

## Putnam pipeline creates electricity



Bobby Williams and Dave Bennett are Putnam graduates now working for M.L. Schmitt.

**PHOTO: KATIE MORRISON**

**BY MEAGHAN CASEY**

Electrical contractor M.L. Schmitt, Inc. understands the importance of staying connected to a pipeline of young talent.

That's why the near century-old company, which specializes in industrial, commercial and residential construction projects, has been supportive of Roger L. Putnam Vocational Technical Academy. In addition to hiring graduates, M.L. Schmitt has also provided donations to the school.

In partnership with Exposure and local electrical manufacturers Legrand and Fidelux Lighting, the company donated low-voltage and line-voltage training kits, a variety of light fixtures, blueprints, surface raceways, disconnect switches and more to Putnam's electrical shop.

"As a small local company, entering our 100th year in business, we value giving back to our community," said Peter Coppez, president of M.L. Schmitt. "It's important that we help nurture our local students because they are our future."

Putnam teacher Charley Jackson, a master

electrician, was thrilled to learn about the donations.

"I share my work experience and testimony with my students, and it really helps them with their desire to learn," Jackson said. "Our visit from M.L. Schmitt and the donation of supplies really encouraged our students to keep pushing."

More donations are expected to arrive in January.

"We yearn to show students how the trade they learn in school can give them successful careers," said Coppez. "We believe donations, along with visits to the Putnam electrical shop, encourage students to work harder and make goals to join the men and women working in the electrical field today."

A number of Putnam graduates are employed by M.L. Schmitt, including purchasing officer Bobby Williams.

"Without our young, upcoming electricians, we won't have a future workforce of skilled tradesmen and women," said Williams. "It's important we help our community."