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Mack Molding Intern program yields first employee

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Elicia Marshall, medical device assembler, watches as Scott Rishell checks the fit of a part on a PediaVision vision screening device at Mack Molding in Arlington.

Photo provided

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By Patrick McArdle
STAFF WRITER - Published: December 31, 2011

ARLINGTON — Responding to common concerns in Vermont, Mack Molding has not only developed its own internship program but also hired its first employee who spent time at Mack as an intern.

Originally from Rupert, Scott Rishell, 28, of Cambridge, N.Y., is now a program manager at Mack and started with the company in November 2010.

After graduating from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 2007, Rishell took a job near Albany, N.Y., but he has since married and started a family. Deciding he didn't want such a long commute, Rishell looked for a position locally.

"I came back to Mack because of my familiarity. There was a good opportunity at the time that presented some career growth for me. It was a desire to come back home. I like looking out the windows here and seeing mountains instead of I-87," he said.

Jeff Somple, president of Mack Molding's northern operations, said earlier this year he wanted Mack to respond to two common concerns expressed by those who want to keep young Vermonters living and working in their home state: Providing training so they could join a skilled work force and having jobs available.

Rishell is a success story for those goals. A native Vermonter, he has found a position in the state and uses skills he learned through Mack Molding's cooperative education program, or "co-op."

In the summer of 2005, Rishell was required to find a co-op placement or internship and he said he wanted to be close to home.

"Certainly Mack is a well-known manufacturing and tech-type of company in the area so it was really my first thought," he said.

Rishell said he thought the people running the program found valuable ways to put students to work.

"I found within the first couple weeks I was right out on the floor and felt like I was helping the company make progress and that's not something I necessarily felt in some of my other co-op experiences," he said.

Julie Horst, director of communications for Mack, said senior staff members do a lot of planning before

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new interns are accepted.

"They have to argue that those projects are worthy of being funded with an intern for the whole summer and they do that in a pretty compelling way. ... It isn't make-work, it's stuff we really need to get accomplished," she said.

Over the summer, Mack had its largest number of interns at one time with 11 students at the plant. Horst said she thought that was valuable for the interns who got to work with their peers.

Rishell said Mack gave him more than technical skills during his co-op.

"If I think back to the person I was in college and coming to Mack and it being my first professional work experience, there's definitely a gap between learning the skills and the knowledge that you get with a degree and really being able to apply that in the work force. The way you dress, the way you professionally talk to people, all that stuff is really part of a maturation process," he said.

Horst said the internship program is expected to continue at Mack although she said it was difficult to estimate the number of interns that might be accepted from year to year.

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