

IMC Secures ARC Grant to Advance Green Energy Manufacturing and Workforce Development in Central PA

written by Lauri Moon | November 26, 2024



The Innovative Manufacturers Center (IMC), a public-private partnership dedicated to supporting small- and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) in Central Pennsylvania, has been awarded a \$510,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE) fund.

This funding will enable IMC to help SMMs in its 12-county region expand or enter the growing green technology and clean energy sectors, fostering economic growth and sustainability.

Driving Green Technology Adoption

The ARC grant will support Central PA manufacturers in adopting technologies and practices for renewable energy, hydrogen power, low-carbon and decarbonized energy, smart grid improvements, electric vehicles, and green buildings.

IMC will provide:

- **Training and Technical Assistance:** Resources to upskill employees and implement green technologies.
- **Supply Chain Mapping:** Insights to help manufacturers identify and

capitalize on opportunities in the green energy market.

- **Factory Upgrades Guidance:** Support for facility improvements to meet the needs of clean energy production.

Empowering Regional Growth

This initiative will strengthen Central Pennsylvania's manufacturing ecosystem, positioning the region as a leader in green energy innovation while creating jobs and enhancing sustainability.

Central PA manufacturers interested in leveraging this opportunity are encouraged to contact IMC for more information at info@imcpa.com, 570-329-3200.

IMC ARC Arise Client Handout

IMC Secures DOE SMART Grant to Advance Manufacturing Technology in Central PA

written by Lauri Moon | November 26, 2024



The Innovative Manufacturers Center (IMC), a public-private partnership dedicated to supporting small- and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) in Central Pennsylvania, has been awarded a grant through the Department of Energy's (DOE) Smart Manufacturing Assistance and Training Program (SMART). This funding will enable IMC to assist manufacturers in the region with adopting advanced manufacturing technologies to enhance productivity and remain competitive.

Driving Innovation with SMART Manufacturing

The SMART-PA program is designed to help SMMs invest in SMART manufacturing technologies to address critical challenges, such as:

- **Lower Production Rates:** Caused by workforce shortages.
- **Data Delays:** Resulting from manual or paper-based processes.
- **High Scrap Rates:** Due to unnoticed out-of-spec processes.
- **Excessive Downtime:** Caused by inefficient machine operations.

By leveraging SMART-PA resources, manufacturers can improve operational efficiency, attract skilled talent, and reduce costs, ensuring long-term competitiveness in the market.

Program Benefits for Central PA Manufacturers

Through the SMART-PA program, IMC will provide manufacturers with:

- **Technology Assessments:** Identify opportunities for improvement.
- **Technical Assistance:** Support for implementing advanced manufacturing technologies.
- **Mini-Grants:** Financial assistance for technology adoption projects.
- **Educational Events and Networking:** Access to training sessions and industry connections.

IMC is committed to empowering manufacturers in Central Pennsylvania with the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in today's competitive environment. Connect with IMC at info@imcpa.com, 570-329-3200 for support and resources.

IMC Smart PA Program Flyer

IMC Announces Using AI in HR Webinar Series

written by Lauri Moon | November 26, 2024



Using Artificial Intelligence to Support Human Resources in Manufacturing

Four 90-minute Modules

In the rapidly evolving landscape of human resources, artificial intelligence (AI) is emerging as a transformative force. HR practitioners must be aware of how AI can enhance HR practices to stay competitive, improve efficiency, and create a more engaged and satisfied workforce. This 4-session program explores the significance of AI in HR. AI can increase efficiency and productivity of HR operations to improve candidate experience and provide data-driven insights into decision-making and personalize employee development.

In this webinar series you will learn to:

- Analyze job roles effectively using AI tools and explore how AI enhances recruitment processes, improving communication and candidate experience in talent acquisition.
- Identify best practices in onboarding and employee engagement, utilizing AI technologies to automate processes and foster a more engaging workplace environment.
- Examine the role of AI in supporting employee relations and learning & development initiatives, focusing on strategies to improve retention and training outcomes.
- Assess the importance of HR analytics and compliance, exploring how AI can enhance data-driven decision-making and ensure adherence to regulatory

standards within HR functions.

Schedule:

- No-cost Introductory webinar: December 5, 2024 - Using Artificial Intelligence to Support Human Resources
- January 16, 2025 - Using Artificial Intelligence to Support Job Descriptions, Recruiting, and Workforce Planning
- February 13, 2025 - Using Artificial Intelligence to Enhance Onboarding, Engagement, and Performance Management
- March 6, 2025 - AI-Driven Employee Relations, Development, and Retention: Building a Future-Ready Workforce
- April 3, 2025 - AI-Powered Analytics, Compliance, and Employee Assistance: Driving Data-Driven Success

Don't miss this opportunity to learn from one of the top thought leaders in the field. Register now to unlock the power of AI in HR.

You are welcome to register for each webinar individually but register for all four for only \$309!

IMC is recognized by SHRM to offer Professional Development Credits (PDCs) for SHRM-CP® or SHRM-SCP® recertification activities. For attending this webinar series, SHRM members are eligible to receive 1.5 PDCs.



Presenter:



William J. Rothwell, PhD. is President of Rothwell & Associates, Inc., Rothwell & Associates, LLC, and Rothwell & Associates Korea. He has worked full-time in human resources, training, and organizational development in both government and in a multinational company. He has been a consultant for over 50 multinational companies. He has served many manufacturing clients in both the U.S. and abroad. Some of his clients include Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Siemens, Sony, Phillips, Erickson, and HP. Dr. Rothwell is a prolific author and has published more than 130 books and authored numerous training packages, guides, technical reports, and scholarly articles. He is a Distinguished Professor in the Workforce Education and Development program in the College of Education at The Pennsylvania State University. He holds top-level certifications and credentials with National SHRM and ATD.



This program is WEDnetPA eligible.

Thank You for Joining Us in

Celebrating Central Pennsylvania's Manufacturing Community!

written by Lauri Moon | November 26, 2024



We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who joined us for this incredible event celebrating the vibrant manufacturing community of Central Pennsylvania. Your presence made the event truly memorable, and it was inspiring to see so many professionals, community leaders, and innovators come together in support of local industry.

The event was held at the historic Axemann Brewery, a former metal factory now repurposed as a unique and fitting space to celebrate our region's resilience and rich industrial heritage. Thank you to those who arrived early to take part in the exclusive tours of the manufacturing space—your enthusiasm added to the event's energy and sense of community.

This gathering was a wonderful opportunity to connect, learn, and inspire. We hope you enjoyed the networking opportunities, discovering valuable resources offered by regional economic development partners, and engaging in important discussions about manufacturing in our region.

Together, we're building a stronger, more innovative community. We're excited for

what lies ahead and look forward to supporting your continued growth and success.

Thank you again for being part of this special day and for all that you contribute to Central Pennsylvania's manufacturing landscape.







Celebrating

National

Manufacturing Day: Strengthening Central PA's Manufacturing Sector with IMC

written by Lauri Moon | November 26, 2024



On **October 4th**, we celebrate **National Manufacturing Day**, a day dedicated to recognizing the critical role manufacturing plays in the U.S. economy. Here in Central Pennsylvania, manufacturing is a vital industry that fuels local economies, providing high-paying jobs and fostering innovation.



According to recent statistics, manufacturing in Central PA accounts for **14% of the region's total employment** and generates more than **\$8 billion** in annual economic output. The industry supports family sustaining jobs and drives economic growth in communities large and small. With a strong base in advanced manufacturing, food production, metal fabrication, and more - the region is a cornerstone of Pennsylvania's industrial strength.

At **Innovative Manufacturers' Center (IMC)**, we are proud to be part of this manufacturing community. As your trusted partner, IMC provides a suite of services

that help manufacturers throughout Central PA enhance their **processes, boost productivity, train their workforce**, and drive **innovation**. Our goal is to help manufacturers achieve operational excellence, remain competitive, and thrive in an ever-evolving market.

IMC's Key Services for Central PA Manufacturers:

1. **Process Improvement:** Manufacturers across Central PA face constant pressure to improve efficiency and reduce waste. IMC's process improvement services are designed to streamline operations, eliminate inefficiencies, and lower costs. Whether it's reducing lead times or enhancing product quality, we help businesses implement sustainable solutions that boost performance.
2. **Productivity Enhancement:** With the manufacturing sector contributing billions to the economy, maximizing productivity is essential. IMC works with companies to fine-tune their production systems, optimize resource allocation, and improve overall output. Our proven strategies help businesses in Central PA stay ahead of the competition by achieving more with fewer resources.
3. **Training:** Central PA's manufacturing sector employs a skilled workforce, but as new technologies emerge, ongoing training is crucial. IMC offers comprehensive events and training programs that equip employees with the skills needed to operate new machinery, adopt advanced manufacturing techniques, and improve safety and leadership. By investing in workforce development, we ensure that the region's manufacturers have the talent they need to succeed.
4. **Innovation Support:** Innovation drives the future of manufacturing, and IMC is committed to helping manufacturers in Central PA by providing expert guidance on incorporating new technologies, from automation to digital manufacturing solutions, and help businesses bring innovative products and processes to life. Our innovation services ensure that Central PA manufacturers are well-positioned to lead in their respective industries.
5. **People:** A skilled, motivated, and cohesive workforce is critical to the success of any manufacturing operation. Your employees drive productivity,

innovation, and quality, and their skills and dedication are essential to the long-term success and growth of your business. IMC supports Central PA manufacturers by offering comprehensive services focused on employee engagement, leadership development, change management, and human resources support, essential for the long-term success and growth of Central PA manufacturing.

Celebrating Manufacturing's Impact in Central PA

Manufacturing in Central PA is more than just an industry—it's the backbone of our local economy. National Manufacturing Day serves as an opportunity to highlight the impact this sector has on our region's prosperity and to inspire the next generation to consider careers in manufacturing.

At IMC, we are dedicated to supporting the growth and success of manufacturers in Central PA. Our tailored services help manufacturers improve their efficiency, increase productivity, and innovate for the future. As we celebrate National Manufacturing Day, we remain committed to empowering the manufacturing community and driving economic growth throughout the region.

For more information on how IMC can help your manufacturing business thrive, visit IMCPA.com.

Let's celebrate the continued success of manufacturing in Central PA this National Manufacturing Day!

Innovative Manufacturers' Center (IMC) is a trusted service provider for Central Pennsylvania manufacturers, offering tailored solutions to enhance productivity, drive innovation, and improve workforce skills. IMC is committed to helping manufacturers succeed in today's competitive market.

For more information on National Manufacturing Day, visit MfgDay.com.

New No-Cost Electrical Safety Training Grant Extended to December 31st

written by Lauri Moon | November 26, 2024



NO COST Electrical Safety Training

M Manufacturers' ASSOCIATION

The federally-funded grant training for Electrical Safety Training will be offered in Central & South Central PA.
MEETS OSHA NFP70e Requirements!

Training Topics:

- General Electrical Safety Information
- General Electrical Safe Work Practices
- Common Hazards / Arc Flash
- Permitted & Non-permitted uses
- Energy Control Procedures & Lockout/Tag-out

In partnership with:

IMC Industrial Maintenance Center

Visit: imcpa.com/electrical-safety-trg/ to learn more. Email: LauriM@imcpa.com or Call: (570) 329-3200 to schedule training



M Manufacturers' ASSOCIATION

NO COST ELECTRICAL SAFETY TRAINING: General Industry

Meets OSHA NFP70e Requirements!

Training Topics:

- General Electrical Safety Information
- General Electrical Safe Work Practices
- Common Hazards
- Permitted and Non-permitted uses
- Arc Flash
- Energy Control Procedures (ECPs) & Lockout/Tag-out (LOTO)

In partnership with:

IMC Industrial Maintenance Center

The federally-funded grant training for Electrical Safety Training will be at no cost, with dates and training locations throughout Central & South Central PA. Companies are able to host training sessions at their locations, in conjunction with the IMC.

Visit: imcpa.com/electrical-safety-trg/ to learn more
Email: LauriM@imcpa.com or Call: (570) 329-3200 to schedule training

This material was prepared under grant number 2018R120-002 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. It does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor or the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

IMC, in partnership with The Manufacturers' Association, is bringing **No-Cost Electrical Safety Training for General Industry** to Central PA.

This opportunity is available through a grant provided by the Occupational Safety

and Health Administration (OSHA). Companies are also able to host training sessions onsite with a minimum of 10 participants.

Training Topics Include:

- General Electrical Safety Information
- General Electrical Safe Work Practices
- Common Hazards
- Permitted and Non-permitted Uses
- Arc Flash
- Energy Control Procedures (ECPs) & Lockout/Tag-out (LOTO)

This NO COST training is available to workers and employers covered under the OSH Act of 1970, SEC. 4, codified at 29 U.S.C. 653 (Appendix B). This also includes multiple small businesses and temporarily unemployed workers who are planning to reenter the workforce in a position covered by the OSHA Act within the next three months. Unemployed and high school and college students within three months of employment are also eligible for this training.

The trainer is a CHCM, DSM, CHST, OSHA Consultation Program Consultant and has been the trainer for over 100 OSHA 10- & 30-Hour training programs.

To schedule Electrical Safety Training at YOUR location, please contact Lauri Moon at (570) 329-3200 or by email at laurim@imcpa.com.

**Susan Harwood
Training Grant Program**

This four-hour program honors the late Susan Harwood, former director of OSHA's Office of Risk Assessment, who died in 1996. During her 17-year OSHA career, she helped develop federal standards to protect workers exposed to bloodborne pathogens, cotton dust, benzene, formaldehyde, asbestos and lead in construction.

The training material was produced under grant number SH-39128-SH2 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. It does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S.

Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

IMC Announces Board of Director Officers

written by Lauri Moon | November 26, 2024



With a unanimous vote, the Innovative Manufacturers' Center (IMC), Inc. is excited to announce the appointment of Marcus M. Annicelli as Chairman of its Board of Directors. The IMC is a public-private partnership that is dedicated to driving economic success and business growth for manufacturers in its 12-county region. IMC provides expert advice and solutions to small and medium-sized manufacturers through consultative services and training opportunities.



Marc is an experienced business leader who has managed manufacturing operations in electronics, fabrication, automotive, architectural products and print and mailing. His experience includes “lean and agile” operations, automation and people development. Additionally, Marc has been a business owner throughout his career. He has been a partner of the IMC, its leadership, business advisors and the board for many years.

He said of his new appointment, “I am very excited to have this leadership role and to continue working with and learning from the IMC Board, its President, Dennis Gilbert, and other business leaders.” Marc went on to say, “The opportunity to put my fingerprint on the organization that has supported me and so many businesses over the years feels very rewarding.”

Also appointed to one-year terms were Ben Eltz as Vice Chairperson and Donita Rudy, returning as Secretary/Treasurer. Ben currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of DiamondBack Automotive Accessories, Inc. located in Philipsburg, PA and Donita is a Certified Turnaround Professional located in State College, PA.

Success Story: NuVisions Saves Employment Contract Through IMC’s CMMC Assessment

written by Lauri Moon | November 26, 2024



NuVisions Center, located in Lewistown, PA, exists to improve the lives of persons with vision, physical or mental impairments through services and employment; and to also educate the public about vision loss. They serve the Pennsylvania counties of Huntingdon, Juniata, and Mifflin. NuVisions employs persons with disabilities who perform manufacturing, sewing, janitorial, and customer service-related jobs. They currently employ 44 individuals spread among the various areas.

NuVisions Center approached IMC to discuss their desire to comply with the DFARS 252.204-7012, FAR 52.204-21, and the anticipated CMMC level cybersecurity requirements for government contracting. The need for compliance originated because of a requirement from one of their customers. To maintain an existing employment contract, NuVisions had to achieve the appropriate CMMC level of compliance. Higher levels of compliance are continuing to be assessed by the Department of Defense (DoD) and are a moving target for businesses in need of proving compliance. There are currently three levels being evaluated and considered by the DoD. Level 1 is the most basic, Level 2 is more advanced and results in a SPRS score (NIST 800-171 SPRS Score), and the highest level of compliance is currently rated as CMMC Level 3. Those requirements can be daunting to a small company with limited resources. NuVisions Center did not have in-house IT support and were very concerned about the time investment and how to address such a change in procedures.

IMC worked with NuVisions Center to provide them with professional assistance and

guidance through self-assessment and used the CISA CSET tool to generate necessary reports. The CSET tool reports became the foundation for the project deliverables. The plan included a system security plan, action items, and milestones for incremental completion. A Gap Analysis was created, identifying deficiencies and any CMMC controls which weren't fully met. The project findings were then presented as an Executive Summary showing which requirements were met and any which needed further attention. Throughout the project, NuVisions and their IT contractor provided documentation and answered all questions relative to the content of the requirement.

NuVisions successfully completed the required CMMC requirements. In doing so, they were able to save an employment contract, which resulted in the retention of three jobs for their workforce. Three jobs equate to over 6% of their workforce. That result is very important to the mission of NuVisions Center, and extremely important to the people whose lives are so positively impacted by having a job. The assistance provided by IMC guided NuVisions Center through a process which seemed quite overwhelming and difficult, saving precious time for the leaders of the organization. The project also led NuVisions Center to upgrade some of their IT equipment, which improved operations and further protects their investment from cybersecurity threats.

“We are a small organization and do not have IT staff. Before we found IMC, the task to implement CMMC seemed almost insurmountable. With their help, the process was no longer overwhelming, and we were able to easily manage the implementation of the CMMC requirements.” Terry Knouse, Vice President of Operations, NuVisions Center

Success Story: Pik Rite, Inc.

Implements Strategies Learned Through IMC's CI Programs with Positive Impact on Production

written by Lauri Moon | November 26, 2024



Pik Rite was founded by Elvin Stoltzfus and Joe Yoder with a focus on creating a mechanical method for picking tomatoes. Their first machine was built in 1983, and by 1986, Pik Rite had manufactured three harvesters and incorporated the company.

From its initial tomato harvester, Pik Rite has diversified its product line to include equipment for harvesting cucumbers, peppers, gourds, zucchini, squash, pumpkins, and carrots. Additionally, Pik Rite produces vine diverters, commercial waste handling vacuum tanks, water hauling trailers, truck mounted dump bodies, manure spreaders, and municipal leaf collection units. Pik Rite also has a dedicated contract manufacturing line.

Pik Rite has steadily grown since the 1990s, expanding its market coverage, sales, and technological innovations both domestically and internationally. Based in Central Pennsylvania, the company now employs nearly 100 people across two facilities in Lewisburg, PA.

With continuous growth in business and varied industrial and agricultural markets, Pik Rite sought to increase production capacity and capabilities while maintaining their high-quality standards and design flexibility.

Pik Rite faced several critical challenges in their production process that hindered efficiency, employees, and ultimately customer satisfaction. The main bottleneck was cumbersome production flow due to fragmented processes, which led to frequent

delays and increased operational costs. Material handling issues further complicated these inefficiencies, as the lack of streamlined systems resulted in frequent delays and product mismanagement. Employees reported dissatisfaction stemming from repetitive, unnecessary tasks, impacting overall morale and productivity. This ultimately resulted in strained relationships with clients.

Pik Rite has a long-established relationship with the Innovative Manufacturers' Center (IMC) and IMC is a contributor to Pik Rite's continuous improvement journey. Pik Rite selected several personnel to attend the IMC's Lean Level 1 and 2 certification programs to seek potential strategies to address its current challenges in production as well as to build on its mission to give everyone "the opportunity to grow personally while engaging in an atmosphere of unity, respect, and integrity."

Through both the training program and post training assessments, Pik Rite implemented strategies learned from the IMC certification programs that included but were not limited to:

- Streamlined receiving and storage methods in the material warehouse to eliminate waste and improve material flow.
- Implemented a small parts handling system in the fabrication shop to reclaim lost floorspace, eliminate wasted motion, and improve overall flow and efficiency.
- Relocated materials in the fabrication shop for easier access for fabricators.
- Created multiple travel lanes throughout the entire facility to provide direct access from the fabrication shop to the production floor.
- Implemented a smart organization and carting system for Harvester fabricated parts.
- Started a safety hazard removal initiative in the fabrication shop.

These changes led to increased flow in the fabrication shop and production area, reducing the time employees spend searching for materials. Raw materials now flow into the storage areas seamlessly and can be retrieved safely and quickly by the operators.

Fabrication has become approximately 15% more time efficient while utilizing full sheets of raw material. Production now tracks and utilizes 100% of their remnant

material, up from approximately 25%. Overall throughput has increased by 8-10% with these changes and has even spiked to 20% in unique scenarios. Since implementing a safety hazard removal initiative in the fabrication shop, Pik Rite has had zero incidents, improving from 1-2 reported incidents per month, previously.

“The IMC and its staff have played an integral part in the success of Pik Rite’s Continuous Improvement culture as well as directly influencing more efficient production and operations. The proof is in our results – our workplace is safer, our employees are happier, and we’re getting more quality work delivered to our customers, faster.”

Caleb Thomas, Product Line Manager

IMC participates in STEM program

written by Lauri Moon | November 26, 2024

IMC Business Advisor Rick Terry used the Lego Airplane Simulation Factory to introduce students to manufacturing flow and key concepts during the 2024 Remake Learning Days STEM to the Skies program on May 14 and 16. Now in its third year, this northeastern Pennsylvania initiative offers hands-on learning experiences for youth, families, and educators to explore creative and fun ways of learning. In addition to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), the program emphasizes the importance of teamwork and collaboration.





