demand for skilled workers and building the pipelines that will lead to future success," said Lake County Partners' president and CEO, Kevin Considine.

HydraForce is an excellent example of superior corporate leadership on workforce development. The company has nearly 1,000 local employees and has worked both with the partners of the Workforce Ecosystem and on their own to creatively address talent needs as they have experienced tremendous growth in Lake County.

HydraForce has created two programs in STEM and Manufacturing to get high school students into the company's facility, to experience the people, environment and equipment. Specifically, the company worked with Lake County Workforce Development to build strong connections to the Lake County High Schools Technology Campus, giving them the opportunity to both educate and attract their students. HydraForce has also been an enthusiastic partner at many career expos

and fairs across the county, including the successful in the Lake County Engineering and Internship Fair.

HydraForce even has an on-site ESL program to help employees build language skills and offers citizenship classes. New citizen employees are celebrated each year at an Independence Day event. The company also participated in a job fair for Adult Education and ESL students at the College of Lake County.

HydraForce is currently partnering with the Veterans Administration at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago to hire veterans. This work has included having V.A. staff come to the HydraForce facilities to learn how to best work with veterans who may have disabilities or be struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Smart companies are realizing that truly investing in human capital is an imperative business move. HydraForce goes above and beyond to make sure they can find, build and keep the best people in the business, and it shows. This strategy is part of why HydraForce has seen such remarkable growth,” commented Jennifer Harris, President of the Lake County Workforce Development Board.

HydraForce CEO Jim Brizzolara can often be found walking through their facilities, greeting the nearly 1,000 employees by name. The company proudly maintains that its employees don’t have jobs, they have careers. In fact, the average team member has been at HydraForce for over 12 years.

“We are very proud of our team members and the culture that we have built at HydraForce. Making sure we have top notch people has always been part of our DNA as an organization, and it is critical to our future success,” said Brizzolara “We have directly benefited from the support of the Workforce Ecosystem, and we are thrilled to be recognized with the Talent Innovator Award.”

### **About Lake County Partners**

Lake County Partners is a 501(c)(3) economic development corporation that works to maintain economic vitality in Lake County, Illinois by creating and retaining quality jobs, stimulating capital investment, and pursuing economic diversity. Lake County promises businesses a highly-educated workforce, beautiful and diverse recreational areas, a gateway to global markets, the right balance between work and play, top-ranking schools nationwide, world-class healthcare in your backyard, global industry leaders, and first-rate quality of life.

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