



The Center to Advance Manufacturing Monthly News

February 2025

Dear Associates,

In 2022, the Center to Advance Manufacturing was known as the Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics. While our name has changed, our commitment to logistics remains steadfast. We recognize the vital role that infrastructure and the movement of goods play in sustaining and strengthening our manufacturing economy and continue to engage in these initiatives.

This past month, the global discussion on tariff implementation has put logistics and the movement of products in the spotlight. Northwest Ohio is home to over 230 automotive companies that rely on global supply chains, particularly a large number of metals. Beyond the automotive industry, the region is also home to refineries, food processors, packaging companies, and many other industries that can leverage its logistical assets to mitigate risk and reduce costs.

Northwest Ohio is fortunate to have key infrastructure, including the Port of Toledo, Eugene F. Kranz Toledo Express Airport, and the CSX Intermodal terminal in North Baltimore. In addition to these physical assets, the region is home to Foreign Trade Zones 8 and 151 operated by the [Toledo Port Authority](#) and [Findlay Hancock County Economic Development](#), respectively. *Has your company reviewed its import costs and explored whether a Foreign Trade Zone could help reduce, defer, or eliminate duties?*

With the growth of e-commerce and increased manufacturing, our region will continue to see investments in distribution and logistics. This month, the Ohio Department of Transportation released its [Final Report](#) for the Strategic Transportation & Development Analysis, a comprehensive study examining statewide and regional demographics, economic development opportunities, transportation systems congestion risks, and future travel needs.

Ohio is well-positioned to lead in emerging technologies for material movement. In 2023 Joby selected Dayton for their first scaled aircraft production facility, and earlier this year [Anduril](#) announced a major investment in Pickaway County. As Advanced Air Mobility evolves, Northwest Ohio is poised for similar investments, supporting freight, medical, and ultimately, passenger transportation.

As the world becomes more interconnected, it is crucial for Northwest Ohio to fully leverage its logistics assets — including roads, air, water, and rail—to remain competitive. Additionally, our region is home to an exceptional talent pipeline of students specializing in supply chain and logistics. I encourage you to engage with these students through internships, co-ops, and research projects led by experienced faculty.

Finally, the data section of this month's newsletter (see *page 4*) focuses on the impact of tariffs, as reported by S&P Global.

On a personal note, this will be my last newsletter as the Center's Executive Director. It has been a privilege to work with so many dedicated people in Northwest Ohio including staff, faculty, students, economic developers, government officials, and business leaders. I look forward to seeing you all soon.

While logistics may no longer be in our name, it remains deeply embedded in the Center's and Northwest Ohio's DNA.



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

Tim Mayle
Executive Director
419-788-0490



Whirlpool Plant Tours

In early February, Center staff had the opportunity to visit two Whirlpool plants — each for a unique and impactful purpose.

At the Findlay plant, we brought together representatives from our partner schools — Bowling Green State University (BGSU), Owens Community College (OCC), and the University of Findlay (UF) — to collaborate on strategies for supporting Whirlpool’s workforce needs. Our discussions focused on developing key competencies in leadership, problem-solving, industrial engineering, project management, and technical skills, ensuring that education aligns with industry demands to prepare the next generation of manufacturing professionals.

At the Ottawa plant, our staff toured the facility alongside the Regional Growth Partnership (RGP) to witness Whirlpool’s revolutionary new technology in action. A special thank you to the Putnam County Community Improvement Corporation (PCIC) for coordinating this visit.

We’re excited about the opportunities ahead and proud to collaborate with our industry and academic partners to make a lasting impact.



Top row: Whirlpool Engineering Mgr, John Elmlinger; UF AH Project Mgr, Tim Saltzman; OCC Findlay Dean, Brad Wood; Center ED, Tim Mayle; BGSU Assistant Professor, Zahabul Islam; UF Assoc. VP of Academic Affairs, Damon Osborne; BGSU Assoc. Professor, Chris Kluse; Whirlpool Sr. Director of Manufacturing, Renato Esteves; Bottom row: Whirlpool Director of Operations, Chad Inkrott; OCC Workforce & Economic Development ED, Charlene Page; Center Program Mgr, Ford Weber; UF AH Operations Mgr, David Copus; BGSU Assoc. Professor, Mohammed Abouheaf

Pictured: Center ED Tim Mayle; Center Workforce Training Coordinator, Jeri Steinbrook; PCIC Director, Amy Sealts; Whirlpool Senior Director of Process Transformation, Brent Schnipke; RGP VP of Project Management, Chase Eikenbary



Cleveland Cliffs Visit

The Center recently had the opportunity to visit Cleveland-Cliffs Inc.’s state-of-the-art Toledo plant, gaining insight into their advanced operations and workforce needs. We look forward to supporting their continued success by connecting them with students, facilitating upskilling opportunities, and exploring potential faculty partnerships.



Pictured: Center ED, Tim Mayle; Center Program Mgr, Ford Weber; Cleveland Cliffs Human Resources Mgr, Adrienne Longoria; Cleveland Cliffs Sr. Community Relations Representative, Cheri Pastula

BGSU Supply Chain Management Institute (SCMI) Dinner Meeting

Tim Mayle and Ford Weber attended the BGSU SCMI Dinner, an event dedicated to fostering connections between students and industry professionals.

The evening provided an excellent opportunity for company representatives to engage with students and alumni, share industry insights, and discuss career opportunities in supply chain management.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation by Ohio Logistics CEO, Chuck Bills, who shared his expertise and perspective on the evolving logistics industry.

Events like this reinforce the importance of collaboration between education and industry, helping to prepare the next generation of supply chain professionals.



Pictured: BGSU Professor and SCMI Director, Dr. Amelia Carr with SCMI Member, Ohio Logistics CEO, Chuck Bills as he shared best practices and insights with the audience.

Honda Heritage Center Tour

The Center had the opportunity to tour the Honda Heritage Center, thanks to an invitation from Honda. Workforce Partnership Lead Nathan Titus provided an insightful look into Honda’s rich manufacturing history and innovations.

Building strong relationships is key to supporting our regional manufacturers, and we were pleased to have our partners from the All Hazards Training Center at The University of Findlay and Findlay Hancock County Economic Development join us for this visit. These experiences help us stay connected to industry leaders and strengthen collaborations that drive manufacturing forward.

Pictured: Honda Workforce Partnership Lead, Nathan Titus; UF AH Sr. Director, John Kayser; Center ED, Tim Mayle; Findlay Hancock Economic Development Director, Chris Keller; Center Workforce Training Coordinator, Jeri Steinbrook; Center Program Mgr, Ford Weber

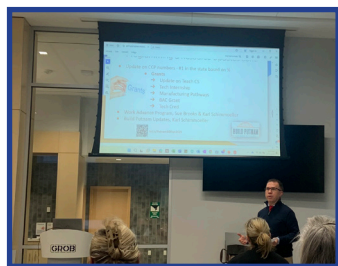


Strengthening Workforce Development Through Business Advisory Councils

We are pleased to share that Jeri Steinbrook, Workforce Training Coordinator, is joining several Business Advisory Councils (BACs) across the region. These councils play a vital role in bridging the gap between education and industry, ensuring that students develop the critical skills needed for success in today's workforce.

Through these partnerships, BACs provide guidance to school districts on economic changes, job market opportunities, and the evolving skills required by employers. They work to align curriculum with industry needs, embed essential employment and life skills, and foster collaborations between education, business, and community organizations. These efforts help cultivate a sustainable, well-trained workforce, ensuring that students are prepared for careers or further education.

By actively participating in these councils, Jeri and the Center continue to support the development of a strong talent pipeline that benefits both students and regional manufacturers. We continue to make strides alongside our partners to grow and retain a high-quality workforce that drives economic success in our communities.



Steinbrook recently attended the Putnam County ESC Business Advisory Council meeting, hosted at GROB Systems, Inc. The meeting featured presentations from several speakers, including Workforce Partnership of Putnam County Director Karl Schimmoeller (pictured).

Expanding Regional Partnerships Through Innovation

The Center is strengthening its impact in the region through innovative collaborations, recently entering into agreements with two companies on projects focused on digital transformation and automation. These initiatives aim to enhance operational efficiency and competitiveness by leveraging cutting-edge technologies.

In digital transformation, projects will explore AI applications for office productivity and manufacturing, including natural language processing for streamlining administrative tasks, as well as predictive maintenance, quality control, and supply chain optimization in manufacturing. These advancements will help companies improve decision-making, reduce downtime, and optimize resources.

On the automation front, efforts will focus on identifying inefficiencies in production, implementing scalable automation solutions, and driving continuous improvement. By developing data-driven models, companies can make strategic decisions that enhance productivity, sustain growth, and drive economic benefits.

These challenges reflect a broader industry shift toward smart manufacturing and automation. Rising costs, labor shortages, and the increasing demand for skilled technical workers are driving companies to invest in advanced manufacturing solutions. By partnering with regional companies on AI-driven processes, automation strategies, and digital transformation initiatives, the Center is actively working to bridge these gaps and equip manufacturers with the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in an evolving industry.

Ohio TechCred - Apply in March

Ohio's TechCred Program gives employers the chance to upskill current and future employees in today's tech-infused economy. Businesses of all sizes, from any industry, are eligible for up to \$30,000 per round. Employers who submit successful applications will be reimbursed up to \$2,000 per credential when current or prospective employees complete eligible technology-focused credentials. Training must be completed within 12 months from the award date.



In late 2024, the Center hosted a webinar featuring presenters from the Ohio Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, providing an overview of TechCred and a question-and-answer session. To view a recording of the webinar, click [here](#).

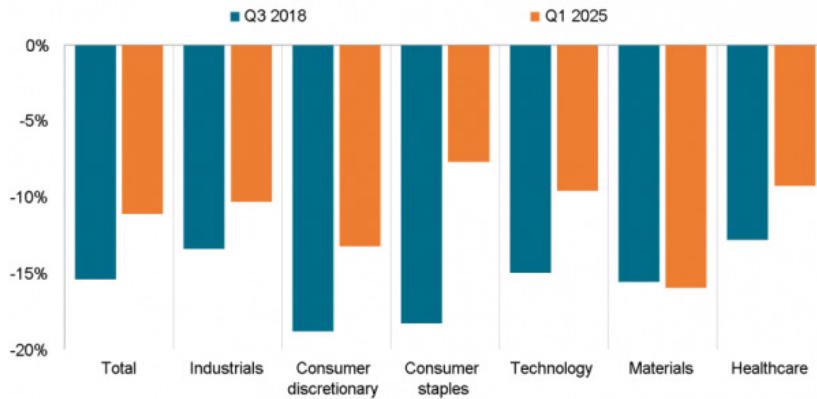
The next application round for TechCred will run from March 3 through March 31. Need assistance applying? Contact our Workforce Training Coordinator, Jeri Steinbrook!

For full program details, click [here](#).

Supply Chain Data Analysis

Worries about tariffs less extreme than prior tariff implementation period

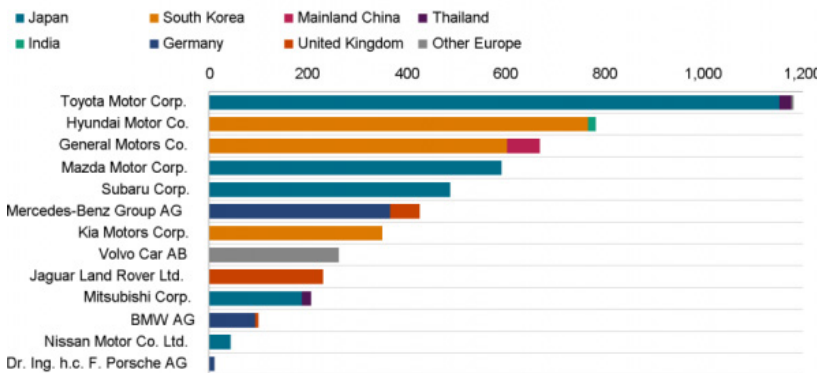
Balance of positive and negative mentions of 'tariffs' in corporate earnings calls



Tariffs have dominated news headlines, prompting executives to closely monitor and assess their potential impact on business operations. While discussions on corporate earnings calls acknowledge the concerns, the tone has been less extreme compared to 2018 during the first Trump administration. Speculation suggests that this administration may take a more targeted approach, rather than implementing a blanket 25% tariff.

Many car firms only have one location center outside North America for US sales

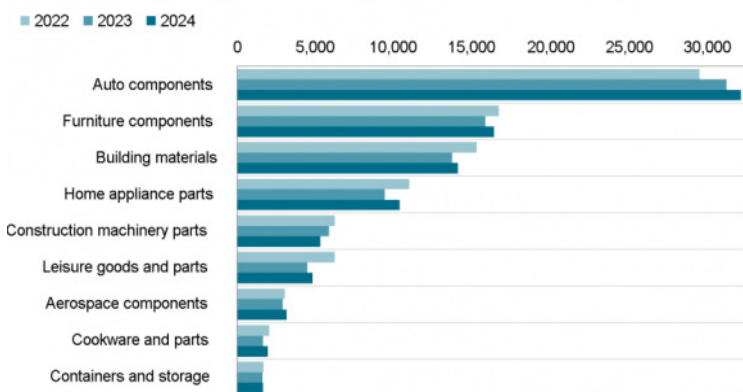
US imports of passenger vehicles, thousand metric tons



The United States imports a significant number of passenger vehicles each year, with Japan and South Korea being the top two sources. Imposing tariffs could have a substantial impact on OEMs that rely heavily on vehicle imports to serve the U.S. market.

US manufacturers face tough choices, particularly in autos

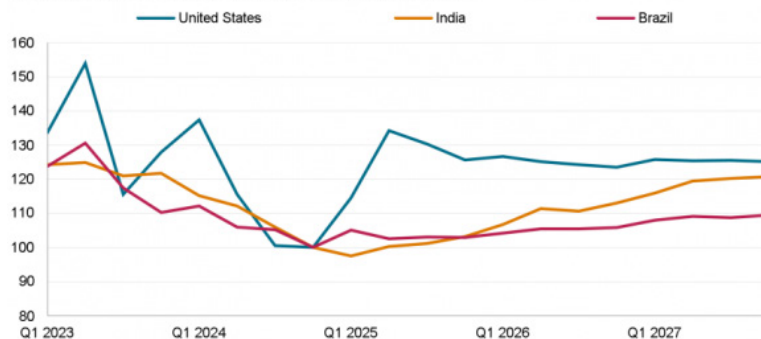
Face value of US imports of products covered by Section 232 tariff extension, US\$M



The automotive industry has been significantly impacted by the steel and aluminum tariffs first imposed in March 2018. Data shows that over the past three years, the total value of U.S. imported auto products subject to Section 232 tariffs has continued to rise. The Trump administration has signaled that these tariffs will remain in place.

US steel prices expected to solidify higher

Hot-rolled coil spot price, US\$ per metric ton; indexed, 100 = Q4 2024



U.S. steel prices have been volatile in recent years, but they are expected to stabilize in the coming years. This stabilization would be a welcome development for Northwest Ohio industries, providing more predictability for pricing and contracts.



JOIN US FOR A DEEP DIVE DISCUSSION FEATURING:

INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION

THURSDAY, MARCH 6
2 PM - 4 PM AT BGSU



LUNCH & LEARN WEBINAR
NORTHWEST OHIO AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY STUDY

Monday, March 31

12:00 PM



Following the strong interest in our recent webinar, *Transforming Manufacturing with Intelligent Automation*, we're excited to host an in-person deep dive session on AI, machine learning, and autonomous systems in manufacturing on Thursday, March 6, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM at Bowling Green State University.

Why attend?

- Gain insights into predictive maintenance, quality control, supply chain optimization, robotics, and more
- Engage in discussions with industry and academic experts
- Network with peers who are exploring automation solutions

This is a great opportunity to take the next step in understanding how intelligent automation can enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and improve decision-making in manufacturing.

Space is limited, secure your spot [here](#).

Join us for the rollout of our Northwest Ohio Automotive Manufacturing Study!

Conducted in partnership with the Center for Automotive Research, this study offers valuable insights into the trends, challenges, needs, and opportunities shaping the region's automotive industry.

This one-hour virtual session, led by the Center's Program Manager, Ford Weber, will take a comprehensive look at our study's results, including:

- Northwest Ohio's Automotive Manufacturing Landscape
- Industry and Economic Development Challenges
- Workforce and Talent Needs

Register today [here!](#)

Partner Events

At the Center, we highly value our partnerships with organizations that support the growth and innovation of the industries we serve. As part of our commitment to keeping you informed, we're excited to share upcoming events from our partners that provide valuable insights and opportunities for professionals in manufacturing, economic development, and higher education.

CLA Connect Manufacturing Happy Hour

Thursday, March 6, 5 - 8 PM
Inside the Five, Toledo
Find event details [here](#)

Regional Growth Partnership Annual Meeting

Thursday, March 13, 9 - 11 AM
The Pinnacle, Maumee
Find event details [here](#)

Center for Regional Development State of the Region

Thursday, March 27, 8 AM - 12 PM
BGSU Lenhart Grand Ballroom, Bowling Green
Find event details [here](#)

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