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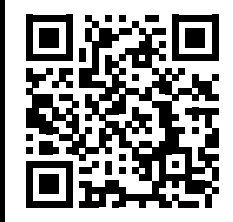
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SEND US YOUR STORY

Each issue of The Record features our members. We want to hear from you. Send us stories of successes, innovations or experiences.

The submission deadline is the 1st of the month prior to publication.

For more information, contact editor@ntma.org or call 800.248.6862.



UPCOMING NTMA EVENTS



IMTS TECH LUNCHEON
September 10, Chicago, IL



ENGAGE 2024
October 16-19, Nashville, TN



FROM ROGER

a message from the president

While not the theme of this month's issue, I'd be remiss not to discuss the pending revisions of the R&D Tax solution. For us small/medium U.S. manufacturers, it is unbelievable that a seemingly bipartisan tax bill has become a political football for all parties, while we as the backbone of American manufacturing suffer negative results. According to our NTMA survey results, the stalemate of the R&D Tax incentives costs small/medium manufacturers an estimated \$250,000. Remember the cost when election time rolls around and do not underestimate the power of your vote. Make sure your employees also recognize the impact this issue has on your company and the impact of their ballot.

This month, we focus on Workforce Development. NTMA began more than 80 years ago because of the need for a skilled workforce, and yet today we still face the same challenges. I am all about looking forward to solutions, but I think one must look back to try to understand why this issue has not been solved in more than eight decades.

Maybe we waited on industry or

government to solve our workforce problems and challenges. Early in my career, the industry removed that workforce development responsibility from their focus and passed it down to their supply base, which is you and me. We and our trade associations have always been some part of the solution equation; however, we were never the predominant piece.

Many looked to the government to replace industry's contribution. Sounds good, but when government doesn't understand the need, their solution is to throw money at the problem. Again, sounds good, but money does not identify nor solve the problem and leaves it to academia and opportunistic others to create the solution. As a result, all hell breaks loose to get in on the "jackpot" of government money and create a training solution for whatever the government indicates needs to be trained. Colleges, MEPs, manufacturing institutes and other newly created training centers step in to offer solutions.

Again, this sounds good, but the real test is: have they been

effective? Admittedly, some are doing good things, but are the results getting down to the small/medium manufacturers? In most cases, I would say no. All the while, the government has primarily overlooked trade associations and individual companies who focus 24/7/365 on investments and contributions to training.

If what I contend is accurate, the real result of the influx of government money has been mass confusion, lack of collaboration and lack of an overall strategy. There has been minimal success resulting in mass creation of individual, self-centered solutions and duplicated efforts across the country. This duplication of efforts means competition for the same funds, trainers and participants. Marketing efforts and all the effort it takes to have an individual training program is duplicated. These programs are often and unfortunately the first thing to be eliminated when self-funded and individual money becomes tight.

We were once a very united group of precision manufacturers

focused on collaborating through trade associations and providing products for multiple industries and our country. Today our industry has become very fractured, self-centered and no longer seems to be community-minded. Success is measured only on personal or local gains. Individual success may be enough for today, but is it enough to sustain our industry for years to come?

Today's manufacturing journey for all precision and advanced manufacturing companies is NOT an individual journey. The U.S. needs a manufacturing movement.

Over the years our country pushed global outsourcing, financial performance of conglomerates (our customers) and college for all at the exclusion of the trades. In a world that finds conflict in every corner of a round world, we now see the greatest manufacturing needs and opportunities in decades.

If we as an industry can align and join together in igniting a manufacturing movement across the U.S. we can change the world. Workforce development is a critical factor. Regardless of what a company can contribute in time and energy, being a part of a combined

community is good for all. I believe that not being a part of this manufacturing movement will leave companies behind. NTMA is here to lead the way for our industry.

We are Stronger Together as We Advance America's Future.

Roger Atkins, President, NTMA



NTMA 6S Excellence Award

PURPOSE:
To improve the perception of American manufacturing by promoting and recognizing excellence in member shop organization and efficiency.

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SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY:
Conference exposure via introductions, etc. Promotional exposure: web, print, blogs, and emails that promote and support the award.

SUBMISSION DUE DATE:
Please submit your application by Friday, September 6th, 2024 to be considered.

For more information, please contact Linda Warner at lwerner@ntma.org or 216-264-2824. Applications and self-assessment documents can be found here: <https://ntma.org/resources/ntma-awards> Applications should be sent to 6Saward@ntma.org

WELCOME

We're glad to count you among our members.

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Inofast Manufacturing is a recognized leader in supplying Level 1 military fasteners to the Navy, its prime sub-contractors and the supporting industrial base. Inofast has an excellent reputation for quality and on-time delivery performance. We frequently become the “vendor of choice” for many of our customers.



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Kansas City Chapter

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Worldwide, more than 1,300 coating systems are in operation at Oerlikon Balzers' facilities and its customers. Equipment engineering and assembly of Balzers' systems are processed in Liechtenstein and in Bergisch Gladbach, Germany. Oerlikon Balzers operates a dynamically growing network of more than 110 coating centers in 35 countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia. Oerlikon Balzers is – together with Oerlikon Metco and Oerlikon AM – part of the Surface Solutions Division of the Switzerland-based Oerlikon Group (SIX: OERL).

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LEGAL: DOL PUBLISHES OVERTIME FINAL RULE



On April 23, 2024, the Department of Labor (DOL) announced a final rule that will increase the Fair Labor Standards Act's (FLSA) minimum salary threshold for overtime exemptions for executive, administrative, professional and highly compensated employees.

In most cases, an employer must pay employees 1.5 times their regular rate for hours worked over 40 in a workweek. The FLSA exempts executive, administrative and professional employees from this overtime requirement. To qualify for the exemption, the employer must establish that an employee meets specific criteria concerning their job responsibilities and receives a salary equal to or exceeding the minimum salary threshold.

The FLSA also exempts highly compensated employees from overtime requirements. To qualify, the employee must regularly perform certain job responsibilities and receive a salary equal to or exceeding the minimum salary threshold.

The FLSA also exempts highly compensated employees from overtime requirements. To qualify, the employee must regularly perform certain job responsibilities and receive a salary equal to or exceeding the minimum salary threshold.

EMPLOYEES IN AN EXECUTIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY

- Effective July 1, 2024, the minimum salary threshold will increase from \$684 per week to \$844 per week. On January 1, 2025, it will increase to \$1,128 per week.
- The minimum salary threshold will be updated every 3 years beginning July 1, 2027, based on census salary data.

HIGHLY COMPENSATED EMPLOYEES

- Effective July 1, 2024, the minimum salary threshold for highly compensated employees will increase from \$107,432 per year to \$132,964 per year. On January 1, 2025, it will increase to \$151,164 per year.
- The minimum salary threshold will be updated every 3 years beginning on July 1, 2027, based on census salary data.

If a salaried employee earns less than the new minimum salary thresholds, employers will need to increase the employee's salary or reclassify them as eligible for overtime.

In 2016, the DOL attempted to increase the minimum salary thresholds using a similar method, but, after legal challenge, a federal court invalidated the increases. Similar litigation is anticipated to block the current rule.

Despite the likelihood of legal challenges to the new rule, employers should prepare by reviewing their employees' salaries and evaluating their classification policies to determine what is necessary to comply with the new overtime rule, if and when it becomes effective.



Stephen B. Maule, of McMahon Berger Attorneys at Law, practices in all areas of labor and employment law, including litigation, client counseling, and document preparation and review. He is based out of St. Louis, Missouri. He may be reached at: maule@mcmahonberger.com

ADVOCACY: FINAL OSHA WORKER WALKAROUND RULE RELEASED



The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) final rule to allow third-party employee representatives, including a union official at a non-organized facility, to be present during OSHA inspections has been officially published. The final rule changes a long-standing OSHA rule allowing only employees to be designated by workers as "walkaround representatives."

Specifically, the agency's text says "representative(s) authorized by employees may be an employee of the employer or a third party." It would allow non-employee representatives to participate in a walkaround "if, in the judgment of the Compliance Safety and Health Officer [CSHO], good cause has been shown why their participation is reasonably necessary to the conduct of an effective and thorough physical inspection of the workplace (e.g., because of their relevant knowledge, skills, or experience with hazards or conditions in the workplace or similar workplaces, or language skills)."

The rule codifies a 2013 Obama-era OSHA guidance, the "Fairfax Memo," which broadly interpreted the Occupational and Safety Health (OSH) Act of 1970 to allow union officials or community organizers to accompany CSHOs on walkaround inspections. That guidance was challenged by multiple parties in court before being rescinded by the Trump administration in 2017.

In comments on the proposed rule, One Voice along with coalition partners, argued that the rule is fatally flawed and fails to improve workplace safety and "undermines OSHA's credibility by imposing workplace access to otherwise uninvited third parties." One Voice will support coalition efforts to file legal challenges in the courts to the final rule.

The final rule takes effect on May 31, 2024. Many expect the rule will allow multiple employee groups within the company to request separate representatives, which could include a union representative for non-organized facilities, a trial attorney or community activist.



Omar S. Nashashibi is a founding partner with The Franklin Partnership, LLC, a bipartisan lobbying and strategic consulting firm based in Washington, D.C., and a member of NTMA's advocacy team in Washington, D.C.

HR: CAN HR DELIVER ROI?



Human Resources departments have a reputation for being a paper-pushing drain on budgets, so how could there possibly be an ROI from HR for small businesses?

The answer is in understanding the multifaceted role HR plays, beyond traditional administrative tasks. It's essential to shift the perspective from viewing HR as a cost center to recognizing it as a strategic partner

in achieving business goals.

A comprehensive HR plan encompasses various aspects, with a focus on: performance management, compensation, attraction and retention.

Collectively, these contribute to building a high-performing workforce and, consequently, improving the bottom line. One of the most impactful ways HR can contribute to ROI is through effective attraction and retention strategies.

We've heard it said by business owners: "What if I train them up and they leave?"

Well, what if you don't and they stay?!

By attracting top talent and retaining them for longer with opportunities for advancement and personal growth, businesses can mitigate the costs associated with turnover. Something we discuss is the "ghost tracing method" - the long-term impact of losing experienced employees due to lack of training opportunities and having to onboard new talent. It's much more expensive than keeping the employees you've got!

Can outsourced HR save money and deliver a return on investment for small businesses? The answer is a resounding yes.

It provides access to expertise without the burden of maintaining an in-house HR department.

By investing in HR strategies that prioritize employee satisfaction, businesses set the stage for long-term success.



Adam Daines, ADDA's founder and CEO brings many years of experience and expertise in Building HR Departments, Human Capital Planning, Employee Coaching, Interview Training, International HR, Talent Management and is a Certified EI Trainer. He may be reached at: adam.daines@addainfusion.com.

REVENUE: PARTNERSHIPS OPEN INDUSTRIAL SALES DOORS



The biggest challenge facing most industrial sales teams is getting initial meetings.

Buyers are overwhelmed with tasks, priorities and information. Overflowing voicemail boxes are unable to accept new messages. Prospecting emails that dodge quarantine or spam are often unread.

Many sellers don't help themselves. Prospecting is often clumsy, intrusive and provides no value — even when the

product or service would solve a legitimate problem for the prospect. It's little wonder that it's generally ineffective.

Nevertheless, sales reps must get in front of buyers, and software sales may offer a helpful example for industrial companies. The "nearbound" partnership movement is gaining momentum rapidly because of its simplicity and effectiveness.

Nearbound is like traditional referral sales. Buyers are often too busy to entertain cold outreach, but they're open to insights and ideas that can help improve aspects of their business. And, they are receptive to introductions from trusted and established vendors.

By creating helpful partnerships with strong vendors in key adjacent and complimentary product or service spaces, a company can create a framework for introductions and referrals. A payroll services company could "partner" with a machine tool, industrial cleaning, trucking and/or simulation software company.

The partnership often includes sharing helpful information for each other's customers, and mining appropriate opportunities for mutual introductions. There's no obligation to sell for one another, it's as simple as saying, "We've seen these folks really make a difference for companies like yours. I'd like to introduce them for a quick chat because I think they may have some creative ideas for you."

That's all.

And that's often enough to facilitate the important first meeting.

Maybe 2024 is the year for you to get serious about partnership marketing and sales.



Ed Marsh helps B2B industrial companies grow revenue by improving strategy, marketing, sales and technology. He's a veteran, independent board director and has run industrial companies. He can be reached at em@cgbadv.com.



CAPTIVATE TALENT:

...Unleash your Story to Inspire Paths to Manufacturing

JENNY STUPICA, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, NTMA

A few years ago, I was sitting in the back of a classroom listening to several local companies address a class of individuals new to manufacturing. These individuals came from a variety of backgrounds — recently graduated students with no plan in place post-high school, citizens returning from incarceration looking for a second chance and retail employees considering a better opportunity. The company representatives were in search of new employees and came well prepared with their PowerPoint slides and handouts. Within minutes of starting their presentations, sharing the history of their companies and details of the products they made, I could see glazed looks on the faces of their audience. They had completely lost the attention of the very people they wanted to recruit for their companies.

Manufacturing has the greatest stories to tell and yet, historically, we've been dreadful storytellers — not sharing our achievements with the world, but hoping our work will speak for itself. The competition for talent is tougher now than ever before and we need to pull out all the stops to be sure manufacturing is not just on the radar, but at the top of the list of career options. It's time we toot our own horns.

People need to feel something to act — curiosity, awe, or even surprise — and storytelling plays a crucial role in captivating individuals and sparking their interest in manufacturing careers. Our industry often faces misconceptions about being tedious or lacking innovation, or that it is solely assembly line work. Through effective storytelling, these stereotypes can be dispelled and the excitement and opportunities within manufacturing will appeal to individuals with different skill sets and interests.

Storytelling humanizes the manufacturing sector by highlighting the stories of individuals who have thriving careers within it. By sharing personal narratives of engineers, designers and technicians, potential candidates can see themselves in these roles. Hearing about a skilled technician who manufactured a device that saved patients' lives can inspire others to pursue similar paths. These stories connect on a personal level making manufacturing careers relatable and aspirational and underscore manufacturing's impact on other industries.

Furthermore, storytelling is an effective way to communicate the impact of manufacturing on society and the environment. Highlighting how advancements in technology like 3D printing, robotics and automation are transforming traditional processes can capture attention. Sharing stories about how these technologies increase efficiency and precision to make products more affordable and accessible can instill a sense of purpose in potential candidates. Many individuals today are seeking careers that align with their values, and storytelling can illustrate how manufacturing is a forward-thinking industry that is constantly evolving.

And most importantly, people want to hear what it's like to work in your shop. Will they find commonalities with their coworkers and be accepted as part of the team? Are there opportunities for training and advancement if they work hard and are open to learning? Do employees come together on projects to give back to the community? Do you celebrate holidays or do fun things to foster a sense of camaraderie? The more stories you can share about your culture and your employees, the more interested they will become in joining your team.

Ultimately, storytelling is instrumental in fostering interest and enthusiasm for manufacturing careers among a broader audience. Personal anecdotes bring to life the human side of manufacturing, demonstrating how this industry positively impacts lives and communities. We'd all rather listen to stories than a listing of facts and figures. Stories stay with us. They make us feel. They encourage us to act. And that's how we will inspire a new generation of talent to pursue rewarding careers in this dynamic field.



HERE'S

We were all asked a simple question as kids; “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Or it seemed like a simple question at the time. As we get older, we realize that question is a bit more complicated. We start asking ourselves more questions to find the right fit:

What am I good at?

What am I passionate about?

Do I want/can I afford to go to college?

The answers we put to these questions at 18, might not be the same answers at 30, 40 or even 50. That is okay, because we are never too old for a career change. For the majority of us, we all grew up with the same message, go to college to have a good career. If college wasn't an option, then it was the military. While neither are bad options, there is a third that is being talked about again: learn a skilled trade.

That is what precision manufacturing in the U.S. is, a highly skilled trade, which has been experiencing a skills gap for decades. That skills gap, along with what we manufacture, makes us a high-demand industry. There are always open positions waiting to be filled. The need has grown exponentially due to retirements and the COVID-19 pandemic. The global supply chain virtually shutdown, and as a result of that, more work is being reshored to the U.S. Manufacturers are busier than ever and show no signs of slowing down.

In 2023, the average cost of a four-year degree was \$26,000-\$54,000 per year, not including student loan interest (Hanson, 2023). The average salary for a machinist is \$42,000-\$69,000 per year (Salary.com, 2024), requires no college degree, has excellent benefits, tuition reimbursement, on the job training, advancement opportunities and offers a stability that many other industries cannot match. Just imagine starting a career without college debt, with the opportunity to continue your education to further advance your career and potentially have that reimbursed by your employer.

At Peerless Precision, we have two team members in our Quality Department with Bachelor's Degrees. Our lead inspector started out in our industry 35 years ago, and was working towards a Bachelor's in Accounting. After

THE WHY

KRISTIN MAIER CARLSON, SENIOR PRESIDENT, PEERLESS PRECISION, INC.

he graduated, he found he would make more money as a machinist than following his degree. Our up-and-coming QC Manager has a Bachelor's in Astrophysics. When he graduated, he went on to work at a local L3 as an optical engineer. He found that he wanted to be more hands on and work more with customers. Through our regional employment board, he enrolled in a grant-funded training program for unemployed and underemployed adults for advanced manufacturing, which brought him to Peerless. He is more fulfilled with his role now than he was as an optical engineer.

As we all saw during the COVID-19 pandemic, many industries were required to shut down and even more had to pivot to allow remote working. Most manufacturers, however, were considered essential businesses and part of the Defense Industrial Base. We remained open for the duration. Not a lot changed for us through the pandemic, aside from ensuring that our team members remained healthy and safe and we could keep producing and shipping what our customers needed, even pivoting operations to support elevated body temperature detection at ports of entry, vaccine development, respirator production and more. Otherwise, it was business as usual.

Admittedly, just like any industry, working in manufacturing is not for everyone. We need people who are hands on, problem solvers, strategic thinkers, good at math, mechanically inclined, curious about how things work, take pride in making things and can work in a fast-paced environment.

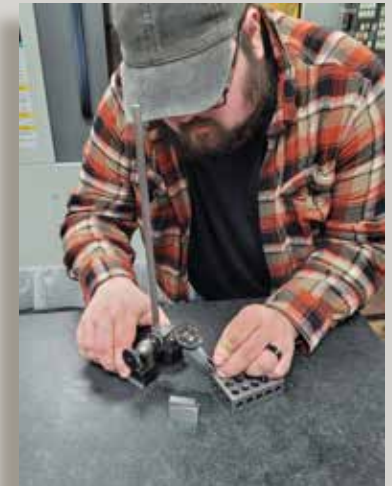


Manufacturing is not just about being a machinist. We offer many diverse career opportunities including engineering, design, procurement, accounting, process improvement, sales, quality control and programming. Nothing we produce as manufacturers is considered easy and it often takes a village to get to the finish line. We are a collaborative ecosystem

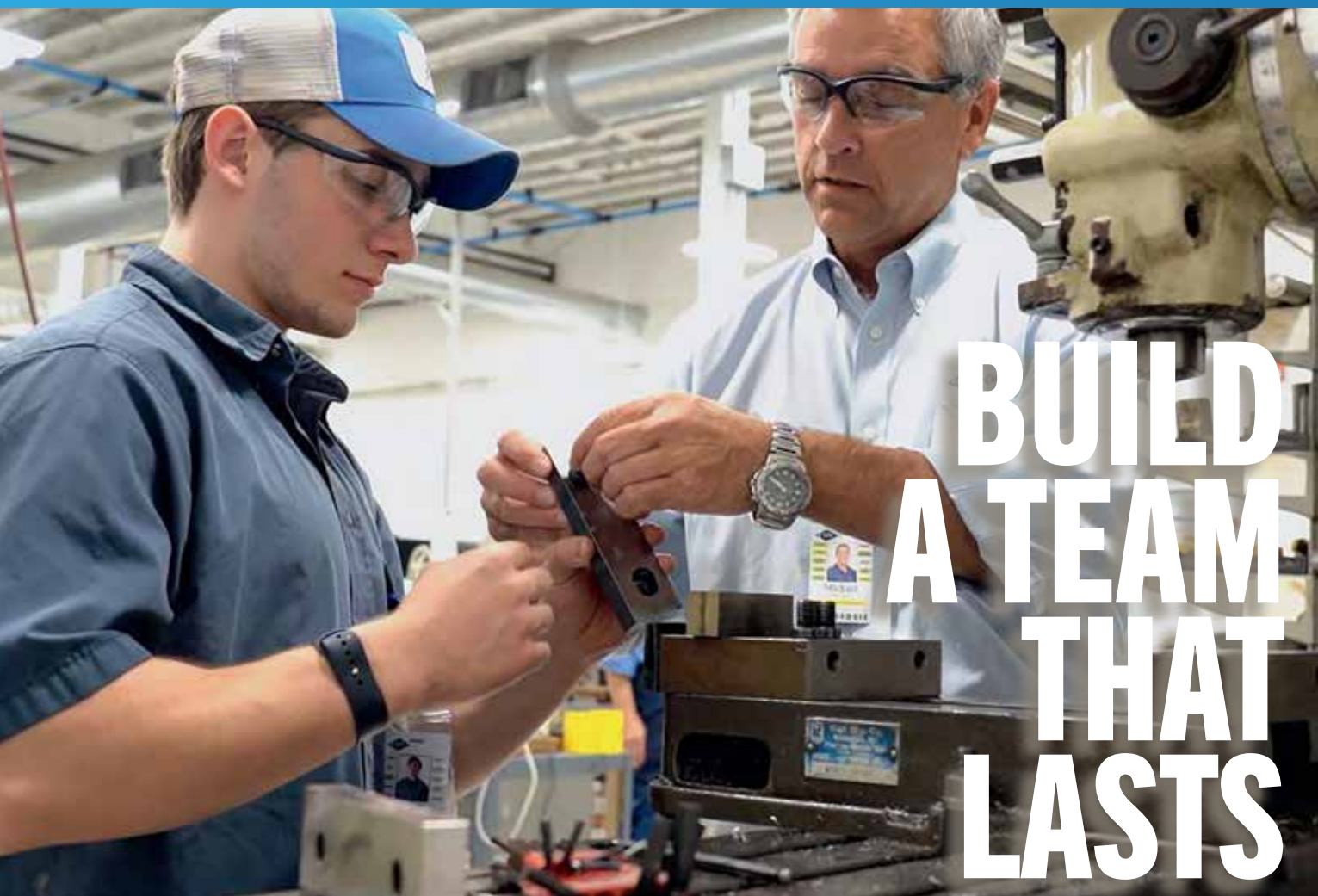
whether it be within our own organizations, through the supply chain or turning competitors in to partners.

As U.S. precision manufacturers, we have a lot to be proud of. We manufacture components that make airplanes, helicopters and shuttles fly. Our parts produce vaccines, go into satellites, prosthetics and robotics and are instrumental in life saving procedures. Our parts help protect our military and even inject peanut butter into a certain cup.

This is all just the tip of the iceberg of what we make and what it means to be part of the U.S. precision manufacturing ecosystem. Working in manufacturing is not just a job, it is a career that can provide the right people with limitless opportunities and paths. When you choose manufacturing, you work on projects that not only challenge you, but can potentially make a difference in the world that we all live in. That's the message we need to share, and it's up to manufacturers to tell our story.



YOU KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING THE MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE, BUT IF YOU EVER STRUGGLE TO ARTICULATE IT, HERE ARE JUST A FEW WAYS TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO CONSIDER CAREERS IN THE INDUSTRY.



How to craft a culture of longevity
BILL COX, PRESIDENT, COX MANUFACTURING COMPANY

In recent years, workforce retention has emerged as a critical concern, particularly in the wake of the “Great Resignation.” As the pandemic recedes, businesses nationwide, including those in the high-skill NTMA sector, are grappling with increased turnover. This challenge is exacerbated by the retirement of “baby boomers” and a societal shift favoring college education over trades. Even against this backdrop, our experience at Cox Manufacturing Company has yielded effective strategies for nurturing and expanding our technical workforce.

From 2012 to 2016, we were actually recognized as an “Inc 5000 Fastest Growing Private Company” and grew our skilled workforce with sales growing 3.5 times. We have continued to apply this strategy to increase sales 1.6 times again and grew the skilled workforce to 200 by 2024. Our top line sales increased every year, except 2020. Without these key ingredients, we do not believe this would have happened.

Here’s what made the difference for us.

BIGGER PURPOSE: A well-defined company vision, mission or purpose that transcends the transactional nature of employment, fostering a sense of contribution and engagement.

Cox Manufacturing Company Vision Statement

*To be a premier small part production machining company
 While providing a high quality of life for our employees
 And, being a positive influence for Christ.*



TECHNICAL TRAINING PATHS AND SYSTEMS:

Investment in employee training has proven to increase retention in numerous studies. We have seen significant benefits from establishing clear paths for advancing achievement and pay while offering an Apprenticeship Diploma recognized by the Department of Labor (DOL). This signed diploma from the DOL motivates, especially when combined with bonus vacation and a pay increase.

LIFE ENRICHMENT AND CHARACTER BUILDING:

Addressing life’s challenges with supportive resources can profoundly impact employee well-being. Initiatives such as paying employees to attend David Ramsey’s Financial Peace University, providing corporate chaplain services, and hosting “Life Learner Lunches” on various enrichment topics have bolstered our community and family ties. (I highly recommend Corporate Chaplains of America or Marketplace Chaplains, as well as resources such as Robert Lewis’s “Winning at Work and Home” for a lunch and learn series.)

INTENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF A HEALTHY CULTURE:

Our core values — Teamwork, Continuous Improvement, and Perseverance — are integral to our identity. New hires are introduced to these values and participate in building a culture based on trust and mutual accountability, using materials like Patrick Lencioni’s “Five Dysfunctions of a Team” as a foundation for training. But, most importantly, we focus on applying these from the top down to advance a culture of trust and results.

EMPLOYEE SELECTION:

Enhancing the selection process to prioritize cultural fit and potential over specific skills can yield immediate benefits. Utilizing pre-employment profiling tools like the Culture Index (or Predictive Index or AcuMax) can provide a very



helpful data point in the selection process. Additionally, a team approach with trained interviewers for hiring decisions, helps us minimize costly mis-hires.

RAISING THE IMAGE OF OUR INDUSTRY AND JOBS:

Combating negative stereotypes about the industry and showcasing the value and pride in your work can attract and retain talent. We can reverse that image with shop tours offered to teachers, students and even employee families. Our annual “Breakfast with Santa” tradition for employee family and friends offers a Saturday breakfast with shop tours and a Santa visit. These events have given our employees an opportunity to show off their work and their company.

SETTING AND MAINTAINING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:

Acknowledging hiring mistakes and acting promptly to correct them is crucial for organizational health. The principle of being “slow to hire and quick to fire” remains sensible, emphasizing the importance of making tough decisions for the greater good. People are always the toughest part of leading a company. Most of us are too slow to confront problems — but we are “in charge.” Nobody is perfect, but we set the standards. (Prov. 14:4 “Where no oxen are, the manger is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of the ox.”)

Workforce retention requires a multi-faceted approach, emphasizing continuous improvement. By focusing on these seven key areas, we not only tackle immediate challenges, but also lay the groundwork for long-term success and growth in U.S. manufacturing. Each strategy contributes to a culture that values growth, support and excellence, essential for retaining and attracting talent in today’s competitive landscape.

PHOTO FINISH

Congratulations to our Cover Photo Contest Winner

We put out the call, and you answered! Thank you to the companies who submitted great images reflecting the spirit, importance and strength of American manufacturing.

After careful deliberation, our panel selected this winning cover image brought to you by member company Reata.

Grady Cope founded Reata in 1993 with no more than a used manual lathe and mill purchased for \$6,000 with a charge to his credit card. Success came quickly. It took him less than a year to lease a shop, hire the company's first employee and add a CNC mill.

Reata offers machining and assembly services with expertise in various industries like medical, semiconductor, aerospace, defense and industrial products. Reata prioritizes transparency, reliability and quality, welcoming challenging projects with a team of skilled engineers.

The skill of Reata's growing team of expert contract manufacturers is reflected in the company's continued success and expansion.

This image was taken by David Hartfelder, Production Supervisor at Reata. It blends his passions for photography and manufacturing. With a degree from Brooks Institute of Photography, he's captivated by the process of creation, sharing the excitement of manufacturing through his imagery.

The parts being produced are one of multiple components of an assembly that goes into a blood plasma machine. The company machines multiple parts that go into this assembly for their customer. Their employees take pride in knowing how the parts they make help people.

Pictured in this photograph are Adam Zaouague and Jessica Leung. Zaouague is a Manufacturing Engineering student at MSU Denver and an Automation & Data Specialist at Reata Engineering & Machine Works. He has experience implementing automation solutions that have helped improve production processes. He is passionate about making a positive impact in the industry.

Jessica Leung is a Manufacturing Engineer at Reata Engineering & Machine Works. She holds a degree in



Mechanical Engineering from the University of Colorado at Denver. She specializes in designing innovative parts and processes that enhance efficiency on the manufacturing floor.

Congratulations to Reata for winning this year's photo contest and thank you to all of the companies and individuals that took the time to submit images. Be on the lookout for other photo submissions which may be included in future issues of The Record.



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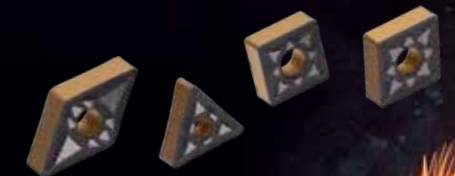
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NATIONAL ASSOCIATE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: HWR

European Workholding Solutions come to North America

THOMAS SAUR, CEO, HWR USA

In 2022, HWR Spanntechnik GmbH, renowned throughout Europe for its cutting-edge workholding solutions, brought its innovative products and deep technical expertise to North America. It accomplished this through the establishment of HWR Workholding USA, a new subsidiary headquartered in Noblesville, Indiana.

In its first two years, HWR USA has rapidly solidified its presence across the United States and Canada building a distribution network, forging partnerships with machine tool builders and establishing a substantial customer base spanning all major industry segments. The company draws on its team's extensive experience and industry insights to provide personalized consultations to optimize manufacturers' workholding strategies.



From assessing part portfolios to recommending custom solutions for particularly challenging components, the HWR USA team is dedicated to maximizing efficiency and productivity. Furthermore, the company possesses proficiency in process automation, enabling it to seamlessly integrate workholding solutions into existing workflows or even assist in the development and implementation of new automation systems.

HWR's commitment to excellence is reflected by the company's diverse product portfolio, which includes a variety of groundbreaking solutions. For turning applications, HWR offers the INOLine 4-jaw self-centering and compensating chucks, which are designed to revolutionize precision machining and are backed by a range of innovative accessories and options. On the milling side, the company provides the SOLIDLine zero-point workholding system, a flexible system that offers high security in demanding applications such as 5-axis machining.

This fall, HWR USA will be exhibiting at IMTS for the first time and can be found in booth #431579 in the West Building at the show. In addition to a general focus on its standard-setting INOLine and SOLIDLine portfolios, the company will be highlighting three new solutions that will be of particular interest to attendees.

SOLIDGrip MAXX provides an easily implementable solution for holding parts up to 800 mm x 800 mm. The system makes use of a center support and spindle to significantly increase the

HWR

capabilities of SOLIDGrip workholding for simple, cost-effective clamping of large workpieces.

The company will also highlight its SOLIDGrip vise for direct mount to machine pallets. With simple installation and an extremely low profile, this product provides secure workholding while minimizing cost and maximizing the available work envelope of the machine.

Lastly, IMTS attendees will see HWR pyramids that feature directly mounted SOLIDGrip vises on three sides, significantly increasing the part density that can be achieved in a 5-axis machining center.

For more information on HWR USA's products and services, visit hwr-usa.com or contact us at 317.798.6599.



Serving Members 

MEMBER PROFILE: A.E. MACHINE WORKS

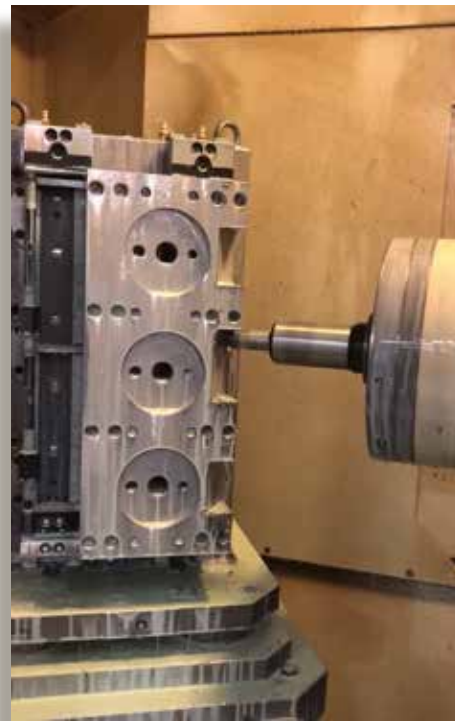
BRANDON KOCHER, PRESIDENT, A.E. MACHINE WORKS

WHO WE ARE:

A.E. Machine Works, founded in 1966 by A.E. Herbrich, stands as a testament to longevity and stability in the precision machining industry. What began as a small tooling venture for a single customer has evolved into a thriving employee-owned company boasting a state-of-the-art 30,000 square foot facility in Cypress, TX. Guided by the principles of family values, community involvement and continuity, we uphold a culture of low turnover, some with over 30 years of service. Generations of families have found success with our company. In fact, we have our newest father/son team starting this summer, when our QC manager's son takes his first job as a summer intern with us! We truly care about our amazing people, and they are THE key component in the company's success. We reciprocate by striving to be a key support in their success as well. Management lives by the motto: we want to train you so well that you could open your own shop, but we want to treat you so well, that you'll never want to leave. We truly desire every employee to reach their full potential at work to provide for their happy families. A.E. Machine Works serves diverse sectors including oil and gas, industrial, aerospace, firearms and renewable energy.

WHAT WE DO:

A.E. Machine Works specializes in custom precision machined components across various industries and materials. Flexibility and adaptability are hallmarks of A.E. Machine Works' approach to meeting customer needs. Leveraging our 55+ years of experience and extensive vendor network, we excel in tailoring solutions. We offer many value-added services to our customers, including but not limited to 3D scanning to support reverse engineering, light and heavy assembly, material identification, welding and fabrication, stocking programs and many more. When we can take the load off our customers manufacturing, it allows them to focus on what they do best.



WHAT WE DO REALLY WELL:

We are very proud of our personalized customer service, giving our customers direct access to knowledgeable staff, and our commitment to understanding our customers supply chain. We never turn down an opportunity to add value to our customers and go above and beyond to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty. Our customers don't just stay with us while seeing a project to completion, they stay with us for decades. We promise our customers "we care more about your parts than you do."

We also take great care while hiring any employee. We have a fantastic culture of teamwork, hard work and caring about each other. We are very protective of that culture and we extensively interview and evaluate to determine motivation, humility and people/teamwork skills for each candidate. We KNOW we can take any highly motivated, coachable person who enjoys working with a team, and fit them into our company somewhere, even if they aren't a machinist. The people that work with us are what makes our company great!

In addition to its internal initiatives, A.E. Machine Works actively contributes to industry growth and workforce development through partnerships with educational institutions and internship programs with local high school students. These efforts underscore the company's commitment to sustainability and responsible business practices.



WHY WE ARE MEMBERS OF THE NTMA:

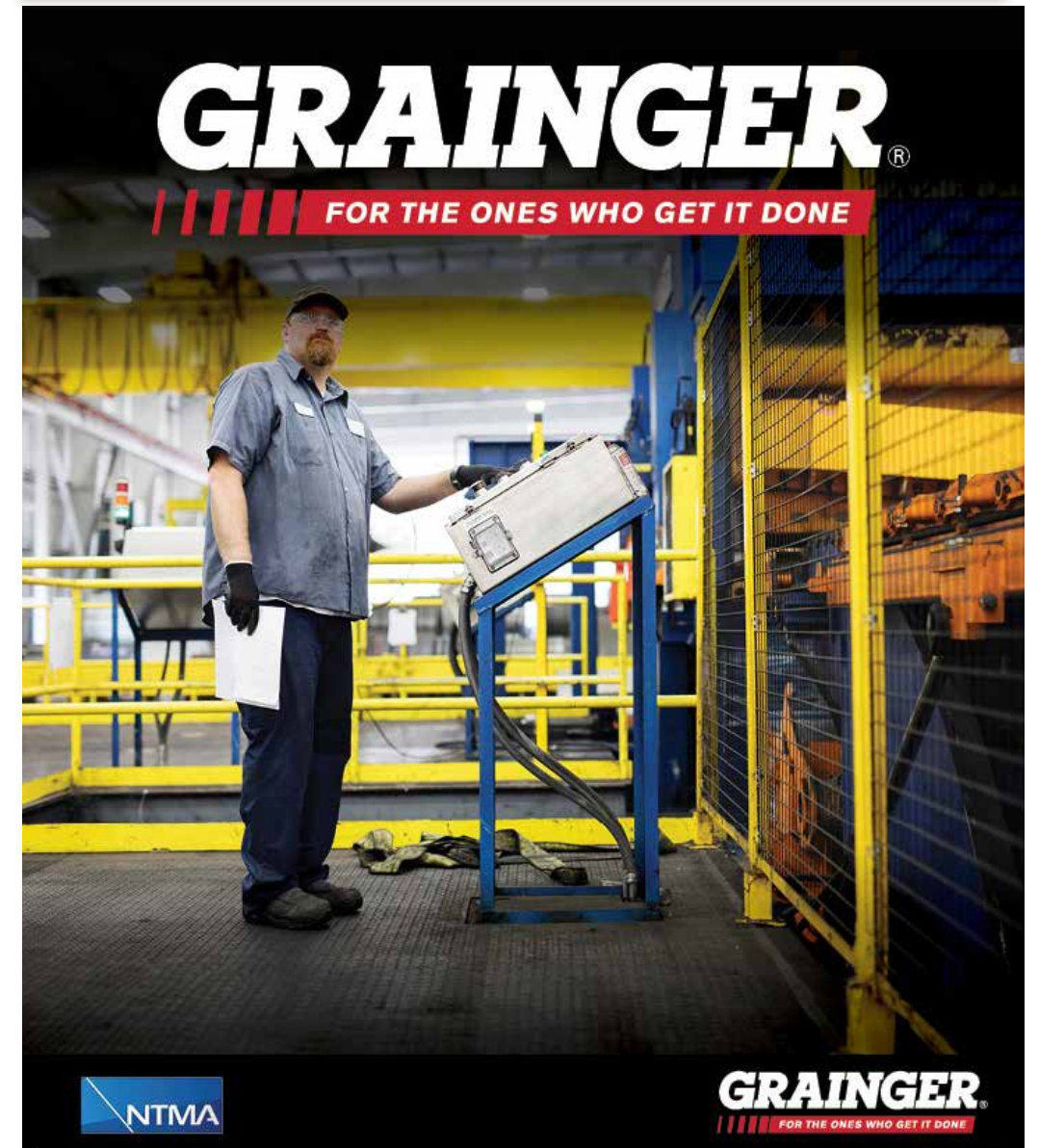
For more than 55 years, A.E. Machine Works has proudly been a member of the NTMA, with our president, Wesley Mills, serving as the Houston Chapter president for more than 30 years. Currently, Brandon Kocher, our president, holds the same role, demonstrating our enduring commitment to the organization.

Industry Networking:

NTMA membership has been instrumental in facilitating industry networking opportunities, allowing us to not only support production needs, but also share best practices and discuss challenging issues with fellow machine shop owners and managers. As one member aptly put it, "You can learn to be a machinist many places. You come to the NTMA meetings to learn how to be a machine shop owner."

Supporting Small Business Manufacturing:

At A.E. Machine Works, we have a genuine desire to improve and support small business manufacturing in Houston. We firmly believe that success is not a zero-sum game. Witnessing and aiding fellow members in their development, growth and success is a true passion for us. Additionally, we are deeply invested in our local community, collaborating with our community college to enhance their curriculum and offering internships to high school students to introduce them to the rewarding opportunities within our industry.



NTMA Who We Are

OKUMA AMERICA CORPORATION

Recognized Nationally as a 2024 Top Workplace

Okuma America Corporation, a world-leading builder of computer numerical control (CNC) machine tools, controls and automation systems, is honored to be recognized nationally as a Top Workplace in 2024. The company received the Top Workplace USA designation by USA Today, a prominent national media company, and Energage, a purpose-driven organization that develops solutions to build and brand Top Workplaces.

The Top Workplace selections were made based on feedback from participating companies' employees.

In the Spring of 2023, Okuma members were offered an opportunity to complete an anonymous employee engagement survey which polled for feedback on various topics related to job satisfaction and company culture. Nearly 80% of Okuma's employees completed the survey, which was well beyond the minimum rate of 35% participation to be considered for a Top Workplace award. The results were then compared to other participating companies and ranked accordingly, with the highest-scoring companies receiving Top Workplace designations.

In addition to the 2024 Top Workplace USA designation, Okuma America Corporation has previously received several national and regional Top Workplace awards. These awards include: a Top Workplace award for the Charlotte, NC metropolitan region in 2022 and 2023; national recognition as a top employer in the manufacturing industry in 2023; national cultural excellence awards for compensation and benefits, employee appreciation, and professional development in 2023.

NTMA In The News

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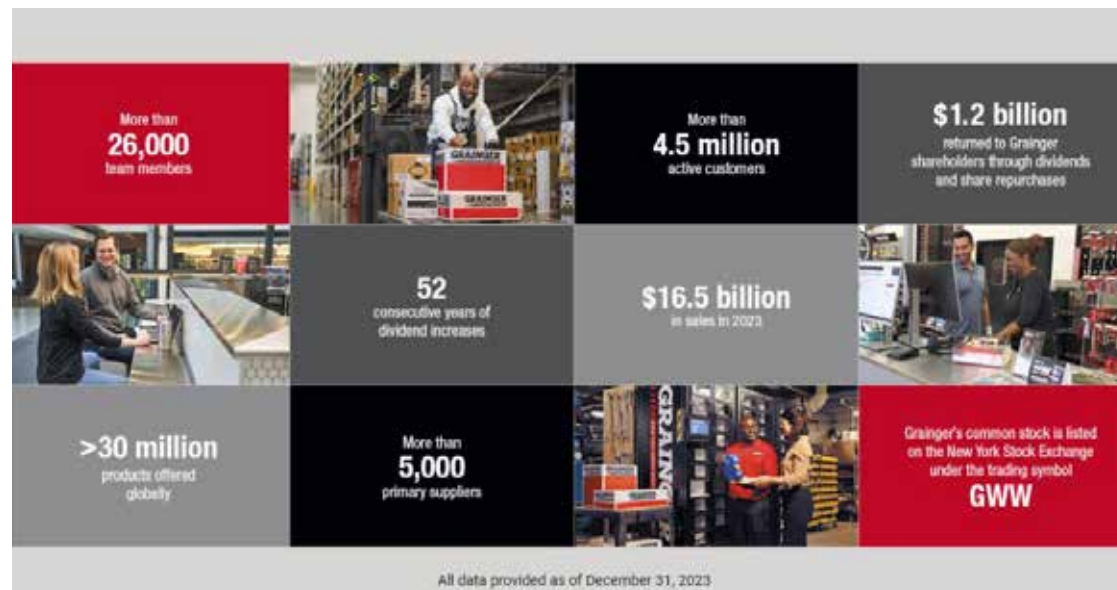
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Want to hear directly from a NTMA member? Watch a video here:



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MTDCNC:

TUNING INTO THE FUTURE OF MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

TONY GUNN, DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL OPERATIONS, MTDCNC

Remember when MTV revolutionized the music scene and gave us 24/7 music videos?

Well, MTDCNC is doing the same for manufacturing, but instead of music videos, think high-octane, chip-making action and a relentless feed of manufacturing marvels. It's the go-to channel where the smell of coolant meets the digital age, and it's reshaping the workforce as we know it.

So, what's the big deal?

We're living in an era where manufacturing complexity meets advanced technology at an intersection laden with workforce challenges. According to a Deloitte report, the manufacturing industry is on a collision course with a potential shortage of 2.4 million skilled workers by 2028.

MTDCNC isn't just a media channel; it's a powerhouse of knowledge dissemination in the manufacturing sector. Through their dynamic platform, which boasts a robust online following, they serve up everything from



tutorials on the latest CNC technologies to interviews with industry leaders, making the complexities of manufacturing as digestible as your morning cereal — though, admittedly, with less sugar and a lot more metal.

The channel plays a crucial role in workforce development by doing more than just reporting on innovations; it educates and inspires. Imagine a young machinist in Omaha or a seasoned engineer in Manchester tuning into MTDCNC to watch a live demo of a 5-axis machining center effortlessly crafting complex components. That's not just informative; it's transformative.

MTDCNC has carved a niche in making high-tech manufacturing approachable and engaging, breaking down the barrier of entry for newcomers and enhancing the skill set of current professionals. Think of it as upskilling in high definition. This is crucial at a time when manufacturing jobs are not only becoming more technologically-driven but also more integral to the economic fabric of our future.



Let's face it, in the 90s, we thought by now cars would fly and robots would do our laundry. While we're not quite there yet, robots are indeed playing a massive role in manufacturing. But instead of replacing humans, MTDCNC helps workers co-pilot these advanced machines, ensuring humans and robots can work in harmony — like a well-choreographed dance routine, but with robots and CNC machines.

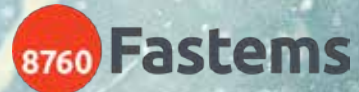
With a blend of expert insights, cutting-edge demonstrations and industry news, MTDCNC isn't just keeping the current workforce informed; it's enticing a new generation to the shop floor. It's like

the cool science teacher you never had, showing you that manufacturing is not just about making things; it's about making things awesome.

So, if you're keen on not just keeping up, but staying ahead, tuning into MTDCNC might be your best move. It's not just about watching manufacturing happen; it's about being part of the action. The future of manufacturing isn't just about automation; it's about the innovative humans behind the machines. And with MTDCNC, the industry is in good hands—very skilled, robot-assisted hands.

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WORKFORCE IS TAKING CENTER STAGE

JENNY STUPICA, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, NTMA

The National Tooling & Machining Foundation (NTMF) has undergone a few changes in the past year, none as significant as Workforce Development activities now falling under this umbrella. New teams have been established and I'd like to introduce you to the Workforce Development Team:

- Kristin Carlson* (Team Leader) *Peerless Precision*
- Tami Adams *NWPA Chapter*
- Neil Ashbaugh *New Century Careers*
- Scott Covert* *Retired, Penn United, Co-Author of NTMA-U Pre-Apprenticeship*
- John Duncan *Penn United*
- John Hudson *Win-Tech*
- Mark Lashinske* *Modern Industries*
- Bryan Powell *Accrotool*
- Brad Robeson *Clean Machine*
- Steve Tamasi* *Boston Centerless*
- Greg Wasko *Starn Tool & Mfg.*
- Scott White *Denver Machine*

“THEY ARE READY TO BRING THEIR ENERGY AND IDEAS TO THE TABLE FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR MEMBERSHIP.”

This team will align its goals with workforce initiatives aimed at preparing and providing a skilled industry workforce that ensures a strong future for U.S. precision manufacturing. This includes engaging the next generation and their parents, cultivating recruitment strategies for youth and adults and creating resources to encourage and aid members starting new workforce initiatives. The team plans to address training, education and pathways for incumbent workers. There was lively conversation in the first meeting in April and the team is already well on its way to establishing specific objectives and goals.

This group is made up of people actively engaged in workforce activities in their areas. They are ready to bring their energy and ideas to the table for the benefit of our membership. I am excited to work with them and look forward to the resources we will roll out to our members in the coming months.



Image Courtesy of: HEIDENHAIN CORPORATION

For more information or to share information about programs or initiatives you are involved in, please contact:

Jenny Stupica, WFD Director, jstupica@ntma.org



CHAPTER CHECK-IN

NRL COLORADO MAKES HISTORY WITH TWO WINNERS

BETTY VRCEK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NRL COLORADO

NRL Colorado is a manufacturing workforce development program of the Rocky Mountain National Tooling & Machining Association (RMTMA) to help machine shops fill their workforce pipeline by partnering with local schools.

NRL Colorado builds on the success of robotics programs in our community and makes a direct tie to careers for the next generation — careers in manufacturing. By formalizing ties between schools and industry advisors, students gain a better understanding and become enthusiastic about the career possibilities in manufacturing.

Students design and build 15-lb remote-controlled robots to face-off in a gladiator-style competition. Through the manufacturing process of bot building, students' imaginations are captured as they design, build and compete



with their own robotic creations. Students gain practical knowledge of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) — all essential skills for manufacturing.

This year's competition was April 6, 2024, co-chaired by RMTMA members: Amy Primrose (Denver Precision) and Christina Collette (Reata Engineering). The competition included Cherry Creek Innovation Campus (Reata Engineering), Horizon

High School (Zimmerman Metals), EPIC Campus (Accu-Precision), Wheat Ridge High School (Denver Precision Products).

For the first time in NRL Colorado history, we had a tie. Two awards plus \$500 were awarded to Wheat Ridge High School (Denver Precision Products) and Horizon High School (Zimmerman Metals).



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WE HAVE FORMED A TERRIFIC RELATIONSHIP WITH LIAM BRACE AND HIS DYNAMIC COMPANY, EMBRACE PUTTERS, BASED IN SCOTTSDALE, AZ. HIS PUTTERS ARE NOT ONLY WORKS OF ART, BUT ARE PERFECTLY CRAFTED, HIGHLY ENGINEERED AND BEING SOLD AROUND THE WORLD. WITH AN AUDIENCE THAT INCLUDES GOLF PROFESSIONALS ON THE HIGHEST TOURS, AND GOLF ENTHUSIASTS OF ALL TYPES, LIAM EQUIPS GOLFERS WITH THE FINEST TOOLS TO OPTIMIZE PERFORMANCE AND ENJOYMENT. EMBRACE PUTTERS IS A HIGH PRECISION BRAND PRIORITIZING TOP QUALITY FINISHES, COMBINED WITH ATTENTION TO PERFORMANCE DETAILS SUCH AS SOLE DRAFT, LOFT AND LIE ANGLE, WEIGHT, FACE FINISHES AND MORE.

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**RODGER SHEPHERD
VP ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES GROUP
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**NTMA SERVICE AWARDS 2024
NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS**

The Service Awards are given out each year at the Manufacturing Engage Conference. We need your help finding the best candidates for these awards.

Award categories are:

MEMBER AWARDS

HONOR AWARD

Nominate a member for continuing meritorious service and dedication to the industry and/or the Association by a regular member; traditionally awarded for longevity of service in dedication, as opposed to a single act or service in a short-time industry or Association position.

**L.A. SOMMER
MEMORIAL AWARD**

For outstanding and continuing service of the highest magnitude; emphasis is placed on service to the Association by a regular member, both of the highest order and over a period of time, connoting excellence in a particular role in NTMA, rather than as a participant in a single event.

**WILLIAM E. HARDMAN
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
IN TRAINING**

For a company or individual (regular member or education member) which consistently demonstrated strong support and active participation in structured training for the precision custom manufacturing industry.

NON-MEMBER AWARD

**DISTINGUISHED
SERVICE AWARD**

For outstanding service to the industry by a person outside the NTMA regular member companies.

Help us recognize deserving individuals and/or companies that have supported and advanced the industry and the Association.

**Submit your nomination(s) by Friday, August 9th, 2024.
For a nomination form, contact Linda Warner at lwarn@ntma.org**



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