



The Center to Advance Manufacturing Monthly News

December 2024

Dear Associates,

This past year has been a remarkable period of growth and success for the Center to Advance Manufacturing, highlighted by meaningful achievements and impactful collaborations. Our progress is a direct result of the dedication of our staff and the strong partnerships we've built with professionals across industry, education, economic development, and government. As we look ahead to 2025, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing manufacturing and fostering growth in our region. With this in mind, we've been diligently planning several key initiatives to build upon this momentum for the year ahead. I'd like to take a moment to highlight some of our key plans for 2025.

Workforce training, especially upskilling, is a critical focus for manufacturers. However, it often takes a backseat to day-to-day operational demands, which can delay progress in this essential area. To address this challenge, the Center will introduce a comprehensive tool in 2025 designed to help manufacturers identify training needs, develop a structured process for upskilling employees, and align with local, state, and federal funding opportunities. This tool will also ensure our training providers have the resources needed to meet industry demands, while implementing a system to track and measure outcomes. By enabling companies to plan their training needs over a 12-month period, this initiative promotes a proactive and strategic approach to workforce development.

The Center will continue hosting webinars in 2025, aiming to deliver six sessions throughout the year. Our first webinar, scheduled for late January, will offer an introduction to artificial intelligence for manufacturers. Additionally, we plan to complement each webinar with an in-person meeting the following month to provide an opportunity to explore the topic in greater depth. All webinars are free and available for on-demand viewing. You can also revisit our 2024 webinars by visiting our website [here](#).

As the network interface between industry and our education partners, we will continue offering engagement opportunities through legislative and manufacturer roundtables, in-person events, company and campus visits, and our annual summit. With the extensive resources of Bowling Green State University, Owens Community College, and the University of Findlay, we aim to increase our visibility and impact even further in 2025.

For nearly a year, the Center has been collaborating with the Center for Automotive Research on a study focused on Northwest Ohio's automotive sector. In early 2025, we will begin sharing the findings with our stakeholders. This study will provide the Center and the region with valuable data and insights to strengthen one of the most critical sectors of our economy—the automotive industry. As the industry undergoes transformative shifts in policy, operations, structure, and workforce, it is essential to position ourselves to retain and grow the 230 automotive companies that call Northwest Ohio home.

I hope you can also look back on 2024 as a successful year, find time to enjoy the company of family and friends in the coming weeks, and feel prepared for an exciting and productive 2025.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'T. R. Mayle'.

Tim Mayle
Executive Director
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Fulton County Economic Development Quarterly Meeting

Center Workforce Training Coordinator, Jeri Steinbrook, recently attended the Fulton County Economic Development Quarterly Meeting, which also served as their holiday event. The gathering took place at Sauder’s Village—a cherished local business in Fulton County.

This event provided an excellent opportunity to deepen the Center’s understanding of the Fulton County region and strengthen connections with local businesses. Matt Gilroy, Economic Development Director (*pictured below*), delivered an insightful overview of the area, followed by introductions from attendees, fostering meaningful collaborations to support regional growth.



Van Wert County Business Advisory Council Meeting

Steinbrook also attended the Van Wert Business Advisory Council Meeting at Vantage Career Center, where discussions centered on programs and events aimed at preparing students to be job-ready upon graduation. During the meeting, Jeri presented an overview of the Center, highlighting our mission and the resources we offer to manufacturers in the region.

The conversation also touched on Ohio TechCred, with recommendations for the Center to assist businesses in navigating the application process. The meeting provided a valuable opportunity for the Center to share how we can contribute to workforce development and bolster local manufacturing efforts in the Van Wert community.



Van Wert Economic Development Workforce Development Manager, Amanda Miller introduced Jeri Steinbrook for a presentation on the Center to Advance Manufacturing at their December Business Advisory Council meeting.

Site Visits

GROB Systems, Inc.

Center staff, Tim Mayle and Jeri Steinbrook, along with Bowling Green State University College of Technology, Architecture and Applied Engineering Dean Wael Mokhtar and School of Engineering Director, MD Sarder, had the opportunity to visit GROB Systems, Inc in Bluffton.

With e-mobility rapidly expanding—particularly in electric motors, batteries, and fuel cells— GROB continues to lead as a global force in advanced manufacturing. This growth presents an incredible opportunity for collaboration between higher education and industry. BGSU’s Robotics Engineering, Systems Engineering Electronics and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering programs offer faculty, staff, and students as valuable resources. The Center is eager to align these assets with GROB to support their advancements and drive innovation.





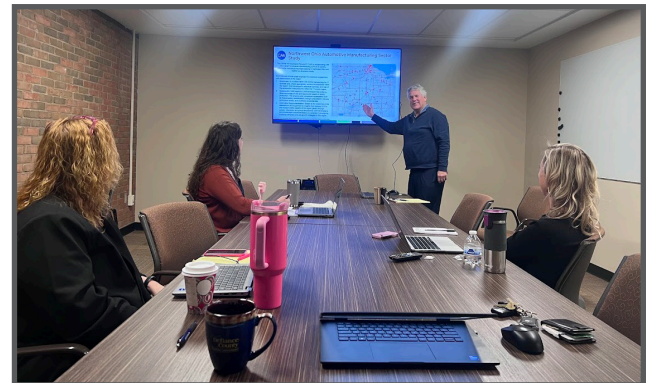
Lightcast Conference

Center Program Manager, Ford Weber, attended the Ohio Future-Ready Workforce Summit in Columbus sponsored by Lightcast, JobsOhio, Work Shift, and Columbus State Community College. The Summit included a presentation by Lightcast's Sr. Labor Economist, Ron Hetrick, on Lightcast's recently published study of the workforce demographic crisis "The Rising Storm," as well as several panel discussions (pictured left), including moderator Chris Laney, VP Social Impact, Lightcast; John Trott, Executive Director, Greater Ohio Workforce Board; David Zak, President & CEO, Ohio Economic Development Association; and Paul Fain, Cofounder, Work Shift.

CAR Regional Automotive Study

The Center is working with the Center for Automotive Research (CAR) to conduct a study of the automotive manufacturing sector in the 17 counties comprising the RGP service territory in Northwest Ohio.

The study consists of 3 phases: inventory, assessment, and actionable recommendations. We are currently in phase 3 and reviewing drafts of the actionable recommendations from the Center for Automotive Research's analysis. We anticipate that we will be able to share the results with the region in early 2025.



Ford Weber presented the first draft of the study results to Center staff at a recent meeting.



CIFT Strategic Marketing Manager, Todd Underwood and Director of Manufacturing, Troy Wildermuth pictured with Mayle and Center Marketing Projects Manager, Kassie Cooper.

CIFT

Center staff visited CIFT to discuss how we can work together to better support manufacturers in the region. As the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) office for Northwest Ohio, CIFT fosters innovation and growth in the food processing, agricultural, and manufacturing industries by offering resources such as product development, sustainability support, and more. The meeting provided an opportunity to explore how our unique strengths can align to create even greater opportunities for manufacturers to thrive.

Holiday Celebration

Center staff marked the season with a festive holiday lunch, joined by several colleagues from the BGSU Center for Regional Development (CRD) (pictured right). Sharing an office with CRD has fostered a strong partnership, allowing us to collaborate on impactful initiatives such as the Glass Innovation Hub, BGSU Engineering Microcredentials, Ohio TechCred, and IMAP. CRD's expertise in community development and data analysis makes them an invaluable neighbor and partner.





Owens Community College Training Opportunities

Interested in upskilling your workforce? Check out these technical training courses that Owens Community College will be hosting in the near future!



Intro to Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) Operator

This course is recommended for students who have a background in electrical work and would like to learn basic PLC operation. Start date: February 13, 2025

FANUC Robotics Training

This course offers hands-on training with lecture, including how to write a program from scratch to how to recover a robot from common fault situations. The course is geared towards students who have zero robot experience and those with a basic understanding. Start date: March 13, 2025



Class A CDL Training

This course features small class sizes and individualized instruction. Certified by the State of Ohio, the program includes 160 total course hours—40 hours of classroom learning and 120 hours of hands-on training behind the wheel of fully equipped big rigs. Classes are taught by licensed CDL instructors committed to preparing students for successful careers in trucking. Start date: Several options available

For full class details and to register, click [here](#).

Bowling Green State University School of Engineering Seeking Capstone Industry Partner Proposals

The School of Engineering at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) is currently inviting industry partners to submit capstone design project proposals for the upcoming spring semester. This initiative provides an excellent opportunity to collaborate with BGSU senior students.

Each capstone design team, composed of 4-5 students from mechanical, electronics, robotics, and system engineering programs, will approach the project holistically, leveraging their interdisciplinary skills to develop innovative solutions. The teams will work on these industry challenges throughout the semester, culminating in a formal presentation of their solutions by Spring 2025. BGSU welcomes proposals from industry partners seeking fresh, creative solutions to engineering challenges.

For more information and to submit project details, click [here](#).



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