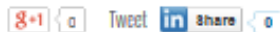



**OPINION**

## Inslee makes it a point to grow valley business | Klaas



by **MARK KLAAS**, Kent Reporter Regional Editor  
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Like his policies or not, Gov. Jay Inslee is gaining credibility and making progress in helping many long-term unemployed Washingtonians find work.

To illustrate Inslee's mission – to build and keep business at home – the governor and his team visited the Hexcel Aerospace plant in Kent last Friday. They met employees who have found a new start through a successful workforce initiative, Washington Work Start.

Inslee wanted the program put in motion, and he succeeded, scoring a major victory when the Legislature gave it a shot after the last session in Olympia. Work Start taps into the governor's strategic reserve fund, allowing the state to invest now and prevent the closure and loss of Washington businesses, including those beating in the heart of the Green River Valley.

It's a business-driven, workforce training program designed to provide new and existing employers with flexible, customized training in direct alignment with the state's business recruitment and expansion efforts.

Work Start targets key sectors, such as aerospace, clean technology, advanced materials, advanced manufacturing, maritime, forest products, agribusiness, life sciences, information, communications and technology, and locally targeted industries.

Companies in Kent, Auburn and other neighboring cities are benefitting.

The job training program was designed with schools like Green River Community College in mind.

"To see this work is exciting," Inslee said while touring Hexcel with state and local leaders. "We have some really incredible people here. ... It's a dream come true."

Inslee approved Work Start funding to train 150 new employees at Hexcel's composite manufacturing facility, allowing the company to grow from 450 to 650 employees.

Company officials say more growth is on the way as the economy slowly rebounds from the Great Recession.

Hexcel Corporation is a leading advanced composites company. It develops, manufactures and markets lightweight, high-performance composites for use in commercial aerospace, space and defense, wind energy and industrial applications.

"It was a good investment. ... You made my day," Inslee told newly hired workers at Hexcel.



Gov. Jay Inslee puts a Washingtonian of the Day apple pin on Larry Ruffino, a laminator and new hire, at the Hexcel Aerospace plant in Kent last Friday. — Image Credit: Mark Klaas, Kent Reporter

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