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AMID THE GREATEST public health crisis in more than a century, the people of Delaware—and all Americans—are gaining a renewed appreciation of manufacturers’ role in securing our nation and creating the future. That’s something we will need to harness as the pandemic accelerates demand for more skilled workers in modern manufacturing.

Modern manufacturers are still saying, “Creators Wanted.” While the industry has not escaped employment shifts from COVID-19, there were still 328,000 manufacturing job openings in May, up from 315,000 in April. And, according to a 2018 study by The Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte, we still may need to fill 4.6 million job openings by 2028.

It’s easy to see why. In times of challenge and in moments where we need innovation, the people of manufacturing always step up to meet the need. Right now, despite COVID-19, manufacturers in the United States are inventing and building the technologies of the future, expanding on revolutionary breakthroughs such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, block chain and 5G and discovering ways to improve sustainability, energy efficiency and water conservation.

And, in the face of COVID-19, everyday superheroes in the industry are researching for cures and treatments, producing personal protective equipment, keeping us connected and supplying food and other necessities.

The simple point is that to rebound from COVID-19 and make a better tomorrow, we’ll need creators.

But we know young people and emerging workers aren’t in our talent pipeline in sufficient numbers because they don’t know enough of this story—and because outdated perceptions of the industry get in the way.

That’s why manufacturers—in Delaware and across the country—host MFG Day events each year. Beginning on the first Friday in October

with events that continue throughout the month, MFG Day is organized nationally by The Manufacturing Institute. It helps showcase the reality of modern manufacturing careers by encouraging thousands of companies and educational institutions to be part of the national movement. MFG Day empowers manufacturers to engage with students, educators and influencers so they can help their communities, the industry and future generations thrive.

Typically, events take the form of tours of manufacturing facilities, but this year presents an opportunity to build more virtual events as we prioritize the safety and health of interested participants—and to reach more students and educators. The Manufacturing Institute recently hosted a webinar and created toolkits to help companies and institutions navigate MFG Day during COVID-19, publishing those resources at CreatorsWanted.org. Companies can also register events at the site so that parents, students and educators can easily find opportunities in their areas.

The country is counting on manufacturers to lead our economic recovery and renewal. But our future is only as bright as the young people we welcome into our industry. And for that reason, MFG Day has never been as important as it will be in 2020. ■



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