



tma news bulletin

THE VOICE OF ILLINOIS MANUFACTURING



THE 2016 ELECTION AND ITS IMPACT ON MANUFACTURING



tma news bulletin

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TMA News Bulletin is published monthly by the
Technology & Manufacturing Association
1651 Wilkening Road | Schaumburg, IL 60173
www.tmaillinois.org

technology & manufacturing association

The Technology & Manufacturing Association (TMA) was founded in 1925 by eight small manufacturing companies who believed they could better themselves by associating with one another. Through the years, members established programs and services that would help their businesses grow and prosper, train their employees, and provide medical and retirement benefits. As a result of these efforts, TMA has grown into a not-for-profit organization of precision manufacturing and supplier companies in the greater Chicago area.

TMA is governed by a Board of Directors, composed of executives from member firms. A full-time professional staff works closely with the Board, its committees and trust.

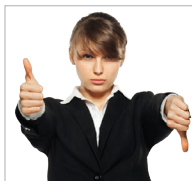
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message from the president



TMA Members & Friends,

Clinton vs. Trump may go down in American history as the first time we've ever elected a commander-in-chief nobody really wanted. I, for one, am not looking forward to either of them as President, but they're the primary choices we have.

When you think about how confused many people are about who to choose for president, think about how much more confusing the rest of the ballot is to most voters. U.S. senators, congressmen, state senators, state representatives, county board members, and judges are all on this November's ballot after the presidential choice.

Regardless of whether we're enthusiastic or informed, men and women will be elected, take office and exercise authority over public policy and spending that will affect all TMA members.

TMA's Government Relations Committee (GRC) acts on behalf of all TMA's members to evaluate aspirants for Illinois state offices, inform officeholders of TMA's perspectives on public policy, and invest in candidates that have demonstrated their support of policies that benefit manufacturing and business issues.

It is time consuming, difficult and expensive for any organization or group to impact candidates, officeholders and public policy, but we believe that together, nearly 1,000 companies strong, TMA makes an impact that benefits our members.

While most members are busy running their companies, volunteer members of the GRC and TMA staff work hard to make sure our voice is heard. I'm proud of both, and I think you should be too.

Be sure to vote November 8th!



Steve Rauschenberger

WHAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION SHOULD DO FOR MANUFACTURING IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS

By Drew Greenblatt

What should our new President do when they are at the peak of their power and the halo is brightest over their electoral success?

Last month, I had the privilege of speaking at the National Press Club at the US Manufacturing & Public Policy Conference to tackle a question that will decide the fate of millions of unemployed Americans and drive the job security of our 12 million USA factory workers. Getting it right will set the tone for the next four years and create an inertia that will power our industry and grow our middle class. Here are my five suggestions that the President should power through Congress to grow the economy quickly and add millions of job fast:

Bring Home \$3 Trillion Dollars

American companies have kept cash profits overseas for over a decade because they do not want to be double taxed (once by the foreign country and again back home by the IRS). This money is locked in low interest accounts overseas - very unproductive. If we tweaked our policy and said all profits made are taxed where they are made (like Europe and Japan and Canada do), we would have \$3 trillion dollars rush home in 100 days. This money will be used for wonderful things back here in the USA like creating new USA factories or initiating new R&D projects which will cause fast job creation. Some fear that dividends or stock may be bought back by some of the companies with their repatriated funds. This may occur in some cases, but ultimately this will help our retired people living on pensions - a good thing. Bring back the cash and supercharge the economy and our retirees.

Protect Intellectual Property

USA intellectual property is being stolen. Frequently. For example, today six Chinese companies have cut and pasted my wire baskets (that our engineers created) from

our website on their website and are pretending they came up with these innovations. To make matters worse, Americans observing the Chinese websites buy Marlin Steel's baskets from these Chinese companies who are not being stopped at our border. Our Federal government does not act and protect our innovators so the foreigners save money by not hiring scientists and researchers and engineers and just copy our ideas. Then they export our ideas back to the USA - and keep the cash. We must stop this injustice by disallowing these companies to sell in the USA. Our government has the power to make this change (Where is the Customs Agency?) but without leadership and direction, they do not act. Hundreds of thousands of USA jobs are lost each year because of this dereliction of duty that can be stopped in the first 100 days.

New Clients = More Sales = More Factory Workers

When we get a new wire basket client, we have to make more products and hire more talent to fulfill those orders. Most of the world's consumers are overseas. Matter of fact, the USA has only 4% of the world's population. We need more clients to sell so we can hire more locals. My company makes everything in the USA and ships wire baskets and precision wire forms to over 39 countries - including China. The best way we can double sales is closing more foreign deals but the foreigners put taxes on our products. Right now, China and Europe are cutting trade deals all over the world and our country is asleep at the wheel. Our nation has a manufacturing trade SURPLUS with countries we have deals with however we have a Deficit with countries we do not have a deal. Time to cut deals like the TPA so we can lock in these new clients so our factories can hire more talent to hit their ship dates.

Sunset Regulations

Many regulations are critical to have safe drinking water and clean air. We need them desperately or we will have to



wear masks like the Chinese do in Beijing. However, there are many regulations that are cumbersome and do not improve our standard of living. Each regulation should be sunset and have to be affirmatively voted on by Congress (not unelected bureaucrats by fiat). This will create an ecosystem where useful regulations are kept and silly ones die. American Factory jobs are dying because of strangling regulations - compliance costs over \$35,000 per employee at our small businesses. This job killer has to be reined in.

Tax Reform

My Canadian competitor pays a 15% tax rate (this includes 100% health insurance for his employees) but companies like my factory in Baltimore that makes custom wire racks pays over 40% in taxes. In addition, we have to pay for health

insurance and local and state taxes which makes our share of the profits less than 50%. This means when we quote jobs we have to quote too high and lose jobs to our Canadian economic rivals. Canadians are thrilled with this plan but our unemployed workers want jobs so we have to make sure our tax plan makes us nimble enough to beat the Canadians and the Europeans and Japanese. We want factories moving to the USA and not moving away to Mexico or Ireland to escape our exorbitant burden.

These five plans enacted will create a surge of job creation and growth in our economy that will power our middle class for a decade. •

**Drew Greenblatt is President of
Marlin Steel**



MANUFACTURING



CLINTON vs TRUMP

WHO WILL FIGHT MORE FOR MANUFACTURING

As a vital source of good-paying jobs, manufacturing has been an important topic this election cycle. Democrat presidential nominee Hillary Clinton and Republican nominee Donald Trump both have ideas on how to strengthen and grow manufacturing in America.



As President, Hillary Clinton promises to:

- Strengthen American manufacturing through a \$10 billion investment in partnerships that bring together workers and labor, business, universities, community colleges, and government at every level to harness the strength of manufacturing communities across America. Businesses that take part will pledge not to shift jobs or profits from these partnerships overseas.
- Prevent countries like China from abusing global trade rules and reject trade agreements that don't meet high standards. Clinton promises to "say no to trade deals, like the Trans-Pacific Partnership, that do not meet her high standard of raising wages, creating good-paying jobs, and enhancing our national security."
- Revitalize the hardest-hit manufacturing communities by creating tax incentives to encourage investment in communities that have faced or are about to face significant manufacturing job losses.
- Crack down on companies that ship jobs and earnings overseas and create incentives for companies to bring back jobs to the U.S.
- Invest in America's manufacturing workforce to ensure that it will always be the best in the world. Hillary will expand apprenticeships and training so our manufacturing workforce is always the best in the world.



As President, Donald Trump promises to:

- Withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which has not yet been ratified.
- Appoint tough and smart trade negotiators to fight on behalf of American workers.
- Direct the Secretary of Commerce to identify every violation of trade agreements a foreign country is currently using to harm our workers, and also direct all appropriate agencies to use every tool under American and international law to end these abuses.
- Tell NAFTA partners that we intend to immediately renegotiate the terms of that agreement to get a better deal for our workers. If they don't agree to a renegotiation, we will submit notice that the U.S. intends to withdraw from the deal. Eliminate Mexico's one-side backdoor tariff through the VAT and end sweatshops in Mexico that undercut U.S. workers.
- Instruct the Treasury Secretary to label China a currency manipulator.
- Instruct the U.S. Trade Representative to bring trade cases against China, both in this country and at the WTO. China's unfair subsidy behavior is prohibited by the terms of its entrance to the WTO, and I intend to enforce those rules.
- Use every lawful presidential power to remedy trade disputes if China does not stop its illegal activities, including its theft of American trade secrets - including the application of tariffs consistent with Section 201 and 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 and Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962.

(Sources: Clinton campaign website, Trump campaign website)

TMA 2016 ENDORSEMENTS

One of the values of membership in TMA is the collective representation and advocacy the Association provides in the halls of power at the state and local level. TMA continually promotes and impedes public policies and regulations that directly impact your business.

Part of that process is the support and endorsement of pro-manufacturing candidates. To that end, the TMA GRC publishes a yearly scorecard that rates each legislator based on floor votes cast on issues important to manufacturers and to those voting taxpayers employed in the industry. It can be found on the TMA website.

These ratings, along with a candidate's engagement with TMA and its members; their public positions on key concerns; their proven political will and courage; and their chances of electoral success, are all factors considered before TMA endorses a candidate.

Below is the list of candidates we believe understand the critical impact decisions in Springfield have on the ability of small manufacturers to compete in the marketplace.

STATE SENATE

Dis. Name	Party/City
19 Mike Hastings	D-Orland Hills
25 Jim Oberweis	R-Sugar Grove
26 Dan McConchie	R-Lake Zurich
28 Mel Thillens	R-Park Ridge
32 Pamela Althoff	R-Crystal Lake
35 David Syverson	R-Rockford
37 Chuck Weaver	R-Peoria
38 Sue Rezin	R-Morris
41 Christine Radogno	R-Lemont
44 William Brady	R-Bloomington
47 Jil Tracy	R-Quincy
50 Sam McCann	R-Carlinville
51 Chapin Rose	R-Mahomet
53 Jason Barickman	R-Bloomington
55 Dale Righter	R-Mattoon
56 Bill Haine	D-Alton
58 Paul Schimpf	R-Waterloo
59 Gary Forby	D-Benton

STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Dis. Name	Party/City
11 Ann Williams	D-Chicago
15 John D'Amico	D-Chicago
16 Lou Lang	D-Skokie
20 Michael McAuliffe	R-Chicago
37 Margo McDermed	R-Mokena
41 Grant Wehrli	R-Naperville
42 Jeanne Ives	R-Wheaton
45 Christine Winger	R-Bloomington
47 Patricia Bellock	R-Hinsdale
48 Peter Breen	R-Lombard
49 Michael Fortner	R-West Chicago
50 Keith Wheeler	R-Aurora
51 Nick Sauer	R-Barrington
52 David McSweeney	R-Barrington Hills
53 David Harris	R-Arlington Heights
54 Tom Morrison	R-Palatine
56 Julian Bernas	R-Schaumburg
61 Sheri Jesiel	R-Winthrop Harbor
62 Rod Drobinski	R-Wauconda
63 Steve Reick	R-Woodstock
64 Barbara Wheeler	R-Crystal Lake
65 Steven Andersson	R-Geneva
66 Allen Skillicorn	R-East Dundee
68 John Cabello	R-Machesney Park
69 Joe Sosnowski	R-Belvidere
70 Robert Pritchard	R-Sycamore
71 Tony McCombie	R-Savannah
75 David Welter	R-Morris
81 David Olson	R-Downers Grove
82 Jim Durkin	R-Western Springs
87 Tim Butler	R-Springfield
88 Keith Sommer	R-Morton
89 Brian Stewart	R-Freeport
90 Tom Demmer	R-Dixon
91 Mike Unes	R-Pekin
93 Norine Hammond	R-Macomb
94 Randy Frese	R-Quincy
95 Avery Bourne	R-Raymond
97 Mark Batinick	R-Plainfield
99 Sara Wojicki-Jimenez	R-Springfield
100 CD Davidsmeyer	R-Jacksonville
101 Bill Mitchell	R-Forsyth
102 Brad Halbrook	R-Shelbyville
103 Carol Ammons	D-Urbana
104 Chad Hays	R-Catlin
105 Dan Brady	R-Bloomington
106 Tom Bennett	R-Gibson City
107 John Cavaletto	R-Salem
108 Charles Meier	R-Okawville
109 David Reis	R-Willow Hill
110 Reggie Phillips	R-Charleston
112 Dwight Kay	R-Edwardsville
115 Terri Bryant	R-Murphysboro



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13 NEW LABOR LAWS

MANUFACTURERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF

10 NEW FEDERAL LAWS

Ten changes to federal labor law and three to Illinois labor law will soon impact manufacturing. Except for one, all the federal laws bypassed Congress and were put in place by the executive branch through presidential proclamations or agency regulation.

1. **More employees will qualify for overtime pay starting December 1, 2016.**

An estimated 4.2 million salaried workers that make less than \$47,477 per year will be eligible for overtime pay on December 1. To comply, employers can increase salaries above the threshold, pay overtime or cut back on overtime hours.

The rule change, set into place by President Barack Obama, has been appealed in a federal court challenge.

2. **Cadillac healthcare tax delayed to 2020**

A new 40 percent tax on so-called “Cadillac” employer healthcare plans was scheduled to take effect in 2018, but Congress delayed implementation for another two years. The tax would apply on health care plans with premiums above \$10,900 for individual and \$29,400 for family coverage.

3. **EEOC to require more data collection on employees September 2017**

In an effort to bring about more pay equity, employers with more than 100 workers will need to report to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission data on pay ranges and hours worked. This information will be required in addition to data on employees’ race, ethnicity and gender, starting September 2017.

The rule is in the midst of the comment phase until April 2017, when it will return to the EEOC for final adjustments.

4. **As of July 2016, temporary workers can now bargain alongside permanent employees if they share similar job descriptions.**

The Obama Administration’s National Labor Relations Board overturned the NLRB’s 2004 ruling, which said that temporary and permanent workers must obtain the consent of both the employer supplying the short-term staff and the company using the temporaries.

The NLRB rejected the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce urging to keep the 2004 policy.

5. **More employer responsibility for temporary workers**

The Obama Administration’s National Labor Relations Board ruled last September that companies using temporary agencies are considered “joint employers,” of the temps and share liability regarding those workers. This is in addition to the NLRB’s decision to give unionized temps the right to bargain with the parent company and the temporary agency.

Labor attorneys recommend that companies review their temp agency contracts as to what changes need to be made to coordinate with the NLRB’s rulings. Now, if a company and a temp agency are joint employers, the two can be held jointly liable for unfair labor practices.

6. **Employers now required to disclose anti-union consultations**

The Obama Administration’s Department of Labor issued a rule in May that requires employers to disclose that they are hiring or seeking advice from consultants in fighting union organizing campaigns. Up until now, consultants could guide employers in creating anti-union materials and strategies as long as they did not contact employees.

The Teamsters Union applauded the decision while the National Association of Manufacturers objected to the decision.

The ruling is on hold, however, because a Texas judge blocked the ruling’s enforcement, to which the Labor Department filed an appeal at the end of August.

7. **NLRB broadens definition of ‘Community of Interest’ in union elections**

In November 2015, the Obama Administration’s NLRB ruled that maintenance workers at the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tenn., could bargain as a unit with production workers because they qualify as a “community of interest.”

The workers voted to join the United Autoworkers union. Volkswagen is attempting to invalidate that election.

8. **New OSHA Regulations on Silica Dust**

Last year, the Obama Administration’s OSHA issued a new rule to protect workers in industries like brick manufacturing, foundries and hydraulic fracking from silica exposure, which can cause lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other conditions. The new rule tightened up

regulations from 1971.

According to OSHA, about 2.3 million workers face exposure to respirable crystalline silica in their workplaces. Most employers can limit harmful dust exposure by using equipment that is widely available - generally using water to keep dust from getting into the air - or a ventilation system to capture dust where it is created.

9. New OSHA injury and illness data collection could make confidential information public

The Obama Administration's OSHA issued a final rule on May 11 that calls for more data collection on employee injury and illness.

"The new rule will require many employers to electronically submit information about workplace injuries and illnesses to the government, and OSHA has announced it intends to post this data on its public website," EHS Today reports.

The business community believes that this new requirement will force companies to publicly reveal confidential business

details that had in the past been considered privileged and confidential.

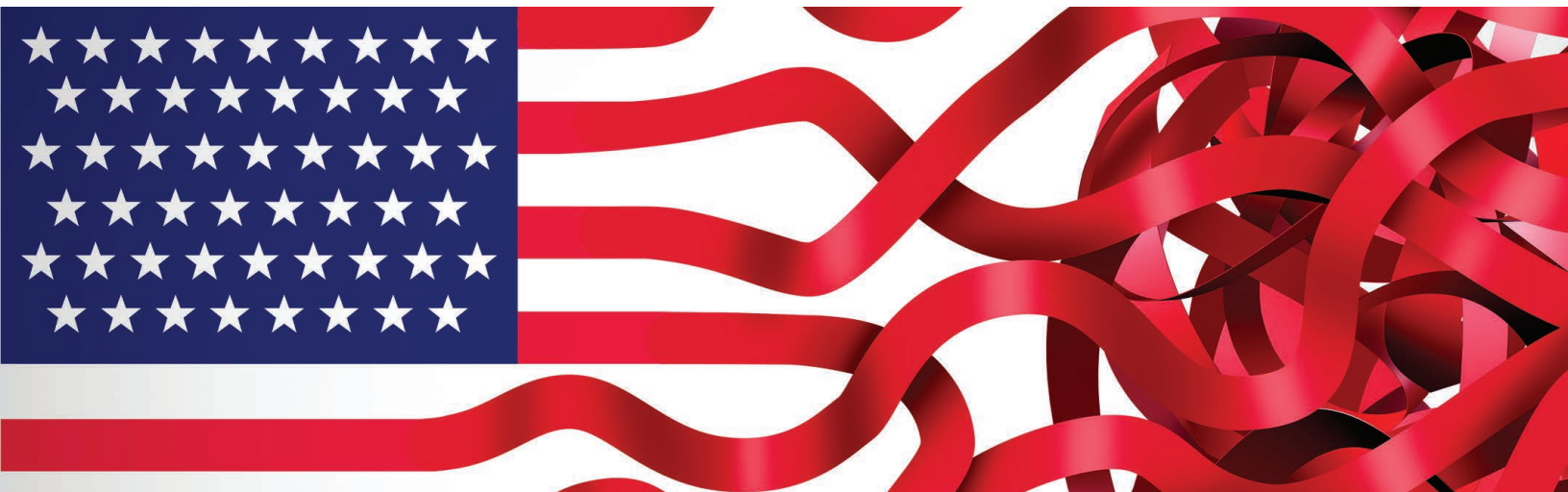
"It also will give undo access to business processes to competitors, plaintiffs' lawyers, community activists and union organizers for use against the company," EHS Today writes. "Finally, there is serious concern that the new rule places an excessive burden on employers while lacking statutory authority."

10. New Executive Order places Closer Watch on Labor Rule-Breakers

President Obama signed Executive Order 13673, which places employers that violated labor laws in the past under new, tighter scrutiny before being awarded federal contracts.

The Fair Pay and Safe Workplace rules causes employers to take proper steps to report and correct past violations in order to be considered for contracts with the federal government.

The National Association of Manufacturers and Industry Week provided basic information to the News Bulletin on federal law changes.



3 NEW STATE LAWS

Three new changes in Illinois labor law passed the Illinois General Assembly and were signed into law by Governor Rauner.

1. Companies employing 50 or more must now allow 10 days of unpaid leave for bereavement after the death of an employee's child.
2. In one of the nation's most expansive laws of its type, Illinois' smallest employers must now allow up to 4 weeks of unpaid leave per year if an employee is the victim of domestic or sexual violence. Current law requires companies with 50 or more employees to allow 12 weeks and employers with 15 to 49 employees to allow 8 weeks. These changes take effect on January 1, 2017.

3. If an employer provides paid time off for an employee being sick, that time must now also be allowed to apply to caring for a sick child, spouse or parent. The law goes into effect January 1, 2017.

TMA opposed these measures until amendments were adopted that reduced their impact on our members, said TMA lobbyist Jay Shattuck.





MIKE O'CONNOR

PRESIDENT, INNOVATIVE COMPONENTS, INC.

How a Wobbly Lawnmower Knob and Good Old American Ingenuity Led to a Successful Business

By Fran Eaton

American ingenuity emerges more often than not when a problem needs a solution. Case in point: Innovative Components, Inc. started 23 years ago when founder Mike O'Connor faced a frustrating issue with his lawnmower.

"As a young single guy, I didn't cut my grass too often. One day when I got into the really high grass, my lawnmower started vibrating and one of the two knobs halfway down the handlebar fell off, into the high grass," O'Connor told TMA News Bulletin during a recent visit.

O'Connor said he searched and searched for the lost knob, but didn't find it until soon after, when he ran over the knob, ruining it and the lawnmower blade.

It was then that a thought crossed his mind that led to a new product and a new business: "Why can't they make plastic knobs that don't vibrate loose on lawnmowers?"

O'Connor's next thought was, "Wait a minute, we make things that go on helicopters and fighter jets that vibrate and don't fall loose. Of course we can make knobs that don't fall off lawnmowers. No one's thought of it yet!"

O'Connor went back to work and in about five minutes with the help of an engineer, came up a design that worked.

Within nine months, the knobs reached one million in sales, and soon after, O'Connor launched Innovative Components, Inc., a company that now makes millions of lawn and garden tool parts.

"That's a lot of knobs," O'Connor said. "We simply used technology in the defense industry and applied it to lawnmowers. Today, as far as we know, we're the number one manufacturer of plastic knobs in North America."

Before starting the now 100-employee company, O'Connor graduated from Notre Dame with a business degree and then earned an MBA from the University of Chicago. He grew up in Elkhart, Indiana, where his father owned and ran a mobile home manufacturing company.

"Every kid in my high school that I hung out with had a dad that worked in manufacturing, and most of them ran the companies," he said. "I was naturally drawn to starting my own company."

O'Connor started Innovative Components in 1992, sharing a space in Long Grove, Illinois with a tool & die maker, before moving to Arlington Heights and finally, Schaumburg 20 years ago. Innovative Components' current facility is 25,000 square feet, with another location purchased ten years ago in Costa Rica.

"We were looking to reduce labor costs, and I didn't want to do what everyone else was doing – at the time, sending work to China," O'Connor said.

India's product quality didn't pass muster and Mexico's policies were not business-friendly, he said. Costa Rica's were ideal.

"I found a country that had about 98 percent literacy, free education, free health care. Labor unions are against the law. Ownership of property is virtually identical to the United States. Central time zone, and two days from Miami by boat for short lead times," he said. "And virtually everybody under the age of 25 speaks English. Yet labor rates are similar to China."

Another change over the years is that Innovative Components is nearly completely green, environmentally-friendly. Almost all of their products are made with polypropylene made from recycled plastic parts, including automotive battery casings. Recycling companies grind the parts up into small flakes and use a process that creates



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purified pellets nearly identical to newly-created pellets.

"But we're saving the scrap plastic from landfills, and the materials cost less that gives us a competitive advantage," O'Connor said. "When we first started, recycled material was very difficult to use. It wasn't consistent, had impurities and we had to design our tooling in proprietary ways to take advantage of the materials."

Overall, things are looking very good for O'Connor and Innovative Components.

"We're definitely in the Golden Age of manufacturing now, our productivity is just so high," O'Connor said. The United States is the world leader in petroleum-based products and plastics manufacturing is at high levels – leading to re-sourcing, especially of small-lot orders with lower levels of inventories.

As with most manufacturers, O'Connor says the future

holds challenges of keeping up with technology advances and finding people trained to handle those changes.

Innovative Components hosts an intern program for high schoolers and an apprentice program with Harper College for college-age students, which is augmented by TMA courses.

Seeing young people succeed is especially satisfying for O'Connor, he says.

"Sometimes people start with us when they're sixteen or seventeen, and they're still with us 15 years later, having tremendous success. They've gotten married, had kids, bought houses – they're having financial success, personal success. I think that's pretty satisfying."

O'Connor is married with two adult age children.

Innovative Components is located at 1050 National Parkway in Schaumburg and on the web at www.knobsource.com. ●

THANK YOU

TMA PAC CONTRIBUTORS | 2016

TMA invested over \$109,000 in the 2016 election cycle. The TMA Board of Directors and Government Relations Committee thank the following companies for their generous support of TMA's PAC and advocacy efforts.

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tma | october calendar sponsor

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NOV 2

Ops/Plant Managers Peer Group

Join fellow Operations/Plant Managers to discuss managerial issues and concerns in an open forum. This month's topic: How to Survive an OSHA Audit.
TIME: 11:30am - 1:30pm
COST: Free
LOCATION: TMA Schaumburg

NOV 4

Christians in Manufacturing 41st Annual Breakfast

TMA's 41st Annual Christians in Manufacturing Breakfast will feature special guest speakers Michelle Johnson and Anthony Johnson who are Exec. Director and Youth Supervisor of Harambee Chicago - a job-training ministry that teaches the skill of tuckpointing to urban youth.
TIME: 7:30am - 10:30am
COST: \$35/person | \$250 for table of 8
LOCATION: Bloomingdale, IL

NOV 9

TMA Fall Business Conference

This half-day program is for manufacturers who want to discover the tools for success, create a positive and safe work environment, and make valuable business decisions. Details on breakout sessions can be found online at the TMA website (www.tmaillinois.org).
TIME: 12:30pm - 7:30pm
COST: \$35 ~ \$60 ~ \$75 (see pricing online)
LOCATION: Hoffman Estates, IL



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West Chicago, IL
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Burr Ridge, IL
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Westchester, IL
www.wellsfargo.com



My Fellow Manufacturers:

I recently had published in MetalForming magazine a response to a reader who wrote:

"Manufacturing has been in a decline or recession... with everything made overseas and wages stagnant in manufacturing. Who can make a living in this industry anymore?"

Personally, I see this from an entirely different perspective, and here's why: My family owns a metal-stamping company located just outside of Chicago. We've been in business for three generations, since 1941, and like many others in our industry we are struggling. However, we are not struggling to find customers; we are struggling to find skilled workers to fill job opportunities —positions such as tool and diemakers, designers, quality technicians and press operators. Filling current job openings with this degree of qualification is not easy. However, I know that when candidates entering the workforce choose careers in manufacturing, we can provide them with the financial backing to have excellent lifestyles. This is not something that is widely known by the general public or by those entering the workforce.

We've Recovered from the Downturn

For a time in the 2000s, it was scary to be in manufacturing. With occurrences like 9/11, the emergence of China as a large manufacturing nation and the great recession of 2008, U.S. manufacturing surely was on the decline. Today's landscape is much different, however. The economy has stabilized and many sectors, including automotive, have recovered. Most importantly, for suppliers like us, large OEMs are finding out that cheaper is not always better. These companies have begun to source their manufacturing

WANTED: SKILLED LABOR

locally, bringing manufacturing jobs back to the United States.

As demand for manufacturing in the United States grows, so does job creation. Basic economics will tell you that if demand outweighs supply, the value of the current supply will increase. We are seeing manufacturing jobs created without skilled labor to support the growth, and the skilled labor that does exist has experienced a sizable increase in compensation.

Further, referencing the letter to the editor again, I respectfully disagree that manufacturing does not offer career paths. Manufacturing creates wealth, and supplies value-added goods and services to markets throughout the world. Yet, as an industry we have done a horrendous job promoting careers in manufacturing. We have allowed people to hold a negative perception of careers in manufacturing, instead of dispelling myths by sharing truths.

With today's global standards and expectations, we no longer are a "dirty, grungy, oily" operation. Manufacturers have adopted lean and 5S principals, strived to achieve zero defects, and instilled continuous improvement in their culture, all while keeping safety the number-one priority. Manufacturing companies also work with advanced technologies such as robotics and automated equipment that require highly skilled operators. In return, these employees now have secure careers. How then do we change the perception of manufacturing careers? Here are some ideas:

Network—Getting proactively involved in communities, schools and trade associations such as PMA, and similar local organizations, is the place to start. Not only am I the president of Wiegel Tool Works (WTW) and vice chairman of the Technology & Manufacturing Association (TMA), I also serve on the TMA Education Foundation, which works to promote careers in manufacturing in local high schools and colleges. Together we brainstorm ideas and form committees to help resolve the issues we all face. Networking events and committees are vital to our overall success in manufacturing in our local areas. The TMA Education Foundation, founded 25 years ago, connects businesses with high schools and colleges to promote manufacturing careers. We generate funding and create pathways to careers in manufacturing. The Foundation also has contributed to our local training center, providing funding for manufacturing equipment including CNC machining centers and lathes.

Recruit—Recruiting is key to maintaining a healthy balance of employees within our businesses. Since we face a crisis in skilled-labor supply, it is important that we become more involved in recruiting through our local schools. I have donated to local scholarship funds for my alma mater, Northern Illinois

University, the TMA Education Foundation and Harper College to promote careers in manufacturing. Through these programs, we can bring students in for internships so that they can gain hands-on experience and consider career options. I also have given presentations to local business leaders and graduating classes, and have hosted open houses to provide students, parents, instructors and guidance counselors an opportunity to view world-class manufacturing and help recruit our future employees.

Train—While challenging, training is critical to maintaining a consistent flow of skilled labor. No matter what size the company, a robust, certified training program is essential, not only for consistency but for attracting new applicants. The fundamental push for today's graduating high-school students is to head straight for college. This may be appropriate for some, but not for all.

In 2011, WTW established a U.S. Department of Labor-certified apprenticeship-training program for tool and die making. With TMA's help, we established a training program that comprises 10,000 hours of learning. At the end of the program, apprentices become journeymen tool and die makers and are provided with certificates of completion from the Department of Labor. This recruiting tool attracts a lot of talent to WTW.

Let's Turn the Tide

Look around your plant and analyze your workforce. I bet you'll observe that 40 to 50 percent of your highly skilled labor force is part of the baby-boom generation, projected to retire in the next 4 to 7 years. If we don't look ahead and address this threat to our industry, we are doomed. We must educate the marketplace on the opportunities that careers in manufacturing can provide to the next generation entering the workforce.

Manufacturing is alive and well, but a crisis looms. My advice: Visit with high schools and local colleges, and sell manufacturing. Open your plants to students, parents, teachers and guidance counselors, and educate them on what manufacturing is all about.

Let's turn the tide and tell the market who we are and what we do, rather than allowing the market to tell us what they think we are! •

Article first published in MetalForming Magazine

Aaron Wiegel is vice chairman of TMA and president of Wiegel Tool Works, Inc., a precision stamper specializing in electrical automotive tight-tolerance terminals, complex lead frames and busbars.

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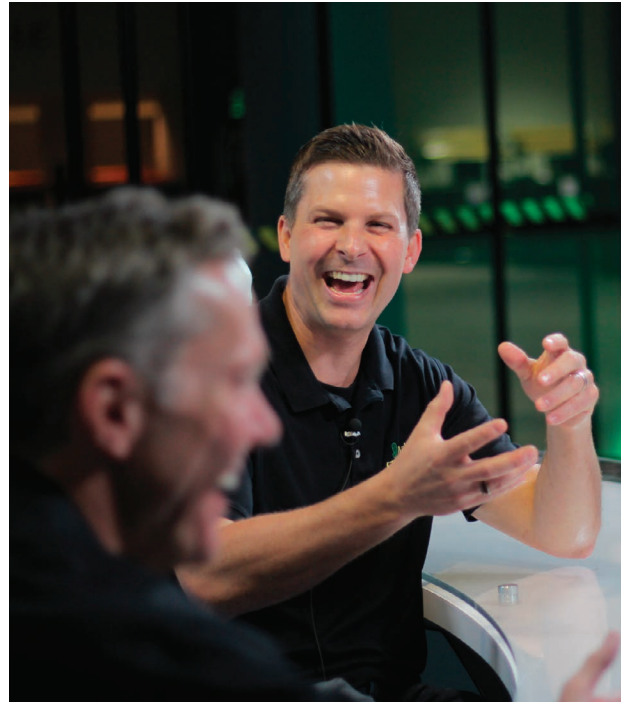
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TMA Directors - Live From IMTS



The podcast “Making Chips” was among the many things to see at last month’s IMTS. TMA chairman Jim Carr and director Jason Zenger recorded their show live from IMTS, where they were featured on IMTS TV and were broadcast from the Main Stage in the Grand Concourse at McCormick Place.



Manor Tool Hosts State Rep. McAuliffe



Manor Tool President Tom Simeone (right) hosted State Rep. Michael McAuliffe (center), along with Manor Tool VP Ken Galeno (left). Rep. McAuliffe was presented a check from the TMA PAC.

“Not only the wealth, but the independence and security of a country, appear to be materially connected with the prosperity of manufacturers. Every nation, with a view to those great objects, ought to endeavor to possess within itself all the essentials of a national supply. These comprise the means of subsistence, habitation, clothing and defense.”

**Report on Manufactures, 1791,
Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of
the Treasury**



TECHNOLOGY & MANUFACTURING ASSOCIATION
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