

March 6, 2023

Newman Signs letter in support of House Bill 1168.

Dear Representatives,

We at Newman Signs are big believers in the importance of automation in our traffic sign manufacturing plant. We have been struggling for at least four years to hire employees. It's become clear to us that our workforce must be enhanced through automation, that waiting for our numbers to increase the old-fashioned way **will not work**.

We have taken many steps to increase the number of people seeking employment with us. For example, upward wage adjustments, increased benefits, flexible hours, and working remotely. Given that, we are not however, seeing an increase in new hires.

Because of the inability to hire new employees, increased efficiencies have become essential. Efficiencies with increased automation is the direction we decided to go. In 2022, Newman Signs invested in a table cutter with the help of the ND Automation Tax Credit. The machine will help us nest our art together electronically (eliminating waste), instead of by hand, which will save time and allow that employee to do other duties with the saved time. And last but definitely not least, signs will now be cut to size which eliminates hand trimming of each sign individually. These savings are desperately needed so our employees can go to other places within the manufacturing plant where short staffed.

Newman Signs is currently looking at additional automation within our manufacturing plant in 2023. Please pass House Bill 1168 so there is more funding available for automation within manufacturing plants. With no current prospects for new employees, we have no choice but to try to seek additional automation. We appreciate the state of ND help.

Sincerely,



Chris Rathjen  
Director of Operations

