

Volume 01 | November 2020



Your source for monthly news & updates effecting the manufacturing industry.

Welcome to the first issue of *NEPIRC News*! We are excited to introduce you our re-launched e-newsletter. The goal of *NEPIRC News* is to keep our audiences abreast of national, state, and local manufacturing news, along with the latest updates and opportunities from NEPIRC. This monthly e-newsletter doesn't take the place of our bi-weekly no-cost events and certification programs e-blast, but instead is geared toward keeping you "in the know" of our constantly evolving manufacturing industry.

Questions, comments or feedback? Please don't hesitate to share your thoughts with us by emailing Info@NEPIRC.com.

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Manufacturing News from our Nation, State and Region

National News

October Marks 6th Consecutive Month of Manufacturing Growth; Supply Chains, Input Price Increases & Workforce Are Top Concerns



According to the [latest Institute for Supply Management \(ISM\) report](#), the nation's manufacturing sector continued to expand in October 2020 – recording its sixth (6th) consecutive month of growth – as customer demand increases and industrial firms adapt to new post-COVID-19 working environments. With the exception of April 2020, the manufacturing activity grew each month for the past 10 years! Companies that participated in the report study cited strong domestic orders, increased export orders and low levels of customer inventory as drivers behind their growth and reasons to be optimistic about the future of American manufacturing. Five critical sub-sectors – Fabricated Metals, Food/Beverage Manufacturing, Chemical Products, Computers & Electronic Products and Transportation Equipment – reported particularly strong growth.

While 15 of the 18 sub-sectors reported growth, there were shared concerns about slowness of supplier deliveries and supply chain disruptions, potential increases in raw material costs and the availability of qualified workers.

State Update

Manufacturers Laid Off Less, Hired Back More Quickly Than Other Employers



State employment data released from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics illustrates that the commonwealth's manufacturers were growing at a rate twice that of the state economy overall prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (2.7% vs. 1.1%), laid off a lower percentage of its workforce during the pandemic when compared to other sectors (-13.1% vs. -18.8%) and hired back its workers faster than other employers once Pennsylvania's counties improved to Yellow and Green phase conditions. Currently, Pennsylvania's manufacturing employment stands at ~92% of its pre-COVID-19 levels, with an estimated 20,000 jobs still available.

Local Wins

Region Lands Premier Manufacturers – Others Expand Existing Facilities



Even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, several premier manufacturers announced that they'd be moving into the northeastern and northern tier regions of Pennsylvania to do business – bringing millions of dollars into our economy and creating hundreds of good-paying jobs. Over the past two (2) months, [Ball Corporation](#), [National Cart Company](#) and [Wren Manufacturing](#) solidified their plans to establish manufacturing and support facilities within the region. In total, those companies will create more than 700 new jobs – most with starting compensation in the \$18-\$20/hour range. Existing manufacturers also announced expansion efforts, including Carbondale-based [Gentex Corporation](#), which plans to invest \$14 million in updating its manufacturing facility, purchasing new equipment and upskilling its workforce.

NEPIRC News

\$2,500 Grants Available to Accelerate Manufacturer Recovery

NEPIRC recently secured grant funds for manufacturers in Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties that want to accelerate their recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. These grant funds can be used to offset the cost of training, consultative services and advisement paid to NEPIRC or one of its qualified affiliated consultants for COVID-19 recovery assistance. Grants cover 25% of those costs, up to a maximum of \$2,500 of grant funds per company. For more information, email Info@NEPIRC.com.

NEPIRC & ToolingU Offer Free Online Training for New Manufacturing Employees

Luzerne County manufacturers that made new hires since October 1, 2020 may be eligible to receive a FREE All Access ToolingU/SME Training Pass that will provide each new employee with 3 months of unlimited online training in key areas such as Industrial Math, Basic Safety, Fire Prevention, Machine Tools, Fundamental Manufacturing Skills, Lockout/Tagout and other foundational skillsets. This is a great opportunity to provide on-demand, any-time training to your new hires. Contact Marla Hager, NEPIRC's Business Advisor, at Marla@NEPIRC.com for more information.

Free COVID-19 Manufacturer Impact Assessments Still Available

Regional manufacturers can still receive a customized no-cost COVID-19 Impact Assessment & Recommendation Report from NEPIRC by going online and completing 10 questions. Each participating company will receive a report that benchmarks their answers against those of their peer group and recommendations for bridging any gaps. The assessment, which takes 10-15 minutes to complete, can be found by [CLICKING HERE](#).

NEPIRC's *Manufacturer Return to Operations & Best Practice Guide*

[Click here](#) to download NEPIRC's free *Manufacturer Return to Operations & Best Practice Guide*, which provides key information and suggestions on how to properly and safely keep your facility clean and sanitized to prevent the spread of COVID-19. NEPIRC professionals are available for no-cost phone, video conference or, in limited cases, on-site reopening and workplace safety best practice implementations. Companies interested in receiving an customized consultation should contact Dale Parmenteri, NEPIRC's Vice President of Consulting Operations, at Dale@NEPIRC.com.

New Business Opportunities: Companies Looking for Suppliers

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

- **SPICE JAR:** Montana-based company seeking supplier of 150,000-200,000 (annual buy) 5.5 oz. PET spice container w/ lids. Bottle is clear w/ 2.0" diameter and 4.75" height. Cap is twist-on black PET. No lining needed on jar or lid. Container must meet FDA food safety standards and be BPA free. Needed immediately. Price point

of \$0.23/bottle preferred.

- **COVID-19 RELATED: DISINFECTANT WIPES:** Company (location confidential) seeking manufacturer of EPA-approved disinfectant wipes. Non-woven fabric or cotton infused w/ alcohol-based solution w/ skin moisture additive (preferred). Must meet EPA List N standards and be packaged in tubs of 160 wipes. May be branded for specific retailers. Order of several million wipes/day is expected over short term (3-6 months). Price point of \$5/tub of 160 preferred.
- **COVID-19 RELATED: NITRILE GLOVES:** Company (location confidential) seeking manufacturer of Nitrile Gloves – blue, medical grade, Nitride Butadiene Rubber (NBR). Must have FDA 501(k) approval. Additional specifications available through NEPIRC. Anticipated order is in excess of 1 million/day for foreseeable future. Cost of \$6.50/100 pack is desired.
- **RESHORING OPPORTUNITY:** North Carolina company seeking supplier of sand-cast aluminum blower housing and boot for lawn mower deck. Blower housing is 20" x 20" x 7" and ~20 lbs. Houses a steel impeller blade that moves lawn debris (grass) through mower system. Boot attaches to motor deck and captures the debris. Must be made of A356.0-T6 Sand Cast Aluminum. Technical specs and drawings available through NEPIRC. Currently a 2-piece design, but 1-piece design is acceptable. Estimated order quantity – 1,300 of each unit/year. Current cost is \$46/boot and \$67/housing. Looking to replace overseas supplier!

Companies interested in these supplier opportunities are encouraged to contact NEPIRC at Info@NEPIRC.com and put "Supplier Opportunity" as the subject line for an immediate response!

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