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**Training Wisconsin workers: Automation leadership students develop niche station for Eaton**

Coil winding training station helps develop quality employees to keep jobs in the state

Written by Abbey Goers, University of Wisconsin–Stout

A group of [B.S. automation leadership](https://www.uwstout.edu/programs/bs-automation-leadership) students at UW-Stout completed a multi-year project to develop a niche training station and related training materials for [Eaton](https://www.eaton.com/us/en-us.html), headquartered in Waukesha.

Building the project into their capstone course, the group was father and son **Jason Solberg** and **Tyler Solberg**, and classmate **Wesley Lidwin**. Jason, an automation systems instructor at Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC), led the group.

Eaton, which manufactures transformers for utility companies and data centers, partners with WCTC to complete on-site training for its employees. Through the partnership, Eaton donated a coil winding machine from its plant to WCTC, allowing Eaton employees to train at the college and providing students with hands-on experience.

The capstone group received around $350,000 in financial support from Eaton to complete the project. They collaborated with [Pieper Electric](https://www.pieperpower.com/) for the machine upgrade.

“Transformers step up or step down the voltage of different systems and provide power for facilities. This niche coil winding training with Eaton will help develop quality employees to keep jobs in Wisconsin,” said Jason, who conducts training bootcamps a few times a year at WCTC for new Eaton employees. About 20 employees per year will use the new coil winding training station.

“Coil winding requires expertise and knowledge within the transformer manufacturing process,” said Guillaume Laur, senior vice president and general manager for Eaton, in a [project video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkvX-nv5YdI). “The training station will also help WCTC students learn what Eaton does and what positions it can offer them, knowing that our business is growing.”

The Solbergs and Lidwin also developed training materials for the station, including programmable logic control (PLC) and human-machine interface (HMI). The PLC handles the control functions, while the HMI provides a user-friendly interface for monitoring and control.

They developed a variable frequency drive (VFD) and backups of machine parameters, applied 5S and [Lean](https://www.uwstout.edu/outreach-engagement/corporate-relations-economic-engagement/manufacturing-outreach-center/learning-center/lean-series) to create a safe workspace, and created safety documentation and a project charter to document the process, Jason said.

The Solbergs and Lidwin transferred to UW-Stout from WCTC. “We chose Stout's automation leadership program since WCTC and Stout created an articulation agreement for this program that closely aligns with WCTC’s automation systems technology,” Jason said. The automation leadership seniors will graduate in spring 2026

The [automation leadership degree](https://www.uwstout.edu/programs/bs-automation-leadership) is offered entirely online. SACA professional core and professional-level classes may be completed on-site with a partnering technical college. Students may transfer up to 88 credits from any technical or community college in the country.