

# PRECISION PITTSBURGH

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF SOUTHWEST PA MANUFACTURING WITH CUTTING EDGE PRECISION

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# PITTSBURGH CHAPTER NTMA ADVANCED MANUFACTURING EXPO

Tuesday, March 25, 2025 | 9AM - 4PM  
DoubleTree Cranberry

<https://bit.ly/pgh-advanced-manufacturing-expo>

## ABOUT THE EVENT

The Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA's Advanced Manufacturing Expo is the premier event for manufacturers, industry professionals, and innovators looking to connect, collaborate, and explore the latest advancements in the manufacturing industry. This event is designed to showcase cutting-edge technology, best practices, and solutions that drive the future of manufacturing.

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

#### The Toyota Tools for Work and Life

**David Newberry,**  
Production  
Engineering Senior  
Manager,  
Toyota WV

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPTER EXECUTIVE



Dear Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA Members,

As we welcome a new year, we also embrace fresh opportunities to strengthen our manufacturing community, expand our professional networks, and advance the skilled workforce that drives our industry forward. The Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA is committed to supporting you—our members—by providing valuable resources, networking events, and advocacy initiatives to help your businesses thrive.

In 2025, we have an exciting lineup of events and programs designed to support you and your company, including:

- **Advocacy & Industry Influence** - Stay informed about key legislative issues and make your voice heard through NTMA's advocacy efforts and OneVoice.
- **Workforce Development** - Strengthen your talent pipeline by participating in our apprenticeship program, partnering with local schools, and mentoring the next generation of skilled professionals.
- **Networking & Industry Events** - Connect with fellow manufacturers and industry leaders throughout the year.
- **Educational Workshops & Best Practices** - Learn from industry experts through training sessions, leadership workshops, and roundtable discussions tailored to address the evolving needs of precision manufacturing.

Your participation is what makes our chapter strong. Whether you are looking to grow your workforce, expand your business, or connect with peers, we invite you to engage with us and take full advantage of what NTMA has to offer.

Stay informed with monthly e-blasts and through our social media channels.

**Here's to a prosperous year ahead!**

Sincerely,

Michel Conklin  
Chapter Executive, Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA



**Contact Us  
Form**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

**Kevin Hartford, Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA Board President**

As I embark on my third decade with the NTMA's Pittsburgh Chapter, I do so filled with immense pride and appreciation for our collective accomplishments thus far, the promising future ahead, and the unwavering commitment that our board and leadership team continue to demonstrate.

What I admire most is the remarkable courage and tenacity exhibited by the owners of our member companies who have forged their paths as entrepreneurs. These individuals have willingly embraced risks and made significant personal and financial investments to establish their businesses, each with captivating stories that highlight their journeys. Reflecting on companies such as **Oberg Industries**, the "The Granddaddy Of Us All", one can see that over 50 enterprises have emerged from Don Oberg's legacy, including names like **Penn United Technologies**, **JV Manufacturing**, and **Composidie**, just to name a few. This landscape is a testament to the resilient entrepreneurs within our chapter, possessing the talent, skill, and foresight to thrive.

Which brings me to Russ Finsness and our featured company, **MetPlas** ([www.metplas.com](http://www.metplas.com)). After completing his service in the US Marine Corps in 1970, Russ relocated to Montego Bay, Jamaica, to manage a company specializing in men's toiletries, including aftershave and cologne, alongside sunscreen products. These items found their markets across the Caribbean. Unfortunately, following a governmental shift, Jamaica's economy took a downturn, making it increasingly challenging to maintain a business there. By early 1977, Russ chose to return home and took on the role of manager at a modest plastic fabrication shop in Oakmont, PA.



In 1981, Russ made a pivotal decision to leave Chrishon Fabricators, taking three machinists with him, and founded MetPlas Inc. — still located in Natrona Heights, just off Exit 16 on Route 28. Initially focused on machining aluminum parts for Westinghouse, the company experienced substantial growth. By 1989, Russ had acquired the shares of the three minority partners, becoming the sole shareholder of MetPlas. Today, MetPlas operates as a family-owned Chapter S Corporation, with a diverse range of materials at their disposal, and a robust emphasis on plastics. They run two shifts and employ 59 highly skilled and dedicated employees.



MetPlas boasts a wide array of capabilities, including precision machining, waterjet cutting, subassembly, busbar fabrication, and electrical insulation.

Today, MetPlas continues to flourish. Notably, they have become deeply engaged with the NTMA and have 6-employees participating in our Apprenticeship Program. Their Vice President of Finance, Rebecca Dalton, now serves on the Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA's Board of Directors and has been a refreshing addition.

In a fascinating perspective, Russ attributes MetPlas's initial success to the leadership and policies of Ronald Reagan from 40 years ago. It raises an interesting question: how many of today's business owners might echo the same sentiment 40 years from now? I doubt I'll be around to see it but I'm guessing it'll be substantial.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Russ Finsness and the MetPlas team for their contributions, which undoubtedly enhance the prestige of the NTMA's Pittsburgh Chapter.

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## ROBOTICS FACTORY

The Robotics Factory will further the region's efforts to grow robotics startups and link them to industry and manufacturing capabilities. What captured the attention of the EDA and made the Southwestern Pennsylvania application stand out for the competitive Build Back Better grant was the region's cohesive approach to building the workforce and capabilities of robotics industries.

Not only will the Robotics Factory programs address existing problems experienced by industries that can be solved using robotics and automation solutions, we will also provide the resources and funding that are so critical to emerging companies.

Learn more at [www.roboticsfactory.org](http://www.roboticsfactory.org)

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# Welcome to the NTMA!

Please join us in welcoming the newest members  
of the Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA



MACHINE  
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## MEET A MEMBER: Machine Innovations Inc.

**Machine Innovations Inc.**, established in 2019 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, specializes in delivering comprehensive engineering and manufacturing solutions with a focus on prototyping and small production runs. Their skilled team has extensive experience across a wide array of industries, including industrial manufacturing, electric motors, utilities, and motorsports.

By integrating engineering and manufacturing seamlessly, Machine Innovations empowers their customers to efficiently develop, test, and refine their projects through a streamlined and cost-effective process. Their diverse manufacturing capabilities include manual and CNC machining, laser cutting, additive manufacturing, fabrication, and assembly.

Under the guidance of their founder and president, Oleg Tovpeko—an accomplished mechanical engineer with extensive experience in engineering and manufacturing—Machine Innovations has successfully partnered with a multitude of different companies. Their tailored, innovative design and prototyping solutions are crafted to meet the unique demands of each client, ensuring practical and impactful results.

### Company Location:

144 Dance Hall Rd.  
Apollo, PA 15613

### Contact Information:

<https://www.machineinnovationsinc.com/>  
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MACHINE  
INNOVATIONS



## BOTSIQ HOLDS 4TH ANNUAL GIRLS EXPLORING ENGINEERING DAY

**Suzanne Gloekler, STEM Program Coordinator, BotsIQ**

BotsIQ is gearing up to host its 4th Annual Girls Exploring Engineering Day at Commonwealth Charter Academy on February 19th. This exciting, free event, welcomes all young women from 7th-12th grade who have an interest in exploring a wide variety of careers in engineering and technology! Girls Exploring Engineering Day is held during “National Engineers Week,” which seeks to inspire and educate students to pursue careers within engineering.

One of the careers highlighted will be the “Pipeline Engineer” where students will work in pairs to design their own natural gas pipelines. They must determine the most cost effective pathway for their pipeline to travel safely, while avoiding buildings and environmental obstacles. By exploring this process, the students will gain a deeper appreciation of how an everyday, essential resource is delivered to their homes and schools.

A major highlight of Girls Exploring Engineering Day is the chance for students to interact with engineers who are already excelling in their respective fields. Industry professionals from DMI Companies, Smith & Nephew Robotics, the

Society of Women's Engineers and many more, will share their journeys, offer advice and provide insight into the skills and education needed to succeed in the world of engineering. By hearing firsthand experiences from these industry professionals, the girls will gain a better understanding of the potential and impact of future careers in engineering and technology.

Girls Exploring Engineering Day not only encourages young women to pursue engineering as a career, but also helps to bridge the gap between high school and the professional world. By providing a supportive and inspiring environment, the event fosters a sense of community for young women interested in STEM fields. It is an important step towards creating a more diverse and inclusive engineering industry, where women play an equal role in shaping the future of technology and innovation.



**Pictured: A Greensburg-Salem High School student creates a mini-robot.**

# BOTSIQ INSPIRES FUTURE INNOVATORS IN WESTMORELAND COUNTY!

**Oula Abdul Ghani, STEM Curriculum Specialist, BotsIQ**

This fall, Amos K. Hutchinson Elementary School got an exciting glimpse into the world of manufacturing and engineering with BotsIQ. Over the course of three days, BotsIQ engaged 360 young learners in hands-on lessons from its MFGExplore program, which aims to inspire curiosity and enthusiasm for in-demand manufacturing careers by offering a practical and interactive learning experience.

BotsIQ's visits featured two engaging activities. In the first, students stepped into the role of bioengineers by designing and creating prosthetics for amputee animals. Using recyclable materials and innovative thinking, the young engineers learned how they can improve the quality of lives of living creatures. This activity highlighted the critical role of bioengineers in developing life-enhancing solutions for both humans and animals.

In the second, students explored the field of industrial production by constructing zipline carriers with a limited budget and materials. This challenge encouraged them to think about design efficiency and safety throughout the production process as they built and tested their models.

Both activities also focus on the soft skills and competencies needed for success in manufacturing including collaboration, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

The event was a resounding success! BotsIQ was invited back to coordinate and run an all-day STEAM Carnival at the school in the spring. This event will continue to grow that spark of excitement among students about the potential of future careers in engineering and manufacturing.

All BotsIQ programming, including MFGExplore, is available to any educators across districts FREE of charge. BotsIQ provides educators with different curricula and support as part of a broader effort to address the growing demand for skilled professionals in the manufacturing industry.



**Pictured: Students test their ziplines.**

## 2025 PITTSBURGH CHAPTER NTMA APPRENTICE COMPETITION

Liz Blashock, Apprenticeship Program Manager, Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA

The MSC Industrial Supply / Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA Apprentice Competition, a cornerstone event for the Pittsburgh Chapter, carried on its longstanding tradition on Monday, January 20th. Despite the snow and cold, eight machinist apprentices from five area manufacturing companies gathered at Eastern Westmoreland Career and Technology Center to vie for the prestigious title of *Best Metalworking Apprentice* in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

The competition, divided into two rigorous segments, tested both theoretical knowledge and practical machining skills. The first segment featured a written exam designed to assess the contestants' technical knowledge. The second segment required apprentices to fabricate two precise parts using manual mill and lathe machines, following detailed, never-before-seen blueprints. With an eight-hour clock, a fully equipped toolbox, and raw materials at their disposal, competitors worked diligently to showcase their craftsmanship. The final parts were sent to two NTMA member companies for thorough inspection and scoring by quality control inspectors. Winners will be determined based on a point system evaluating understanding, skill, and efficiency, with the results to be revealed at the Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA Apprentice Graduation Banquet on June 4 at Stratigos Banquet Centre.



This competition holds a special place in the hearts of the NTMA Steering Committee members who organize it, many of whom were once competitors themselves. Among them is Jim McDowell, from **Penn State Tool & Die Corp** and former competitor, who expressed his pride in mentoring the next generation. “It’s a great feeling seeing the pride and hard work of the contestants and having the opportunity to share my knowledge and experience. I was once in their shoes and hope to see them right where I am one day,” McDowell said. Notably, six volunteers at this year’s event were past competitors. Their camaraderie and shared experiences enriched the day as they reminisced about previous competitions while ensuring the current event ran seamlessly.

Pictured: Apprentice Competition Naming Sponsors, MSC Industrial Supply, including Jason Beatty, Chuck Mousseau, and Nick Gatén



## —A LONG STANDING TRADITION

The success of this event is owed to the unwavering support of its sponsors. Among the contributors are MSC Industrial Supply, Eastern Westmoreland CTC—including instructor Ken Pedder and his machine shop class, Alro Steel Company, **PDS Industries**, **Hamill Manufacturing Company**, **IMI Critical Engr PBM LLC**, **Penn State Tool & Die Corporation**, **Kurt J. Lesker Company**, and Rigging & Transportation Solutions Inc.

Long standing NTMA member, **PDS Industries**, based in Irwin, PA, has played a pivotal role in the local manufacturing industry for nearly three decades particularly to the Naval Industry. As a new sponsor this year, Stanley Caroline, III, Operations Director and former competitor, shared his enthusiasm: “Bringing attention to these manufacturing careers is something we should all be focused on. We are dedicated to training our employees. The better the training, the better the machinists we have on site. At the same time, having some fun and bringing the best of the best together for a friendly competition is great too. We look forward to having an apprentice compete next year.”

As the anticipation builds for the announcement of this year’s winner, the Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA Apprentice Competition continues to shine a spotlight on the critical role apprenticeships play in shaping skilled machinists. By combining learning, mentorship, and a spirit of friendly competition, the event fosters both professional growth and community pride. “The legacy of this competition—woven from decades of dedication, teamwork, and passion for the craft—remains a testament to the thriving manufacturing industry in Southwestern Pennsylvania.”, said Michel Conklin, NTMA Chapter Executive.



**Pictured: 2025 Apprentices: Travis Bayne - Kiski Precision Industries, Derek Stein - Rivers of Steel, Eli Sherbondy - Kiski Precision Industries, Logan Fox - Hamill Manufacturing, Derek Shaver - Penn State Tool and Die, Michael Paetow - Penn State Tool and Die, Eric Carroll - General Carbide Corporation, and Dan Shortman - Hamill Manufacturing**



**Pictured: Jim McDowell - Penn State Tool & Die, Dan DiFonso - retired, Chuck Lentz - Hamill Manufacturing Company, Stanley Caroline III - PDS Industries, Merle Smith - Kiski Precision Industries, Barry Smith - IMI Critical Engr PBM LLC, Brandon Richards - Aggressive Grinding Services, Liz Blashock - Pittsburgh Chapter NTMA**  
**Not pictured: Roxanne Shurtz - Kurt J Lesker Company / Rigging & Transportation Solutions, Leo Wozniak - retired**





**NTMA** APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM  
PITTSBURGH CHAPTER

**THANK YOU TO THE SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS OF THE 2025 MSC / PITTSBURGH CHAPTER NTMA APPRENTICE COMPETITION**

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# THE RISE OF ROBOTICS: TRANSFORMING INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION IN

**Kevin Dowling, Managing Director, The Robotics Factory**

Industrial automation has undergone a seismic shift in recent years, driven by advanced robotics that enable increasingly complex tasks with remarkable precision. Traditionally, large-scale manufacturers have been the primary beneficiaries of these technologies. However, the accessibility of robotics is now transforming smaller businesses, creating new opportunities in regions like Southwestern Pennsylvania. Historically rooted in manufacturing, the region is leveraging robotics to revitalize its industrial sector and redefine its future.

## **A Region in Transition**

Southwestern Pennsylvania's rich industrial history and expertise position it as a leader in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, defined by the fusion of physical, digital, and biological technologies. Anchored by Carnegie Mellon University's Robotics Institute and innovation hubs like The Robotics Factory, the region is becoming a hub for robotics research and application.

## **Advancing Industrial Automation**

Robotics is redefining automation by moving beyond repetitive tasks to sophisticated operations powered by artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and advanced sensors. Robotic arms now perform micron-level precision tasks, while autonomous mobile robots streamline logistics, and collaborative robots, or cobots, enhance productivity alongside human operators.

For small manufacturers, robotics addresses challenges like labor shortages, high costs, and the demand for customization. By adopting automation, these businesses improve efficiency, reduce waste, and meet evolving market needs.

## **The Potential for Tool and Die Shops**

Tool and die shops in the region, traditionally reliant on skilled craftsmen, are reaping significant benefits from robotics:

- **Enhanced Precision:** AI-driven robotics achieves unparalleled accuracy, ensuring high-quality tools and dies.
- **Faster Production:** Automating processes like milling and grinding reduces turnaround times, enabling shops to take on more projects.
- **Customization:** Robotics enables cost-effective production of small, customized batches for industries such as aerospace and medical devices.
- **Cost Savings:** By automating labor-intensive tasks, robotics reduces dependency on manual labor, mitigating the impact of skilled labor shortages.

## SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

### **Supporting Innovation: The Role of The Robotics Factory**

The Robotics Factory, an innovation hub based in Pittsburgh and operated by Innovation Works, is playing a critical role in advancing robotics adoption in the region. By connecting robotics entrepreneurs with local manufacturers, it fosters collaboration and accelerates the development of practical, industry-specific solutions.

The Robotics Factory provides resources such as funding, training, and access to cutting-edge technologies. These initiatives empower manufacturers to adopt robotics while supporting the growth of homegrown startups. By aligning the needs of innovators and end-users, The Robotics Factory is driving economic vitality and technological advancement in the region.

### **Overcoming Challenges**

While robotics offers immense potential, small manufacturers must navigate several challenges. The upfront cost of acquiring and implementing robotic systems can be a significant barrier, particularly for businesses with limited capital. Programs like the Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center Network (IRC) and grants from organizations such as Innovation Works are helping to offset these costs, making robotics more accessible.

Workforce training is another critical area. As robotic systems become more sophisticated, employees need new skills to operate, maintain, and program them. To address this need, community colleges, technical schools, and local institutions are stepping up with specialized training programs, ensuring that the regional workforce remains competitive.

### **A Vision for the Future**

Robotics is more than a trend—it's reshaping Southwestern Pennsylvania's manufacturing landscape. For small manufacturers, adopting robotics means enhanced growth, resilience, and sustainability. Collaboration among universities, industry groups, and government agencies is crucial to ensure businesses can access the resources, research, and training needed to thrive.

As the region embraces robotics, it positions itself as a leader in the new era of manufacturing, where technology and human ingenuity combine to create a brighter, more competitive future.

Learn more at <https://www.roboticsfactory.org/>.



# BUILDING A THRIVING WORKFORCE IN

## Raymond McGuire, Industry Liaison - Manufacturing, Partner4Work

Pittsburgh's industries are evolving, and meeting the workforce needs of local employers requires a proactive approach. By diving deep into industry trends and collaborating with businesses, Partner4Work ensures that the region remains equipped with a skilled and adaptable talent pool.

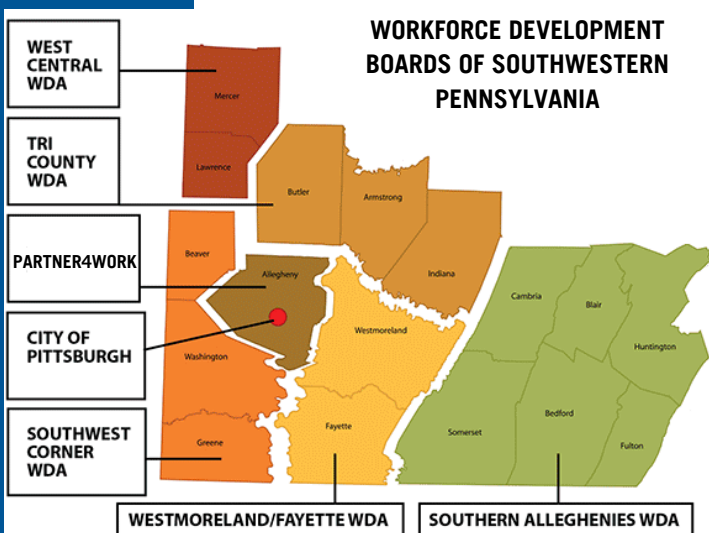
Partner4Work has spent more than two decades refining the process for developing high quality job candidates. As the Workforce Development Board for Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh, we connect funding, expertise, and opportunity to ensure businesses find the talent they need while individuals gain access to meaningful careers.

### The Power of Partnership

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements, shifting economic landscapes, and an aging workforce, workforce development must do more than keep up — it must lead. At Partner4Work, we embrace this challenge by driving strategic investments, building innovative partnerships, and delivering measurable impact for job seekers, businesses, and the community.

Collaboration is at the core of our mission. We understand that creating a thriving workforce isn't a one-size-fits-all endeavor. It requires deep connections with training providers, employers, and policymakers to ensure that every program we design meets real-world needs.

- **Aligning Curriculum with Employer Needs:** By connecting training partners with employers, we ensure that apprentices receive job-specific education tailored to industry requirements. This alignment guarantees that businesses have access to a pipeline of skilled talent ready to contribute on day one.
- **Anticipating Trends Through Collaboration:** Our partnerships with local legislators, businesses, and trainers give us a 360-degree view of workforce needs as they evolve. Whether it's preparing for the rise of electric vehicles or expanding opportunities in IT and manufacturing, we stay ahead of the curve.





# PITTSBURGH: THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

## Real-World Impact: Apprenticeships That Change Lives

Apprenticeship programs are shining examples of how strategic collaboration can transform industries. Registered Apprenticeship Programs provide a valuable pathway to employment by offering individuals the unique opportunity to "earn while they learn," combining paid, on-the-job training with paid related technical instruction.

Active Apprentices in Allegheny County by Industry FY2025

INDUSTRY	FY 2025 #OF APPRENTICES	FY 2015 VS 2025 CHANGE	FY 2015 VS 2025 % CHANGE
Construction	2,997	+624	+26.3%
Manufacturing	196	+83	+73.5%
Educational Services	103	+102	+10,200%
Admin & Support, Waste Mgmt & Remediation	94	+80	+571.4%
Other Services (Except Public Admin)	80	+70	+700%
Healthcare & Social Assistance	42	+38	+950%
Not Provided	7	+6	+16.7%

While most active apprentices in Allegheny County are employed in Construction, the number of individuals participating in “new sector” apprenticeships outside of Construction has steadily increased over the past decade. We encourage our employer partners to connect with Registered Apprenticeship Programs to take advantage of this promising trend.

Our work with our peer local workforce development boards and the German American Chamber of Commerce Pittsburgh Chapter has grown apprenticeships in mechatronics, polymer process technology, and the nation’s first Electric Vehicle Automotive Technician program. These programs address growing demand for skilled workers while offering individuals debt-free training and clear pathways to stable, high-paying careers.

Similarly, our partnerships with organizations like Apprenti, the Pittsburgh Technology Council, and Fortyx80 have expanded apprenticeship opportunities in tech occupations, providing a fast track for individuals to enter fields like cybersecurity and software development and helping businesses source early career talent.

As we continue to expand our apprenticeship efforts, we invite organizations to partner with us in creating new opportunities and expanding access. By working together, we can design impactful programs that meet industry demands and empower Pittsburgh’s workforce to thrive.

*Continued on next page.*

## THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP (CONTINUED)

### Why These Opportunities Matter

Apprenticeships offer more than just training — they provide a comprehensive approach to workforce readiness:

- **Targeted Training:** Apprenticeships focus on the specific skills employers need, ensuring candidates are job-ready from day one.
- **Accelerated Pathways:** With a streamlined curriculum, apprentices can enter the workforce faster than through traditional education routes.
- **Mentorship and Guidance:** Built-in mentoring equips apprentices with industry insights and confidence, setting them up for long-term success.

### Why Partner with Partner4Work?

Employers who collaborate with Partner4Work gain early access to highly qualified apprentices and can build incumbent worker training strategies. We bring a critical feedback loop with training providers. This ongoing connection allows businesses to share updates on emerging industry trends, ensuring training programs remain relevant and effective.



As industries evolve, staying ahead means embracing innovation and investing in talent. Partnering with Partner4Work means joining a network of forward-thinking leaders who are shaping the future of work in Pittsburgh.

If your business is ready to connect with skilled talent or explore apprenticeship opportunities, Partner4Work is here to guide you. Together, we can drive innovation, strengthen industries, and ensure that Pittsburgh's workforce remains a beacon of excellence.

If you are located in Southwestern Pennsylvania, but outside of Allegheny County please reach out and we'll connect you with our peer workforce development boards Southwest Corner, Tri-County, or Westmoreland-Fayette.

To learn more about PA Local Workforce Development Boards, visit:  
[https://bit.ly/PA\\_Workforce\\_Development\\_Boards](https://bit.ly/PA_Workforce_Development_Boards).

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## COMBAT ROBOTICS SEASON RETURNS

**Todd Landree, Robotics Program Coordinator, BotsIQ**

Hello, Pittsburgh Chapter National Tooling and Machining Association! I am thrilled to announce that the highly anticipated combat robotics season is upon us! BotsIQ's signature program, where 15-pound combat robots go head-to-head in a battle of engineering and strategy, is back in action for its 20th year! Teams of high school students from across the region have been hard at work designing, building, and testing their creations, and soon, their efforts will be put to the ultimate test.

This season promises to be one of our most exciting yet, with preliminary competitions kicking off on March 5th at the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC). Just one week later, on March 12th and 13th, the action continues with additional preliminaries hosted by Westmoreland County Community College (WCCC). These events are an excellent opportunity to witness the creativity, ingenuity, and teamwork that make BotsIQ such a unique experience for students and spectators alike.

But that's just the beginning! The pinnacle of the season—the BotsIQ Finals Competition—will take place on April 11th and 12th at PennWest California. This is the ultimate showcase of combat robotics, where the teams from the preliminary rounds face off in a high-energy, adrenaline-pumping event. If you've never attended a BotsIQ Finals Competition, it's an experience like no other. The thrill of the battles, the camaraderie of the teams, and the ingenuity on display make it an unforgettable event for students, educators, industry professionals, and fans of robotics.





## WITH BOTS!Q!

BotsIQ is about more than just robots—it's about inspiring the next generation of innovators and problem-solvers. Each season, participating students gain invaluable hands-on experience in STEM and manufacturing, explore potential career paths, and build skills that will serve them well into the future. The program also fosters a unique connection between schools and local manufacturers, creating opportunities for mentorship, collaboration, and career exploration.

I encourage all NTMA members to attend one of these exciting events. Not only is it a chance to see some incredible combat action, but it's also an opportunity to support the next wave of talent entering the manufacturing and engineering fields. Your presence at these competitions means a great deal to the students and helps reinforce the importance of these skills in the real world.

Mark your calendars and join us as we celebrate another thrilling season of BotsIQ! Let's cheer on the teams as they bring their bots to the battlefield and showcase the creativity, technical skill, and determination that define this program. I hope to see you there!

For more information about BotsIQ or to get involved, visit our website at [www.botsiqpa.org](http://www.botsiqpa.org) or contact us at [botsiq@botsiqpa.com](mailto:botsiq@botsiqpa.com).

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[www.botsiqpa.org/volunteer](http://www.botsiqpa.org/volunteer)



## **BotsIQ 2025**

### **Preliminary Competitions**

March 5th

CCAC Allegheny

March 12th & 13th  
Westmoreland County  
Community College

### **Finals Competition**

April 11th & 12th  
PennWest California



**THOMAS**

## Grow Your Business With Thomas

Looking to generate leads and grow your digital marketing footprint?

Thomas is a digital marketing services agency that connects industrial suppliers with qualified buyers.

Exclusive Offer for  
NTMA Members  
Save 25% on a Thomas Program

[business.thomasnet.com/ntma-partnership](http://business.thomasnet.com/ntma-partnership)



## Why Partner with Thomas?

Drive traffic to your website with our industrial-focused SEO program

Create **customized marketing strategies** with our experienced digital marketing team

Increase **buyer engagement** by showcasing your products with a custom B2B online catalog

Boost your **exposure** with an advertising program on Thomasnet®

**DOUBLE  
THE  
CAPACITY**

Atmosphere  
Stress  
Relieving,  
Gas Nitriding  
& FNC/ONC  
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~ up to ~  
66"x138" & 20,000 lbs.  
**PER LOAD**



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## WHY CHOOSE US

- Local Pickup & Delivery Service
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- Our Customers LOVE us

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- Age Hardening
- Air Hardening
- Aluminum Alloy Processing
- Annealing
- Black Oxide Coating
- Carbonitriding
- Carburizing
- Cryogenics
- Ferritic Nitrocarburizing (FNC)
- Gas Nitriding
- High-Speed Steel Hardening
- Hot Working Steels
- Induction Hardening
- Laser Heat Treating
- Neutral Hardening
- Normalizing
- Oil Hardening
- Rust Preventative
- Sandblasting
- Selective Hardening
- Shotblasting
- Solution Hardening
- Straightening
- Stress Relieving
- Tempering
- Tool Steel Hardening
- Metallography
- Metallurgical Analysis
- Microhardness Testing
- Vacuum Hardening





# ATTRACT & RETAIN TOP TALENT: PARTICIPATE IN NTMA'S EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION SURVEY

Compensation planning decisions have become increasingly complex. The first three quarters of 2024 saw fluctuating market conditions; slower hiring and slight increases in unemployment. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) reports that total compensation costs for private industry workers increased 3.9% from June 2023 to June 2024. The pressure on labor costs and allocation of limited compensation budgets will create challenges for employers in 2025.

Companies need to focus on growing and retaining current employees. Companies will, no doubt, be relying on sign-on and retention bonuses less, instead focusing their strategies on performance initiatives and promotions.

To evaluate your competitiveness, you need up-to-date, relevant market data for critical jobs.

## **The NTMA Executive Compensation Survey**

provides you with the valuable data you need, including benchmarks for salaried employees such as managers, administrative and support personnel.



By participating in our survey, you'll receive the Executive Compensation Dashboard **FREE** in early April.

Why should you participate?

- Gain a competitive edge: Understand how your compensation stacks up against other precision machining companies.
- Make informed decisions: Benchmark salaries for key positions to ensure you're attracting and retaining top talent.
- Improve your recruitment efforts: Use data-driven insights to craft competitive compensation packages that attract the best candidates.
- Enhance employee morale: Demonstrate your commitment to fair and competitive compensation.

Submit your survey today! Go to: <https://bit.ly/40QpRiy>.

The final report is provided free to participating members. Non-participating members can purchase the report for \$250.

Don't miss out on this valuable resource!

## SIX REASONS GIRLS SHOULD CHOOSE A

**Gretchen Moore, Executive Director, WiM Education Foundation**

Since the advent of modern manufacturing, women have contributed to the industry's development and success by working in textile mills and garment factories during the industrial revolution, heroically filling workforce gaps throughout World Wars I and II, and driving advancement into the Industry 4.0 era.

Women have an important role in the future of the industry as well. Research from Deloitte says that US manufacturing could need as many as 3.8 million new employees by 2033. With access to STEM programs for girls at an all-time high, manufacturing provides great opportunities for girls looking for a career in an exciting, diverse, and growing industry.

Here are six reasons girls should consider the incredible career opportunities available to them in manufacturing:

1. **Work with cutting-edge technology** including AI, 3D printing, robotics, automation, and the Internet of Things. Manufacturing has always been a hub of technological advancement, and a career in manufacturing can put you in the epicenter of innovation.
2. **There's something for everyone:** Choose from promising careers in robotics and engineering, data and software, quality control, research, mechanics, and production. The manufacturing workforce also needs non-technical professionals in sales, marketing, design, management, and human resources.
3. **Utilize all of your skills:** In addition to technical skills required for manufacturing jobs, girls possess great leadership skills that modern manufacturers look for, including collaboration, logical/creative/complex problem solving, critical thinking, innovation, and emotional intelligence.
4. **Be part of the global economy** in exciting industries including defense, aeronautics, food, electronics, telecommunications, textiles, and more! Manufacturing companies come in all shapes and sizes and exist in locations all over the world from multinational global companies to small, family-owned shops.
5. **Salary and Benefits:** The manufacturing industry has made rapid strides in improving benefits that are important to all workers including safety, flexibility, opportunities for growth, workplace culture, and competitive salaries. According to the Department of Commerce, women working in manufacturing earn 16% more than women in other industries.



## CAREER IN MANUFACTURING

6. **A Built-in Community of Support:** Over the last 15 years, Women in Manufacturing (WiM) has worked to empower women workers and strengthen the manufacturing sector. Our global network of more than 31,000 members is a dynamic group of role models and mentors who are eager to welcome the next generation of women working in manufacturing.

We also provide best-in-class programming through WiM's Education Foundation to develop skills that help women achieve, lead, and succeed in their manufacturing careers.



WiM offers year-round conferences, meetings, and networking opportunities for women currently working in the industry as well as resources for women looking to enter the industry through a robust job board and bi-annual career fair.

WiM's 34 chapters throughout the U.S. provide an opportunity to participate in local events, plant tours, and community engagement including three chapters in Pennsylvania!

These are just a few reasons that girls interested in an exciting career with plenty of opportunity should consider manufacturing. For an insider's take on the industry, check out WiM's monthly podcast, "Hear Her Story," for inspiration from incredible women as they share their experience working in manufacturing. Visit [womeninmanufacturing.org/hear-her-story-podcast](https://womeninmanufacturing.org/hear-her-story-podcast) to listen.

You can learn more about Women in Manufacturing by visiting [womeninmanufacturing.org](https://womeninmanufacturing.org). WiM is dedicated to supporting, promoting, and inspiring women who have chosen careers in the manufacturing industry.

The WiM Education Foundation is WiM's nonprofit partner, dedicated to building a skilled, diverse, and resilient manufacturing workforce where women achieve, lead, and succeed. Learn more at [www.wimef.org](https://www.wimef.org).

Gretchen Moore is the Executive Director of the WiM Education Foundation and can be reached at [gmoore@womeninmfg.org](mailto:gmoore@womeninmfg.org).

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## PGH NTMA CALENDAR

- 2/14 Catalyst Connection Webinar: Energy Audits: Why Now is the Best Time
- 2/26 Roundtable Discussion: Navigating Tariffs in 2025
- 3/4 Pitt IEE: State of the Pittsburgh Economy co-hosted with PNC Bank
- 3/18 Supervisor Peer Network Meeting
- 3/25 Advanced Manufacturing Expo 2025
- 4/11 Haas Networking Event at the BotsIQ Finals Competition
- 6/23 2025 Pittsburgh Chapter Manufacturing Open

For details and more events, please visit:

[www.PGHNTMA.org](http://www.PGHNTMA.org)