



Man in Black: Thomas Mundy at Superior Thread Rolling in Arleta.

INDUSTRIAL SKILL GAP

Apprentice program answers manufacturers' labor shortage

By **MARK R. MADLER** Staff Reporter

Thomas Mundy faces a lack of trained machinists at his shop, but he hopes a federal labor program will help him fill those positions.

His company, **Superior Thread Rolling Co.** in Arleta, is one of eight Valley-region manufacturers taking part in the California Advanced Manufacturing

Apprenticeship Collaborative, or CAMAC program, which combines classroom training with paid, on-the-job experience. The program is run by a collaborative that includes the U.S. Department of Labor, **Goodwill Southern California**, community colleges and **ToolingU**, an industrial training and development nonprofit.

Traditionally, apprentices prepared for industrial jobs such as machinists or

electricians, but the training method has expanded in recent years to industrial maintenance workers and early childhood educators. Manufacturing is one sector that needs more apprentices, as the Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts machinist jobs should grow by 10 percent from 2014 to 2024.

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Attorneys Hear Migrant Fears

LAW: Trump talk sends workers, employers to seek counsel.

By **STEPHANIE HENKEL** Staff Reporter

Ever since the Trump administration began re-writing immigration rules, attorneys in the Valley region have been busy calming people's fears and advising clients on their next course of action.

"The number of calls (I've received) has probably tripled," said attorney **Norma Obergh**, who operates her solo practice, **Express Immigration Services**, out of Mission Hills. "I'm seeing twice as many people per day, whether walk-in or by appointment."

Ron Tasoff, a specialist in immigration law and partner at Encino-based firm **Tasoff & Tasoff**, has experienced a similar influx of inquiries.

"It's a different role now being an immigration lawyer than it was a year ago," he said. "I feel a lot more responsibility. I feel I have to give people more perspective, because there are so many rumors out there now."

President **Donald Trump** has signed several executive orders with the intent of banning immigrants from certain countries like Iran and Syria, deporting criminals from other countries, constructing a border wall and pulling federal funding from "sanctuary cities" that refuse to comply with federal requests to enforce immigration law.

"No real laws have changed – not yet," Tasoff

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Tasoff

Was Measure S A Sly Success?

By **CAROL LAWRENCE** Staff Reporter

Measure S lost the battle for voters, but supporters think they may have won the war to manage growth and foster involvement in planning.

Two days after the electoral defeat, Los Angeles Mayor **Eric Garcetti**, who opposed Measure S, signed an Executive Order outlining new rules to make the planning process "more efficient, effective, fair and transparent." In a statement, the mayor said "Angelenos have sent us a clear message."

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For Avery Dennison, It's a Promotional Wrap

TECHNOLOGY: Investment puts label maker in ad business.

By **HELEN FLOERSH** Staff Reporter

Since divesting its office products division four years ago, **Avery Dennison Corp.** in Glendale has built its business on product labels and industrial materials. But now the packaging supplies giant is moving into a new sector with a \$3 million investment in **Wrapify Inc.**,

a San Diego startup that compensates drivers for wrapping their cars in a temporary adhesive film printed with advertisements.

"Avery Dennison sees the promise in what we're building," **James Heller**, founding chief executive of Wrapify and a member of Forbes' "30 Under 30" list for 2017, said. "We've been working with them since the very beginning."

Automotive wraps are used by businesses, individuals and even the military to alter a

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Dry Run: Wrapify employee applies film.

PHOTO BY DAVID SPRAGUE

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Law: Immigrants Crucial for Farm, Service Sectors

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said. “Trump has attempted to use the executive power to undo what (Barack) Obama did and in some cases, take it even further. There are things that will happen, but again, it’s more in the realm of enforcing existing law, which may not have been enforced in the past to the extent that it could have been.”

Prior to the Trump administration, undocumented immigrants, particularly with criminal records, were still subject to deportation. However, the Obama administration did not enforce these laws to the same degree as the new government in power. In addition, certain safeguards for illegal immigrants were implemented during the Obama years, like the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, which prevents deportation and allows work permits for qualifying undocumented immigrants who entered the country as minors.

But now that the political climate has changed, individuals and businesses are taking a more proactive approach and seeking legal counsel to protect their interests and prepare for an uncertain future.

Agriculture question

At his Encino practice, Tasoff primarily deals with family and business immigration issues, like marriage cases as well as the visa process for companies importing talent. Currently, he is working to bring Pakistani software developers into the country for his clients.

He said many of his clients are looking to skip the work-visa process altogether for their foreign employees and instead begin green-card applications for permanent status.

“Maybe as a reward, after working there for three years, they (employers) would then sponsor the foreign worker for a green card,” Tasoff said. “Now, they want to do that for everybody as soon as possible.”

As part of the rumor mill, news reports have stated that Trump may further limit the number of H-1Bs, or non-immigrant visas that allow domestic companies to employ specialized graduate-level workers, and may prevent H-1B holders’ spouses from working in the United States as well. This concern has pushed some companies toward the green-card process to ensure a stable workforce, regardless of current policy.

However, if the United States makes it too hard for companies to import talent, Tasoff said two things could happen – the companies could relocate to other countries with more business-friendly immigration laws, like Canada, or the talent could apply for jobs in other places, where the political climate is more stable.

For companies wishing to stay, he advises them to keep current on the legal requirements for employers; always do the necessary paperwork, like I-9 employment eligibility verifications; and maintain proper employee records to



PHOTO BY DAVID SPRAGUE

Legal Advice: If the U.S. makes it too hard to import talent, companies may relocate, said Ron Tasoff at Tasoff & Tasoff in Encino.



Light

avoid liability down the road.

Jonathan Fraser Light, partner at Camarillo employment firm LightGabler, said Silicon Valley companies are “already screaming about these (pending policies).” But he anticipates even bigger problems in the

agriculture, services and hospitality industries, where many undocumented employees work. He said more people may stop going to work for fear of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids.

For businesses in the Valley region, particularly growers in Ventura County, that could translate into losses.

“In the agriculture sector, we already don’t have enough workers,” he said. “This is going to exacerbate it.”

But the even bigger issue, he added, is there won’t be anyone to fill those employment gaps. In 2011, Alabama implemented anti-immigration policies, including banning landlords from renting homes to undocumented applicants, checking legal status at schools and arresting suspected illegal immigrants. As a result, many

immigrants fled the state, decimating Alabama’s agriculture production.

“Everyone talks about getting rid of immigrants, but citizens won’t do those jobs,” Light said. “There may be an even more underground economy, and we may lose tax base because of it.”

According to a study by the University of Alabama’s Center for Business and Economic Research, within the first year of the new policy, between 40,000 and 80,000 immigrants fled the state, which cost up to \$10.8 billion in lost income and tax revenues.

Indefinite future

Express Immigration Services’ Obergh primarily helps her clients with the naturalization process but also works a variety of cases in deportation defense, marriage and visa-related issues.

“At this time, I’m just trying to interview my clients to see if there are any other benefits they are entitled to,” she said. “They could be eligible, but are just not aware of it.”

Her biggest piece of advice is to not live in fear as she said immigrants with criminal records are the ones being targeted at this time. She also encourages her clients to make a family plan, which entails having all documents ready for themselves, their children and family members and having the name of a legal representative handy.

About 40 percent of the 1.8 million people in the San Fernando Valley were born in another country, according to Congressman Brad Sherman’s website. This means Trump’s policies will be especially felt here. Facing an uncertain future, local attorneys have their hunches about what’s to come.

“I would expect stricter rules about who will qualify for immigration services,” Obergh said. “We don’t know if certain benefits personally available to immigrants will be repealed by the (Trump) administration.”

Tasoff said there may be a remote possibility Trump uses some of the legal safe havens, like DACA, to his advantage.

“This is total rumor, but my theory is that Trump and the Republicans will figure out that they can pass a ‘Dream Act’ law and all the kids who now have DACA will become eligible to get green cards and will have a path to citizenship,” Tasoff said. “Then they will up the filing fees for those applications and use the money to build the wall and then say Mexicans paid for it.”

Tasoff said his bold prediction is just that – a prediction – as no one knows what is coming.

“Immigration is really good for the country and good for business,” he added. “If you want to make America great again, well, immigration is the way it got great in the first place.”

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