

Bemidji Mechatronics Training

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NORTHAMPTON, May 20, 2024 - [PotlatchDeltic](#)

Responding to a growing need for increased technical skills among the workforce in Bemidji, Minnesota, [PotlatchDeltic](#) worked with The Idea Circle, a workforce development consultant, the Minnesota Innovation Initiative (MI2), an affiliate of the local chamber of commerce, and other private, local employers to create a mechatronics program. The Mechatronics program is focused on building competency for maintenance and repair on electrical, mechanical, computer, robotics, and automation systems. The courses are available to any eligible Team Member in our Bemidji mill (production or maintenance) who wants to advance their skills in these areas.

In 2013, [PotlatchDeltic](#) became the first company in the Bemidji area to enroll one of its Team Members, Joe, in the Mechatronics program. Joe had just graduated from high school and came to [PotlatchDeltic](#) as a summer intern in 2012. He was registered to go to trade school that fall but decided to take a leap of faith with us, declined trade school, and stayed employed as efforts continued to establish the full Mechatronics program. After enrolling, Joe completed the Mechatronics program while also working at our Bemidji wood products facility. Fast forward to today, and Joe is a very successful millwright at our Bemidji mill and is seen as a leader in the maintenance department, as well as the mill's resident vibration analysis expert.

[PotlatchDeltic](#) has had Team Members participating in the program every year since then. In 2023, we had four Team Members enrolled in the Mechatronics program. All courses are offered via e-learning and hands-on skill labs. [PotlatchDeltic](#) provides support towards the coursework costs. Participants can choose to complete the introductory courses the first year with the option to continue for a second year to finish the whole program.

The success of this program for production Team Members has been well demonstrated through an increased knowledge and proficiency of their workstations. Maintenance Team Members have increased skills essential to performing troubleshooting, service, and repair on mechanical and electrical systems. For example, a 2023 graduate of the Mechatronics program was recently promoted to full-time millwright.

The Mechatronics program has also expanded into several Bemidji area high schools offering beginning coursework in the program. Our Bemidji wood products facility is a proud sponsor of the Mechatronics Career Academy at Bemidji High School helping to prepare graduates for employment in the industrial sector.

View additional multimedia and more ESG storytelling from [PotlatchDeltic](#) on 3blmedia.com.

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