View From The Hill
(10/29/09)

Harmon Becker Donation To AMS

A Franklin business is reaching out to Western Kentucky University with a generous donation….but it’s not in dollars and cents.

In this week’s “View from the Hill”, Amy Bingham shows us how the Architectural and Manufacturing Sciences Department will  benefit from the gift for years to come.

Last semester, Manufacturing student Jason Pendergrass invited his supervisors from Harmon Becker Automotive Systems in Franklin to attend his final presentation on campus.  It made such an impression, Harmon Becker supervisors realized they were in a position to help students of the future.

WKU students in this lab for Architecture and Manufacturing sciences get the experience of creating a business from design all the way through shipping.

“We built a flexible manufacturing cell so the students who could come in to the course can decide what they want to build and be able to change that product from semester to semester.”

It’s a hands on environment.

”When they leave this class and go to a manufacturing job, they’ll understand what’s going on from program language to what robots are doing.”
And the robots just got a lot of extra support.  Harmon Becker recently donated nearly 120-thousand dollars worth of maintenance parts, motor sensors and other items for use in the lab.

“If students want to create a product and we don’t have the equipment, the equipment from Harmon Becker will allow us to create different cell parts.”

Students and faculty agree it’s a win/win for the campus and the community.

“They saw with all the equipment we have and their support we could develop things that would even help out the industry as a whole.”

“When manufacturing companies come to the university, it allows us to create students who will help lead manufacturing and bring in more companies.”

The Department received the equipment from Harmon Becker Operations Manager Don Barnes in May.

They are still in the process of sorting through it all.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.