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NGTC Engineering Technology students visit IMS in Gainesville.

On a recent field trip to IMS Gear Georgia, Inc., students in the Engineering Technology program at North Georgia Technical College were presented with an overview of a unique precision manufacturing operation.

IMS Gear designs and manufactures customer-specific components, assemblies and gears as well as standard planetary gear assemblies and is widely known for their innovative applications for assembly line and mechatronic production.

“It was interesting to see how they had organized the plant into different entrepreneurial business units,” said Justin Salzman of Toccoa. “Each one is responsible for everything from product design to production, and they each report their profit and loss separately.”

Austin Giles of Cleveland explained the international company has plants in Germany, America, Mexico, and China. “Employees rotate through each plant,” he said. “The idea of being able to go to another country to work and gain experience is very exciting to me.”

“Not only do they design the parts, they design and build the assembly line equipment as well,” noted Nile Waldemar of West Palm Beach, Florida. “And they also do their own diagnostics and repairs as needed.”

Austin Finley had been on an earlier field trip to a completely different manufacturing facility and was able to compare and contrast the two. “This one was much larger. The shop floor was 231,000 square feet,” he said. “At IMS, they produce a wide variety of products and some of the processes are complicated. For example, they might machine a metal gear and then overmold it with plastic.”

A recent graduate of the CNC program Patrick Bell of Cornelia was intrigued by the robotics. “The robots cut down on manpower to assemble components, but higher skills like IT and technical support are required,” he said. “Robotics are essential for efficiency, safety, accuracy, and precision.”

According to the website, IMS Gear started off 150 years ago as a subcontractor for precision components for the regional clock and watch industry in Germany. Even in those days the special tools needed for gearing clock and watch components were manufactured in-house. This core competence lives today and is the foundation for the innovative gear solutions which gained considerable commercial significance some 50 years ago.

“We really appreciate our industry partners in this area,” said Instructor Elwin Northcutt. “Getting into a plant and seeing the operations gives our students a greater perspective on the career opportunities that they have when they graduate from the program.”
For more information about IMS Gear, Inc., in Gainesville, visit www.imsgear.com/en/. For more information about programs of study at North Georgia Technical College, call 706-754-7700 or visit www.northgatech.edu.

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