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Your Source for Monthly Manufacturing News

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Manufacturing News from our Nation, State and Region

National News

Study Finds High Return on MEP Services as 84% of Clients Report Significant Quantifiable Impact

A [2021 study conducted by Summit Consulting](#) and analysts from the [W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research](#) concluded that affiliates of the national [Manufacturing Extension Partnership \(MEP\) Program](#) generate significant financial returns for the nation and companies that utilize affiliate professional services. From a U.S.



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Treasury perspective, the MEP Program yields an impressive \$13.6:\$1 annual return on the U.S. Department of Commerce investment. More importantly, however, 84% of more than 10,000 small and mid-sized manufacturers that utilized MEP affiliate services over the past year, including throughout the pandemic, reported significant quantifiable positive results. The most prominent impacts reported were a better trained workforce (52%), operational cost savings (51%), the avoidance of layoffs (47%) and the modernization of equipment and facilities (43%). Throughout the 2020 fiscal year, clients utilizing MEP affiliate services were able to avoid 82,080 layoffs while creating 23,668 jobs thanks to realizing more than \$1.4 billion in cost savings and nearly \$13 billion in additional sales revenue. MEP affiliates throughout Pennsylvania include [NEPIRC](#), [Catalyst Connection](#), [DVIRC](#), the [Innovative Manufacturers' Center \(IMC\)](#), [MANTEC](#), the [Manufacturers' Resource Center](#) and [NWIRC](#). The full report is available by [clicking here](#).

Manufacturing Institute/BKD CPAs & Advisors Report Defines “New Normal” for Small & Mid-Sized Manufacturers

A [new report](#) compiled by the [Manufacturing Institute](#) and [BKD CPAs & Advisors](#), derived from surveys and interviews with hundreds of manufacturers with fewer than 500 employees, sheds new light on the “new normal” for operations in a wake of COVID-19. The take-aways include: 77% of firms continue to struggle with finding qualified talent; 59% are pursuing continuous improvement and increased efficiency efforts; 77% are implementing new technologies into their production process; and 56% are redesigning their production process to allow for long-term social distancing. Nearly half of the firms surveyed are reevaluating their supply chain while 20% are accelerating their adoption of automation. The full report, which includes candid interviews and quotes with participating companies, can be accessed by [clicking here](#).



State Update

Manufacturing Leads Economy in 31 of PA's 67 Counties; Among Top 3 Drivers of Economic Growth in 47 Counties

A [February 2021 report](#) issued by the [State Science & Technology Institute](#) (SSTI) identified the manufacturing sector as the top producer of wealth and output in 31 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties and among the top three (3) economic drivers across more than 70% of the state. By contributing \$92.3 billion to Pennsylvania's Gross State Product (GSP) in 2019, the manufacturing sector single-handedly accounted for 11.4% of total GSP – a level surpassed only by the Real Estate Rental & Leasing sector. Manufacturing was noted as particularly essential to rural Pennsylvania communities, as it was the highest value-generator in 22 of 48 rural communities. The full SSTI report is [available here](#).



Zippo & Eight Oaks Farm Distillery Leaders Slated for Virtual Statewide Manufacturing Innovation Summit

On March 18, 2021, [Zippo's](#) Vice President of Innovation & Brand Management, [John Sicher](#), and [Eight Oaks Farm Distillery](#) Founder & CEO and retired Army aviator, [Chad Butters](#), will share their thoughts on innovation, change and leadership during a virtual statewide Manufacturing Innovation Summit sponsored by the IRC Network, PNC Bank and others. Registration cost is \$25 for Pennsylvania-based manufacturers. Individuals and companies interested in more information or in registering for the event should contact Chelsey Coslett, NEPIRC's Marketing Specialist, at Chelsey@NEPIRC.com



Regional News

Lawrenceville: A New Home for Victaulic!

A leading manufacturer of pipe joinings, fire protection systems and flow controls will soon have a new home in Lawrenceville, Pennsylvania! [Victaulic](#) recently purchased the 220,000 square-foot manufacturing facility previously occupied by Waupaca to serve its growing North American market. At full production, the plant will boost Victaulic's capacity by 70% and bring approximately 90 new jobs to Tioga County, the majority of which Victaulic hopes to fill from the area's existing skilled workforce. Victaulic's rich history of manufacturing spans more than [100 years](#) – and the company currently employs more than 1,600 Pennsylvanians across multiple facilities.



Congrats in Order: GENTEX Helmet System Passes Testing!

Carbondale-based [Gentex Corporation](#) announced that its [Ops-Core® FAST Helmet Systems](#) passed rigorous U.S. Government First Article Testing, marking an innovation in U.S. Special Forces, global special operations forces and elite law enforcement helmet systems. The new helmet design protects American and allied war-fighters against prevalent higher threats without the need for additional ballistic accessories while maintaining its integration with other communication, situational awareness, protection and utility systems. NEPIRC congratulates Gentex on its success and thanks the company for its dedication to our county.



Welcome Nexii Building Solutions to the Our Community!

[Nexii Building Solutions, Inc.](#), a manufacturer of sustainable (or “green”) construction and building retrofit products, announced its plans to launch its first U.S. production facility in Hazleton, PA in spring 2021. The company's \$20 million facility will bring more than 180 new, skilled green manufacturing jobs to the Hazleton community and have production capacity of more than eight million square feet of building panel output annually. The company will announce career opportunities at www.nexii.com/careers in the near future. The company's decision represents another win for the northeastern Pennsylvania manufacturing economy.



If your company has great news you'd like us to share with our manufacturing community, please contact Chelsey Coslett, NEPIRC's Marketing Specialist, at Chelsey@NEPIRC.com.

NEPIRC News

The IRC Network's *Legal Aspects of COVID-19 Vaccination for Employers* Webinar Receives Grand Applause

Thank you to everyone who attended the IRC Network's *Legal Aspects of COVID-19 Vaccination for Employers* webinar! The event was extremely well-



received by its close to 400 attendees.

The February 10th webinar featured [Atty. James F. Devine](#), a Cipriani & Werner partner with 25+ years of representing manufacturers in matters of employment law, addressed the legality of requiring or not requiring employee vaccination, how to handle employee questions and concerns, how to address employee resistance to vaccination and/or working with non-vaccinated colleagues and much more.



As a result of the webinar's success, two rebroadcasts were aired on Tuesday, February 16th and Friday, February 19th. If you were unable to attend this event or its subsequent rebroadcasts and would like to watch the recording, please [click here](#). If you would like access to the slide deck or the webinar's FAQ document, please email Chelsey Coslett, NEPIRC Marketing Specialist, at Chelsey@NEPIRC.com.

NEPIRC to Host Project Management Certification & Lean Specialist Certification Programs



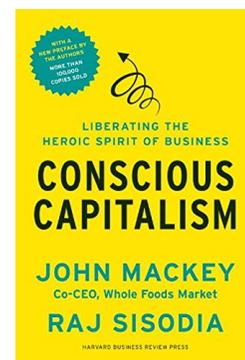
Project Management Certification Program: This 10-session program teaches the basics of project management, such as learning the proper terminology, creating project charters, defining project scope, developing the project plan, understanding work breakdown structures (WBS) using MS Project and leading and communicating with project teams. This virtual program will be held from **8:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.** via Microsoft Teams on the following dates: **March 2, 9, 23; April 6, 13, 20; May 4, 11, 18; June 8**. Total investment is \$1,695.00 per person. To learn more or to register, please [click here!](#)

Lean Specialist Certificate Program: This is a series of courses covering the concepts and tools professionals need to support Continuous Improvement efforts in today's work environment. The curriculum encompasses the necessary technical and interpersonal skills to implement sustainable improvements in productivity, quality and workplace safety. This program runs every Tuesday starting **March 2nd through March 30th** from **8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** and will be held via Microsoft Teams. Total investment is \$1,895.00 per person. To learn more or to register, [click here!](#)

Both courses begin tomorrow, so be sure to sign up today!

What We're Reading

NEPIRC's President & CEO, [Eric Joseph Esoda](#), recently completed "[Conscious Capitalism – Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business](#)", a collaboration between Whole Foods Market's co-founder and CEO, [John Mackey](#), and [Raj Sisodia](#). The authors refute the claim that capitalism is "all about the money" and make sound arguments in favor of companies and leaders that take time to become "conscious" of their higher calling and greater purpose. Their advocacy of taking a more purpose-focused, holistic, and mindful approach to managing team members, customers, vendors, investors, the community, and the environment is accompanied with data and statistical analyses that prove higher profits, faster growth and greater returns. While not all



elements of the authors' instruction and advice may fit every business, the book is a thought-providing and insightful read.

New Business Opportunities: Companies Looking for Suppliers

NEPIRC is relaying these potential new business opportunities to manufacturers across our region:

- **REPLICA FORD MUSTANG FIREWALL:** Replica 1960s series Ford Mustang firewall separating the front driver and passenger seats from engine compartment. May be metal, carbon fiber, aluminum or other suitable materials. No certifications or regulatory compliance is required. Specs and drawings available upon request. Order of 40-80 units to Orlando, FL destination expected within the next six (6) months.
- **FISH FOOD JARS:** PET widemouth jars with caps and induction seal for fish food flakes and pellets. Sizes are 2 oz., 4 oz., 12 oz., 19 oz. and 32 oz. Finishes range from 48/400 for smaller sizes to 89/400 for 12 oz. jar and above. Blow molded jars and injection molded caps. Total order of approximately 170,000 units across all sizes annually. Need is immediate with desired pricing of \$0.13 for 2 oz. jar to \$0.37 for 32 oz. jar. Bulk or loose pack pallet delivery to Rock Hill, SC.
- **MAGNETIC BROADHEAD ARROW TIP:** To be manufactured according to product patent. Used for archery hunting, the tips and washer are 304 SS, feral is 7075-T6 aluminum and blades are 0.04" 17-4 SS. CNC machined w/ laser-cut blades. Will utilize magnets provided by customer. Drawings and tech specs available to interested suppliers. Monthly orders of 2,000 expected. Need is immediate with delivery to western MT.
- **PORTABLE CHARGER:** Innovative 8-slot power station that charges 8 portable device chargers, each with three different charging cables. Charger is made by soldering Lithium-Ion battery to a controller circuit board and placing within plastic housing. Company is seeking manufacturer to assemble and distribute the product. Product is still in design phase, so supplier can have input into construction and final product specs. Rough specifications are available upon request. Current design calls for 5KmAh Li-Polymer battery (132 mm x 70mm x 15mm), integrated LED function/status lights, DC 5V 2A input and output. Initial order of 200/year expected at desired cost of \$300/unit.

Companies interested in these supplier opportunities are encouraged to contact Dale Parmenteri, NEPIRC's Vice President of Consulting Operations, at Dale@NEPIRC.com. Please use "Supplier Opportunity" as the subject line for an immediate response!

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Sent by chelsey@nepirc.com