



Delaware Manufacturing Association

BY BRYAN HORSEY AND PAUL MORRIS

THE TRANSITION IS HAPPENING, and you should be very proud.

Your relatives, friends and neighbors are working hard to transition Delaware into next generation manufacturing; learning, adapting, and growing to succeed in our 21st Century hyper-competitive economy. Delaware is home to some of the world's most recognizable companies who manufacture products within our cities and towns; DuPont, W.L. Gore, Agilent to name a few. We are also home to some of the world's most unique and specialized manufacturers with much smaller workforces like Kuehne Company, Polymer Technologies, MDavis, Aloft and AeroArchitects.

Large or small, one thousand employees or ten, we all face the same challenges to simultaneously prepare our businesses for tomorrow, next year, as well as five years from now. The Delaware Manufacturing Association (DMA) is providing access to best practices, experience, and knowledge to support manufacturers and help our state prosper.

To continue to advance our critical manufacturing culture, the DMA brought in one of the most sought after leaders in lean manufacturing, Gary Convis, to keynote our spring manufacturing conference. As Toyota's first non-Japanese Managing Officer in North America, Gary's



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insight was educational, inspiring, applicable and actionable. He challenged those in attendance to “get more done with less,” and build a culture of innovation and action.

Raising awareness among students, our next generation manufacturing workforce, the Delaware Manufacturing Association and our member companies are collaborating with local educational institutions to inform, teach, and provide the skills necessary to succeed in 21st Century manufacturing careers.

The DMA made progress within several key educational and workforce initiatives in 2018. The partnership between the DMA and local school districts continued through the high school manufacturing program operating within all three counties. Many companies within the DMA took advantage of the program by continually informing the curriculum, hosting participants for tours, hiring students for summer internships, and interviewing graduates for full-time employment. The program will be expanding in 2019 thanks to additional financial support through

Bloomberg Philanthropies. This expansion will increase enrollment to over 140 students for the 2019/2020 academic year.

Another initiative that launched in 2018 was the “adopt a school” program connecting DMA members to local elementary and secondary schools. This initiative is in its infancy but aims at building off the synergy created through the State Chamber’s “Delaware Principal for a Day” program. DMA members will identify schools within their local communities to build mutually beneficial relationships. We anticipate officially kicking off this program in early 2019 with meet and greet events within each county.

We have another educational/workforce partnership that we are finalizing and are hopeful we can announce in early 2019. This initiative will focus on connecting to Delaware’s elementary and middle school students and avail to them the great careers available to them within manufacturing.

It’s time to re-think Delaware manufacturing and build tomorrow’s workforce. ■