

## Town Hall tour of PK USA showcases modern manufacturing

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A single rose adorned each table in the employee cafe at PK USA as the tour group walked through.

The cafe is named for Rose Rutledge who passed away in 2006 after working there for a number of years. She made special decorations to brighten the cafe for the employees, including handmade roses for the tables.

Sandy Lacy, general manager for safety and training, greeted two young workers as they left the cafe; they are members of her safety committees who meet each Thursday.

Lacy is a 26-year employee at PK USA, 600 W. Northridge Drive. She worked her way up from a starting position to her current job, she said.

After 10 expansions since production began in December, 1989, PK USA is one of Shelby County's largest employers, making metal and plastic parts for the auto industry, notably Nissan, and a new line being installed to make axles for the Jeep Wrangler.

Safety gets top priority, Lacy said, so the company does trainings and regular drug sweeps.

"The people here are entitled to a safe place to work," she said, as she led a tour of the factory Thursday, greeting and talking with many employees as she went.

City Councilman Brad Ridgeway (R - 4th Ward) arranged the visit to PK USA as the latest in a series of Town Hall meetings he's organized to discuss public issues with citizens.

A visit to a modern factory gives residents an idea what drives the local economy, he said.

"It's clean," noted Bill Kent, vice president of corporate relations for PK USA, also leading the tour through the 350,000-square-foot manufacturing facility.



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Bill Kent, vice president of corporate relations at PK USA, points out features of the company's "Wall of Heroes" honoring employees who are military veterans. City Councilman Brad Ridgeway (R - 4th Ward), in the foreground, organized a tour of the facility as part of his on-going series of Town Hall meetings to discuss public issues.

The local operation is PK's corporate headquarters in North America, Kent said, and currently employs 625 full-time workers at the Shelbyville plant, at least half of whom live in Shelby County.

PK gives to many local charities, Kent added, and is a corporate sponsor of Pantry Pals, a local non-profit that provides food to those in need.

Shelbyville Mayor Tom DeBaun, watching robotic arms move with startling speed and precision to weld parts, said that STEM classes at Blue River Career Programs technical school will teach students how to program those machines.

Gearing up for the new Wrangler line, Kent said PK USA is hiring technicians.

More information is available at the company's website - [www.pkusa.com](http://www.pkusa.com).