

IMC Partners with Fabtex to Host National Manufacturing Month Event

written by Lauri Moon | October 21, 2022

On Wednesday, October 19th, IMC and the Central PA Chamber partnered with Fabtex, Inc. to host an Inside Jobs Tour as part of a National Manufacturing Month celebration!

Two lucky attendees got to make their own pillows!

Eric Frantz, VP - Customer Commitment, and Will Greiner, Process Improvement Manager, led the tour through the facility near Danville, after providing some background on the 36-year-old company, that is “the performance pacesetter of the fabric fashion industry” in the hospitality and healthcare industries. They have aspirations to expand their market and product lines even further. Learn more at: <https://www.fabtex.com>.





IMC Celebrates Manufacturing Week

written by Lauri Moon | October 21, 2022

IMC, along with partners across Pennsylvania and the United States, is excited  to celebrate **Manufacturing Week on October 7-14, 2022.**

Governor Tom Wolf has proclaimed the week as **Manufacturing Week in Pennsylvania** to honor our manufacturing industry, our makers, and encourage the next generation of talent to take a closer look at manufacturing careers in the commonwealth.

Today's industry demands experienced problem-solvers and strategists, digital operators, engineers, and others who can blend management and STEM skills. And we're proud that our state is preparing the next generation of talent for careers in manufacturing. We know these careers offer challenging, fulfilling, and stable work — presenting us with the opportunity to bring Pennsylvania's innovation, imagination, and legendary can-do spirit to the industry at the heart of our economy and communities.

MANUFACTURING IS AT THE HEART OF PENNSYLVANIA'S ECONOMY.

(bea.gov Employment by State 2020; Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council, PA's Manufacturing Competitiveness Playbook 2022)

- 6th largest manufacturing industry in the United States by employment
- \$113.2 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) in 2021
- 562,700+ employees (accounting for ~9.5% of all private sector jobs in PA)
- 14,000+ manufacturing establishments

MANUFACTURING OFFERS WELL-PAYING, FAMILY-SUSTAINING JOBS.

(Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council, PA's Manufacturing Competitiveness Playbook 2022)

- Manufacturing workers earn 33% more compared to the average for other nonfarm businesses in the state
- \$86,129 avg. compensation in manufacturing in PA, including benefits

U.S. MANUFACTURING JOBS HAVE GREAT EMPLOYEE BENEFITS.

(Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council, PA's Manufacturing Competitiveness Playbook 2022; U.S. Chamber of Commerce)

- Many manufacturers offer on-the-job training that helps employees expand their skillsets and adapt to new industry needs
- 90% of U.S. manufacturing employees have access to medical benefits through their employer
- 78% of U.S. manufacturing employees have access to retirement benefits from their employer
- U.S. manufacturing workers have the highest job security in the private sector.

MANUFACTURERS AND MAKERS COME FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS AND HAVE A VARIETY OF SKILLS AND EDUCATION LEVELS.

(bls.gov, Manufacturing Career Outlook, From Prototype to Production: Careers that Bring Ideas into Being, 2018)

- Entry-level positions have different educational requirements ranging from a high-school diploma (or equivalent), to a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Many manufacturing positions include apprenticeship opportunities and on-the-job training - offering an opportunity to earn income while learning new skills

- Career opportunities abound for those looking for work in the manufacturing industry including:
 - Industrial designers
 - Mechanical and electrical engineers
 - Graphic designers
 - Systems software developers
 - Team assemblers
 - Electricians
 - Computer-controlled machine tool operators (metal and plastic)
 - Industrial machinery mechanics

Pennsylvania 2022 PARTNER TOOLKIT

Help us spread the word about modern manufacturing, its positive impact on our economy and communities, and how it benefits existing employees and students who are exploring career options. DCED's digital toolkit will help you get started with suggested social media posts, newsletter content, and digital graphics. Get involved and be sure to share your own manufacturing resources and stories. Be sure to tag IMC in your social media so that we can share your posts all week. IMC's Facebook. IMC's LinkedIn. Download PA's toolkit [here](#). Post your events on the national

mfgday.com site - Or IMC can for you. National MfgDay Toolkit.

Resources

Check out information about Central Susquehanna's What's So Cool About Manufacturing Video Contest.

For a list of manufacturers who have worked with IMC, check out our directory!

IMC Announces Summer 2022 Lean Manufacturing Level One Certification Graduates

written by Lauri Moon | October 21, 2022

IMC is excited to announce the latest graduates of our Lean Manufacturing Level One Certification program. This eight session certification program uses a unique approach to teach participants to:



- Understand how to recognize and eliminate waste through the PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT (PDCA) cycle
- Determine key activity categories: value added, non-valued-added, and necessary non-value-added
- Identify and map the value stream, pinpointing areas that require improvement

- Develop a roadmap and implementation plan
- Turn data into actionable information to quantify problems and prioritize countermeasures
- Understand “Kata” methodology and how to use a structured coaching approach to drive continuous improvement thinking and acting, down to the contributor level

Training Topics:

- A3 Thinking
- Value Stream Mapping (VSM)
- Effective Communication
- Kata Principles
- Root Cause Analysis
- Training Within Industry (TWI)
- Graphical Analysis
- Project Coaching & Feedback
- Teaming
- Single Minute Exchange of Dies (SMED)
- Capstone Lean 101

Lean Certification Training Benefits:

During the course of our Level One Lean Certification, participants learned to:

- Apply what they learn to an actual Continuous Improvement project at their facility, and every student develops the components of their own A3
- Develop an ability to identify non-value-added activities (i.e. waste) in processes through DVIRC’s “learn and apply” approach
- Help develop solutions to minimize or eliminate non-value-added activities
- Build essential skills related to job instructions, relations, and methods
- Work with a learning partner to implement Continuous Improvement practices

Congratulations to the 41 graduates from the following companies:

- Alberts Spray Solutions
- Andritz
- Architectural Precast Innovations, Inc.
- Construction Specialties
- Custom Container Solutions, LLC
- First Quality Products
- Furmano Foods
- Jersey Shore Steel Co.
- Lewis Lumber Products, Inc.
- Lycoming Engines
- Nutek Disposables
- Overhead Door
- Pneu-Dart
- Shop-Vac USA, LLC
- Stellant Systems
- Strong Industries
- Thermal Product Solutions, LLC



Volatile Energy Prices Will Impact Bottom Lines

written by Lauri Moon | October 21, 2022

IMC recently hosted a webinar where our energy partner, APPI Energy, shared what the volatile energy markets will mean with historic increases in the cost of energy for manufacturers in PA for the coming year and beyond. Dan Forgacs, VP of Market Intelligence & Analytics for APPI, presented



both historical data and projected commercial energy costs as well as potential ways to combat its effects on the bottom line. Included were the projected or confirmed commercial energy increases by utility companies in PA:

- PECO: \$.07699/kWh, up from \$.06816, June 1 - August 31
- PPL: \$.11695/kWh, up from \$.09675, June 1 - November 30
- Met Ed: \$.10625/kWh, up from \$.07482, 42% increase, June 1 - August 31
- Penelec: \$.11056/kWh, up from \$.08031 per kWh, 38% increase, June 1 - August 31
- Penn Power, \$.12533/kWh, up from \$.10002 per kWh, 25% increase, June 1 - August 31
- West Penn Power, \$.10115/kWh, up from \$.06542, 55% increase, June 1 - August 31

Key to potential solutions were the reduction in peak demand, the use of alternative energy sources, and increasing energy efficiency in facilities. Also presented were opportunities to explore energy procurement opportunities and potential grants and incentives for energy related improvements.

If you missed the webinar, but are interested in learning more, or would like to connect with an IMC Business Advisor to discuss ways to potentially reduce your energy costs through efficiency measures, process improvement, and/or energy procurement services with APPI Energy, email info@imcpa.com.

Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council Releases Playbook for Competitiveness

written by Lauri Moon | October 21, 2022



As Pennsylvania's third-largest employment sector - with more than 560,000 full-time workers generating nearly \$115 billion of goods last year alone - manufacturing drives Pennsylvania's overall economy. On August 31, 2022, the Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council, a nonpartisan partnership

of manufacturers and industry experts, released Pennsylvania's Manufacturing Competitiveness Playbook - an actionable strategy document that identifies three game changers and 10 specific recommendations to make Pennsylvania's manufacturing economy more robust and resilient - thus creating more good-paying jobs for Pennsylvanians.

The efforts of the industry-led, 25-member Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council were focused on developing recommendations that government leaders across the Commonwealth should consider as ways to expand Pennsylvania's manufacturing economy. The Council's resultant Playbook includes data and advice derived from insights and commentary offered by more than 500 Pennsylvania manufacturers.

"Over the course of the past year, the Council conducted industry roundtables, one-on-one interviews, and surveys to learn directly from manufacturers what statewide policy and programmatic or procedural changes would most immediately and dramatically enhance their ability to compete, win and grow in today's economy, and the Council's report reflects that knowledge and insight," said Eric Joseph Esoda,

Council Co-Chair.

Through careful analysis of industry input, the Council, within its Playbook, recommends three game changers for strengthening Pennsylvania's manufacturing competitive position:

- Recapture Pennsylvania's manufacturing competitive advantage by aggressively pursuing manufacturing growth sectors to drive prosperity.
- Invest in the factory of the future to boost the performance of small and medium-sized companies, improve the quality of manufacturing jobs and provide better career options for more of Pennsylvania's citizens.
- Unleash the power of advanced manufacturing to drive regional prosperity through policies and services that are more responsive to the needs of manufacturers.

The Playbook builds on Pennsylvania's historic strengths in manufacturing and captures a vision for Pennsylvania's future as a global leader in advanced manufacturing.

"It's vital that we do more for manufacturing because it represents one of Pennsylvania's largest sectors, pays better than most others and offers good benefits," said Dan Fogarty, Council Co-Chair. "The Playbook is a great first step toward coming together around how we can be there for the sector and for communities across the Commonwealth that both support and benefit from our great industrial employers," he added.

The full report can be downloaded on the Manufacturing Advisory Council's website: <https://www.pamanufacturingcouncil.com/playbook>.

IMC Welcomes Ben Eltz, CEO of DiamondBack Truck Covers to Board of Directors

written by Lauri Moon | October 21, 2022



Ben Eltz, CEO
DiamondBack Truck Covers

IMC is excited to welcome Ben Eltz, CEO, DiamondBack Truck Covers to its Board of Directors.

Ben Eltz is the CEO of DiamondBack Truck Covers, a startup that was born at Pennsylvania State University in 2002. Ben joined DiamondBack Truck Covers eight years ago when the company was beginning the transition from garage startup to established company. In these eight years, the company has increased revenues by 300% and profitability by 600%. DiamondBack has captured 1% of the nationwide truck cover market and has its eyes on doubling that over the next three years. Ben has a Bachelors Degree from Penn State in Industrial Engineering and a Master's Degree in Finance from Indiana University.

Picking Area Error Reduction Efforts Successful at Diamondback Automotive Accessories

written by Lauri Moon | October 21, 2022



Diamondback Automotive Accessories, located in Philipsburg, PA with 117 employees, manufactures load-bearing pick-up truck covers and accessories used primarily by outdoor enthusiasts.

Diamondback continues at a rapid growth rate at their Phillipsburg facility, experiencing 25% growth in 2020, followed by 45% growth in 2021. As the company enjoys rapid growth, it also experienced an increase in customer complaints. The main reason for the customer dissatisfaction was errors in picking the right parts to be shipped along with the truck cover. As a percentage of orders, greater than 2% contained picking errors.

IMC's Continuous Improvement Expert, Jeff Kopenitz, facilitated a dedicated team of Diamondback employees to focus on the errors in the picking areas. Over the course of eight days of on-site facilitation plus off-site coaching, Jeff guided the team through various Lean tools such as A3 thinking, PDCA cycles, DMAIC projects, FEMAs and Coaching Katas.

As a result of these efforts, manufacturing communications were improved, key parts visualization was enhanced using shadow boards, labelling was enhanced, equipment such as scales were deployed, and processes were changed and improved. In one year, the picking errors percentage has dropped from 2.29% to 1.29%. Diamondback is well on their way to achieving their next target goal of less than 1% picking errors.

“The results of this project far exceeded my expectations. Every minute and every dollar spent with IMC has resulted in tremendous returns. With IMC’s help, we are achieving our mission of being a company that people love to buy from.” Gerald Gardner, Quality Manager

Central Susquehanna What’s So Cool About About Manufacturing? Award Winners Announced

written by Lauri Moon | October 21, 2022

The What’s So Cool About Manufacturing? program is a video based educational tool that increases awareness of career paths in manufacturing. This innovative career awareness program is “peer marketing” - kids telling kids what’s so cool about manufacturing and manufacturing careers.

This contest gives students the opportunity to connect with local manufacturers, document their experiences and present them in an educational and “cool” way. The contest was created to generate excitement that draws students towards manufacturing career paths, and CTE and STEM education. The Central Susquehanna WSCM contest is made possible by the Innovative Manufacturers’ Center (IMC), The Foundation of the Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce, Advance Central PA, Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) and BLaST Intermediate Unit.

This year’s Central Susquehanna contest featured schools from Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union counties and the following manufacturers:

- BrightFarms

- Girton Manufacturing Co., Inc.
- Kawneer
- Playworld Systems, Inc.
- PMF Industries, Inc.
- Ralph S. Alberts Co., Inc.
- Strong Industries, Inc.

AND the Awards go to! (click here to view all the videos)

- **Outstanding Overall Program:** Selinsgrove Middle School/Bright Farms
- **Viewer's Choice:** Selinsgrove Middle School/Bright Farms
- **Outstanding Team Spirit:** Danville Middle School/Strong Industries, Inc.
- **Outstanding Brand Placement:** Lewisburg Donald H. Eichhorn Middle School/Playworld Systems, Inc.

Two district and manufacturer partners will also be moving on to the statewide competition May 18th in Harrisburg: Selinsgrove Middle School/Bright Farms and Central Columbia Middle School/Kawneer.

CONGRATULATIONS to all!



Central Columbia Middle School/Kawneer



Danville Middle School/Strong Industries, Inc.



Lewisburg Donald H. Eichhorn Middle School/Playworld Systems,

Inc.



Selinsgrove Middle School/Bright Farms

New Employment Opportunity - IMC Accepting Applications for Manufacturing Business Advisor

written by Lauri Moon | October 21, 2022

Due to an upcoming retirement, IMC is searching for a full-time Manufacturing Business Advisor. The successful candidate will be responsible for:

*Join our
team*

- Outreach and Relationship Development with Central PA manufacturers and

partners

- Client Interface and Project Management
- Special Program/Project Management as needed

IMC is a non-profit organization providing consulting and technical assistance services to small and mid-sized manufacturers throughout a 12-county region in Central Pennsylvania and is supported by state, federal and private funding. The ideal candidate will possess a bachelor's degree in a business or technical field or an appropriate combination of both education and experience, and a minimum of three years' experience with a technology oriented non-profit or manufacturing business.

To apply for this exciting position, Candidates should submit their resume, letter of interest and references to: HR Manager, IMC, One College Avenue, Dept 32, Williamsport, PA 17701 or email careers@imcpa.com. For a detailed job description or questions, email careers@imcpa.com.

This position will be open until a qualified candidate is hired. IMC is an equal opportunity employer.

BA Job Ad

The Manufacturers' Guide to Finding and Retaining Talent

written by Lauri Moon | October 21, 2022

As part of their annual survey, NIST MEP asks clients from the 51 MEP Centers, including IMC, to identify the top three challenges their companies will face over the next three years.



The Manufacturers' Guide to Finding and Retaining Talent

Not surprisingly, manufacturers continue to report that employee recruitment and retention are their greatest challenges. In fact, these concerns have heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent workforce disruptions. The market forces driving these challenges are not likely to improve soon. Based on a Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte study, the National Association of Manufacturers estimates that manufacturers will need to fill 4.6 million jobs by 2028.

In this guide, we outline steps that will help you improve and enhance your employee recruitment, retention and engagement. We'll look at:

- Strategy
- Attracting and retaining talent
- Training and development
- Workplace culture

MEP Manufacturers Guide to Finding and Retaining Talent Whitepaper