

Central PA Manufacturing Tariff Poll

written by Lauri Moon | February 26, 2025



This poll is now closed. Thank you to everyone who participated. Please watch our e-news and socials for follow-up information regarding the results.



Central PA manufacturers, your participation is crucial in helping us understand how the proposed tariffs could impact the region. By sharing your insights, you contribute to shaping services that could support your industry.

This poll will take just a few minutes, and your input will remain anonymous.

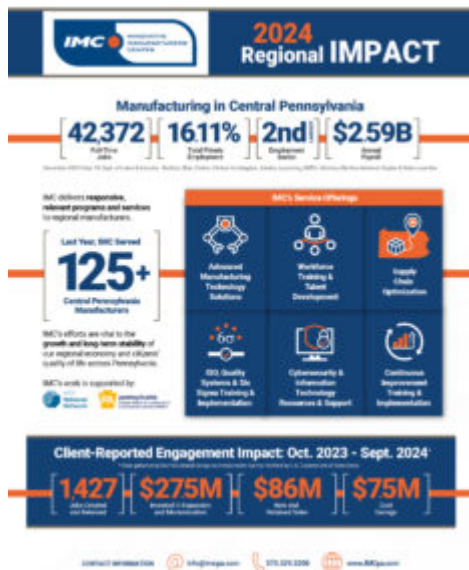
Take the Poll

This poll is intended for Central PA manufacturers, but all manufacturers are welcome to participate.

**IMC's 2024 Regional Impact:
Strengthening Manufacturing,**

Driving Growth

written by Lauri Moon | February 26, 2025

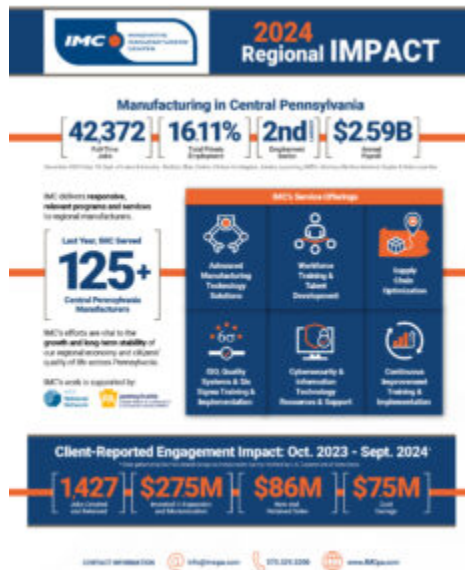


At IMC, we take pride in empowering manufacturers with the tools, resources, and expertise they need to thrive. As we reflect on 2024, we are thrilled to share the significant impact our efforts have had on manufacturers across the region.

This past year, IMC partnered with **125+ manufacturers**, helping them drive measurable success and achieve outstanding business outcomes. Together, we realized:

- **1,427 jobs** created and retained
- **\$27.5 million** invested in expansion and modernization
- **\$86 million** in new and retained sales
- **\$7.5 million** in cost savings

These numbers tell a powerful story of growth, resilience, and innovation in Central PA's manufacturing sector. IMC remains committed to supporting businesses as they navigate challenges, embrace new technologies, and seize opportunities for the future.



We extend our gratitude to our manufacturing partners, stakeholders, and community supporters who make this impact possible. Here’s to another year of building a stronger, more competitive manufacturing industry!

Are you ready to elevate your manufacturing business? Contact IMC today to see how we can help you achieve similar results!

IMC Announces Lean Manufacturing Practitioner Certification

written by Lauri Moon | February 26, 2025



IMC is excited to announce the evolution of our Lean Manufacturing Level One Certification into the ***Lean Manufacturing Practitioner Certification***. This enhanced program is designed to provide participants with practical, hands-on experience in implementing Lean principles to drive significant improvements in manufacturing processes.

Key Features of the Updated Certification:

- **Comprehensive Curriculum:** Our former 8-day program over several months is now 5 consecutive days, where participants will delve into essential Lean tools and methodologies, including value stream mapping, 5S, process flow design, and total productive maintenance.
- **Practical Application:** Participants will continue having the benefit of interactive workshops and simulations that allow you to apply Lean concepts directly to real-world scenarios, fostering a culture of continuous improvement within your organization.
- **Expert Instruction:** Our instructor is an experienced professional who will guide you through collaborative problem-solving techniques and effective change management strategies to enhance productivity and employee engagement.

Upcoming Session Details:

- **Dates:** May 12 - May 16, 2025
- **Location:** Williamsport, PA
- **Investment:** \$1,795.00

By completing the Lean Manufacturing Practitioner Certification, you will acquire the skills to identify and eliminate wasteful practices, leading to reduced expenses

and improved profitability for your organization. Don't miss this opportunity to advance your expertise and contribute to your company's success.

For more information and to register, please visit our event page: [Lean Manufacturing Practitioner Certification - Innovative Manufacturers Center](#)

Join us in embracing this updated certification to drive operational excellence and achieve sustainable growth.

For specific questions about the program content, contact IMC Business Advisor Rick Terry at rickt@imcpa.com. If you need support with registration, contact Lauri Moon at laurim@imcpa.com.

Do You Need Succession Planning and Management?

written by Alisa Fairweather | February 26, 2025



Do You Need Succession Planning and Management?

For small- and medium-sized manufacturers, securing the future of your workforce is essential to long-term success. Yet with an aging workforce and a rapidly changing industry, many companies are left vulnerable when key employees retire or move on. Effective succession planning is crucial—and not just for senior executives. Supervisors, team leads, and other essential roles need a well-thought-

out succession plan to ensure organizational continuity and help bridge the skills gap in your company.

Four key reasons why succession planning and management is essential:

1. Continuity in Leadership

Succession planning creates a pipeline of trained, capable leaders who can step into essential roles with minimal disruption. This ensures your operation remains efficient, productive, and competitive, even in the face of unexpected personnel changes. Continuity in leadership also maintains the steady workflow and productivity that manufacturers rely on to meet demand, reduce downtime, and keep customers satisfied.

2. Overcoming Psychological Barriers

Many supervisors hesitate to plan for their successors. Whether it's the fear of being replaced, or uncertainty about finding someone with the same skills and commitment, these challenges can get in the way of succession planning. Addressing these concerns is crucial to building a team that's not only competent but also empowered to step up and support the company's future goals. Succession planning helps shift the focus from individual roles to collective growth and long-term stability.

3. Strategic Selection of Successors

Choosing the right successor goes beyond technical skills. Both internal and external candidates bring unique advantages, so evaluating them on experience, education, growth potential, and cultural fit helps ensure the best match for your company's specific needs. A strategic approach to succession means identifying candidates who not only have the right qualifications but who also fit the culture and values that make your organization unique.

4. Setting Clear Timelines and Development Paths

Succession isn't an overnight process. Developing a roadmap with clear timelines, milestones, and regular feedback channels ensures that successors are thoroughly prepared to step into their roles when the time comes. Establishing pathways for continuous skill development keeps successors engaged and motivated while they learn the ins and outs of their future responsibilities. This also promotes a proactive mindset, helping your

company stay adaptable in an ever-evolving industry.

Want more insights and practical tools? We're offering a workshop on **Strategic Succession Planning for Supervisors** on March 12, 2025. *Click here for our upcoming training session to secure your spot!*

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

written by Lauri Moon | February 26, 2025





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

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

written by Lauri Moon | February 26, 2025



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.

Do you Know the Role of HR in

Workplace Civility?

written by Alisa Fairweather | February 26, 2025



In the politically charged climate of today, maintaining civility in the workplace is more important—and more challenging—than ever. For small and medium-sized manufacturing companies, where close-knit teams are critical to daily operations, promoting respect and collaboration is essential. Human resource (HR) specialists play a pivotal role in fostering a positive workplace culture. Here are five key strategies to help promote civility in your manufacturing environment.

1. **Lead by Example**

In smaller manufacturing companies, where teams work closely together, the behavior of HR professionals and company leaders sets the tone for the entire organization. By consistently demonstrating respectful communication, fairness, and professionalism, HR can establish a benchmark for employees to follow. When leaders model civility, it encourages a culture where mutual respect becomes the norm, reducing the likelihood of conflicts.

2. **Create and Communicate Clear Policies**

Clear, well-communicated policies are essential in any workplace, but especially in manufacturing settings where team collaboration is crucial. With support or buy-in from top workplace leaders, HR should ensure that policies explicitly define respectful conduct and outline the consequences of incivility. Emphasize the importance of maintaining respect, particularly in high-pressure situations common in manufacturing environments. Regularly remind employees of these policies

through meetings, trainings, and accessible documentation.

3. Empower Supervisors as Role Models

Supervisors in manufacturing often have a significant influence on their teams. HR should train these leaders to model civility and handle conflicts effectively. Equip supervisors with the tools to foster a culture of collaboration and respect, as their behavior directly impacts team dynamics. When supervisors lead with empathy and fairness, it can create a positive ripple effect throughout the organization.

4. Implement Accessible Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Conflicts in a manufacturing environment can escalate quickly if not addressed. HR should establish accessible and straightforward conflict resolution mechanisms that allow employees to address issues constructively. Consider implementing an open-door policy or creating a peer support program to resolve disputes before they escalate. Ensuring that employees feel heard and supported can help maintain a harmonious workplace. Remember that not all conflict is bad, it is natural and properly navigated it can be constructive.

5. Foster a Culture of Recognition and Well-being

In manufacturing, where teamwork is essential, recognizing and celebrating positive behaviors can significantly impact morale and civility. HR can lead initiatives that highlight and reward examples of teamwork and respect. Additionally, promoting employee well-being through access to resources such as counseling services or wellness programs can reduce stress and foster a more positive and productive work environment.

Conclusion

Promoting civility in a manufacturing workplace is not just about managing conflicts; it's about creating a culture of respect, empathy, and collaboration that enhances both employee satisfaction and company success. HR specialists in small and medium-sized manufacturing companies play a critical role in this process. By leading with intention, developing clear policies, empowering supervisors, implementing conflict resolution mechanisms, and fostering a culture of recognition,

HR can help create a workplace where civility thrives.

To learn how IMC can support your HR needs, contact Alisa Fairweather at alisaf@imcpa.com.

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

written by Lauri Moon | February 26, 2025



NO COST Electrical Safety Training

MA 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:



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

Manufacturers'
NO COST
ELECTRICAL SAFETY
TRAINING: General Industry

Meets OSHA NFF70e 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:

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 100...

Visit: mcpa.com/electrical-safety-trg to learn more
Email: Learn@imcspa.com or Call: (570) 326-5390 to schedule training

This information is provided under permit number 2019-02-02-002 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. It does not constitute either the release or withdrawal of the OSHA Department of Labor, nor does it constitute a grant.

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.

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

written by Lauri Moon | February 26, 2025



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 | February 26, 2025



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