

## In This Issue

**Featured Member**

**Upcoming Events**

**Did You Know?**

**CMMA New Member Drive**

**US Manufacturing Needs a Brand Makeover**

## Welcome New Members!

**City of St. Cloud Economic Development**

**Craft Pattern & Mold Inc.**

**Cutting Edge Sales Solutions**

**Granite-Tops**

**Greg Newcomb**

**Lyon Contracting/ITS**

**Midwest Inbound Transport**

**Pro Staff**

**W Gohman Construction**

**William J Molitor**

## Letter From Les

Welcome fall and all the changes on the way! We've enjoyed a great summer and the harvest is good in central Minnesota. Your CMMA continues to be a thriving and growing organization keenly focused on the betterment of manufacturing and yielding bountiful reward for members, schools and communities.

I've been reviewing the recently released report jointly prepared by the Minnesota State College and University System, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and the Department of Employment and Economic Development. The information summarizes the outcomes of 44 statewide industry sector listening sessions that occurred this last April and May. In Manufacturing, 12 meetings were convened with over 400 attendees. Over half of the attendees represented business.

Findings revealed that with skilled workers in short supply, the manufacturing industry is moving toward automation and robotics thereby increasing the demand for qualified programmers, operators and maintenance specialists. Ongoing technological advancements within the industry create a strong need for ongoing incumbent worker training, not only for technical training but also for ongoing training in interpersonal communication. Overall, many employers find it difficult to attract entry-level applicants and leaders in the manufacturing industry are concerned about a high percentage of the workforce retiring over the next decade.

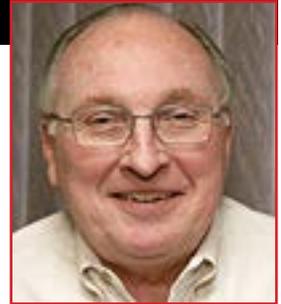
The report contains much more information on workforce issues, skills gaps and incumbent worker training needs that clearly point to the fact that the time is coming when manufacturers will need to re-build their workforce with qualified workers and unless we work together to get young people interested and support their efforts, we may be facing a serious shortage.

To be sure, education is critically important to the world of manufacturing. Without a trained workforce, manufacturing can't continue to grow and thrive in Central Minnesota. Partnering with school programs like Project Lead The Way ([www.mnpltw.org](http://www.mnpltw.org)), Robotics and career exploration are great ways that Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association reaches out to young people, their influencers and educators to get them interested and excited about pursuing a career in manufacturing. CMMA offers high schools teachers and counselors free membership to initiate and enhance collaboration.

I've been mentoring students in our area for many years and I personally get a kick out of it. I love working with young people who are eager to learn, and I enjoy feeling as though I may have some part in their future success. It only takes a small time commitment each month and the reward on both ends can be so great. There are many ways that you, too, can help young learners. Become a mentor to a child or a whole classroom, sponsor or mentor a club like the Granite City Gearheads ([granitecitygearheads.com](http://granitecitygearheads.com)), participate in the central Minnesota STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Summit in January or make a donation to help fund a scholarship.

Please contact me or any CMMA board member for more information on how you can help, there's lots of good work to be done and there's always room for you at the CMMA board and committee table!

CMMA is working hard to deliver membership value and to support Manufacturing in our great state. CMMA, working hard to make you proud!



## Featured Member: Viking Log Furniture

For over 30 years Viking Log Furniture has been manufacturing pine furniture, with an emphasis on rustic furniture styles for the last ten years. Located in St. Joseph MN, Viking Log Furniture ships to customers nationwide.

It all started in the garage for owner Mike Legatt, but has grown into a much larger production. Viking now has a 13,000 sq. foot shop where all of the furniture is built, along with a 13,000 sq. foot warehouse to store stock items.

Viking Log Furniture specializes in manufacturing Rustic Log, Barnwood and Hickory Log Furniture for any room in a home or cabin. Each piece of rustic furniture is built right here in Central Minnesota. The product line includes: bedroom furniture, bunk beds, rustic dining room furniture, pool tables, rustic style kitchen cabinets, and more.

Viking is a stocking manufacture - however the company builds a lot of custom orders as well. Whether the customer requests a different size bed to accommodate a special room or a custom designed TV stand - Viking Log Furniture can meet their needs. The company's most popular items are carried in stock and available for next-day shipment.

Viking Log Furniture has adapted to numerous changes throughout the years. Starting out in 1979, the company manufactured waterbeds. Around 1990 the product line expanded to include pine and hardwood futons. From there the company moved into rustic or log futon frames and eventually transitioned to more log furniture in 2002. More recently, Barnwood and Hickory Log Furniture were added to the rustic product line.

Just as the product line has evolved to adapt to the market, technology has evolved as well. CNC equipment helps make the manufacturing process more precise and cost effective. The CNC enabled Viking to get into the pool table industry by providing the capacity to build a high quality and precisely machined product that meets all the Billiard Congress of America Specifications. The CNC can machine the uni-body for a pool table to .005". The CNC is also used to machine logs for certain products, such as the track in each log for the futon mechanism. Along with the new technology, Viking Log Furniture still uses a lot of old world technology such as the hand drawknife.

The company invested in a Frequency Glue Machine to help build panels for table tops, furniture tops and drawer/door fronts. The glue machine speeds up the process of building each piece of furniture since the gluing process now can be done in a fraction of the time.



As a manufacture, Viking Log Furniture has taken risks and embraced change. The recent addition of Hickory Log Furniture presented some complications when production got underway. Because of the density of the hickory logs, some of the tooling had to be re-designed.

Viking ensures the best quality furniture by starting with quality raw materials that are kiln dried to reduce the moisture content in each log or timber. Because of the commitment to quality, the company offers a lifetime

warranty on all of its manufactured products.

Our employees are what truly make this company possible. Most of the employees have worked for the company for 20 years or more and have been self-taught. The entire staff is very devoted to the company and the work we do. Viking Log Furniture would not be where it is today without such a wonderful group of employees.

Viking Log Furniture can build anything rustic to fit your home, office or cabin. For more information, go to [www.vikinglogfurniture.com](http://www.vikinglogfurniture.com) or call 320-259-0909.



*Viking Log Furniture uses CNC to machine all of their Futon Arms.*

## Viking Log Furniture *Continued*



*Viking Log Furniture hand drawknife all of their log furniture to add a rustic look to each piece.*

## Upcoming Events

### Thursday November 29

CMMA General Meeting in Princeton, MN. Join us for a presentation by Perry Parendo, Perry's Solutions, Inc. about "R&D and Innovation." After the meeting enjoy a tour of Glenn Metalcraft.

### Thursday December 6

Holiday Party at Nick's Third Floor at D.B. Searles in St. Cloud, MN.

For full event listings and details, please visit the [Events page here](#). For questions or reservations contact LeeAnn Rostberg at [leeannr@runestone.net](mailto:leeannr@runestone.net).

Do you have suggestions for speakers or topics you'd like presented? Please contact Sandy Kashmark at [midwest@runestone.net](mailto:midwest@runestone.net).

## CMMA Calls for Nominations

Nominations are being accepted from members interested in serving on the CMMA Board of Directors. Nominations will be accepted through the close of the CMMA business meeting on the morning of November 29, 2012. CMMA's 12-member board has six positions up for election each year, with each director serving a two-year term beginning January 1. The owners/employees of any CMMA member in good standing are eligible to serve. Contact the CMMA office by November 29th to nominate yourself or a fellow member.

## Did You Know?

### Statewide Tour of Manufacturing reveals high tech, high wage jobs

Organizers were pleased to report strong support for the statewide Tour of Manufacturing event, that was scheduled during Minnesota Manufacturers' Week October 21 – 27, 2012. Modeled after the Tour of Homes, the event was designed to give parents, grandparents, youth, teachers and others a first-hand look at modern manufacturing facilities and underscore the high tech, high wage jobs that manufacturing has to offer. More than 50 companies opened their doors to the public throughout the week, including CMMA member Custom Welding & Metal Fab. Details are available at [www.tourofmanufacturingmn.com](http://www.tourofmanufacturingmn.com). CMMA was a co-sponsor of the statewide Tour of Manufacturing event.

### Dream It Do It Central Minnesota VEX Robotics Competition to be held in St. Cloud!

Designed for students age 12 and up, VEX Robotics is a small team robotics competition that requires teams to build a robot from a kit. The robots are then entered in competitions ... and the next world championship VEX competition will be held at River's Edge on March 2, 2013. CMMA recently voted to provide financial support for this event. We encourage financial and/or volunteer support from the membership as well. To learn more, go to [www.vexrobotics.com](http://www.vexrobotics.com).

### Post Manufacturing jobs on the CMMA website at no charge

CMMA now offers manufacturers the opportunity to post skilled trade, supervisory, and technical positions on the CMMA website – qualified jobs will be posted at no charge for 30 days.

### FREE Bridge-2-Manufacturing Classes starting in January at SCTCC.

Bridge-2-Manufacturing classes include math brush up, computer basics, and career planning. Following these courses, students will be tested to see if they meet the entrance criteria for free college classes beginning in March, including: blue print reading, technical math, forklift credential, OSHA 30, and manufacturing processes. Scholarships valued at \$6,000 are available to 30 people at no charge.

### Dream It Do It Goes Statewide

Tri-State Mfg. Association, 360° Center of Excellence, and several other partners have supported a Dream It Do It campaign in west central Minnesota since 2009. An expanded collaboration that includes CMMA, AMFA and MPMA has enabled the campaign to go statewide. Go to [www.dreamitdoitmn.com](http://www.dreamitdoitmn.com) to learn more.

## 2011 Member of the Year



We are pleased to announce Industrial Molded Rubber Products as the recipient of the 2011 CMMA Manufacturer of the Year award. Company owners Donn and Laura Nystedt were on hand to accept the award at a special gathering in August, along with several employees.

The CMMA Manufacturer of the Year award is a celebration of excellence in manufacturing in central Minnesota. Award criteria includes being an active member of CMMA, enhancing and adding value to the organization, and demonstrating innovation in manufacturing.



A cost effective way to reach a broad manufacturing audience.

Promote your product or service to AMFA, CMMA and TSMA for one annual fee.

To learn more, contact Sandy Kashmark at 800-654-5773 or [midwest@runestone.net](mailto:midwest@runestone.net)

## CMMA New Member Drive.

Help recruit new members to your association. From September 2012 through June 2013, CMMA is offering two incentives to get current members involved with growing the association.

**Monthly Drawing.** Each time a current member recruits a new CMMA member, the current member's name will go "in the hat" for a monthly drawing. Your name will stay in the hat until June (unless drawn), so the sooner you start recruiting, the better your odds of winning a prize!

**Save Money on Dues.** Any current member that recruits a new manufacturing member will receive a "dues credit" on their account equal to the value of dues paid by the new member. For example, if you recruit a manufacturer that joins at the \$200 level, your company will save \$200 on membership dues to CMMA.

**LASERSHOWS.**

**FIREWORKS.**

**ROLLERCOASTERS.**

THE ONE EVENT TO SEE THE MOST SPECTACULAR METAL FABRICATION TECHNOLOGY. **FABTECH 2012.**



North America's Largest Metal Forming, Fabricating, Welding and Finishing Event

November 12-14, 2012  
Las Vegas Convention Center  
**REGISTER NOW at**  
[fabtechexpo.com](http://fabtechexpo.com)



Scan this code to watch an exciting preview of FABTECH.

Follow us:



Cosponsors:



# US Manufacturing Needs a Brand Makeover

Contributed by: Eileen Markowitz, *Thomas Industrial Network*

When I was growing up, it seemed like everyone believed that U.S. manufacturers made the greatest products in the world. From our home appliances to our cars, we all chose Made in America products for their quality and their value. No other country put as much pride, innovation, and workmanship into their design, and looking elsewhere wasn't even an option. U.S. manufacturing was a flagship of our economy, and nothing could knock it from its pedestal -- or so we thought.

Of course, the sentiment has changed since then as the economy has grown more global, and countries like China compete on price. But the pendulum is swinging back -- or should I say forward -- as Made in America quality once again becomes a status symbol for consumers and a competitive advantage for manufacturers here at home.

My company recently conducted its annual [Industry Market Barometer®](#) survey of U.S. manufacturers on the growth and outlook of the industrial sector as well as strategies companies are employing to get there. The findings confirm this transformation.

In the end, we heard from more than 1,600 manufacturers, and nearly eight out of 10 of them indicated that they expect growth this year. By standing behind their Made in America quality, these manufacturers are even taking back business from the Chinese. They're borrowing a page from the playbook of The Rodon Group of Hatfield, Pennsylvania, an injection molder of small plastic parts. A few years ago, when they sensed Chinese competitors gaining ground, Rodon launched an online "Cheaper than China" campaign to focus on their American manufacturing values. Within two years, their sales jumped more than 30%. These companies never lost sight of the glory of American manufacturing, and now the world is coming to share their point of view.

Our research shows that U.S. manufacturers are entering new markets, expanding into new regions, and increasing their exports. With their gears fully in motion, American companies are looking to hire more workers to meet new market demand. And that's where this engine of economic growth suddenly starts to sputter. Our research supports what we are all seeing every day: Despite an unemployment rate of close to 8%, manufacturing jobs are going unfilled. Nearly half of our respondents want to bring in line workers, skilled trade workers, and engineers. But the people who are qualified for these jobs are either untrained, or uninterested.

This is a symptom of a larger problem. Despite the resurging interest in U.S. products, American manufacturing is in need of a brand makeover.

## The Changing Face of U.S. Manufacturing

While Americans are proud of the quality of our products, many have a far different perception of manufacturing jobs. They see manufacturing as "dead," lacking opportunities or challenges, and even as dirty or "undesirable" work. They're blind to the reality that today's manufacturing jobs blend design with technology and robotics, and many pay extremely well.

With shop classes disappearing and families and educators pushing students of all abilities toward a bachelor's degree, however, younger generations have no opportunity to be exposed to the rewards of a manufacturing career. Respondents to our survey are vocal about this issue. They stress the importance of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) curricula, along with support for technical and vocational schools. One of them notes that we must "get the message out that manufacturing isn't dead in the U.S.; it has just gone high-tech."

It's gratifying to hear from individuals like Tracy Tenpenny, vice president of sales and marketing with Tailored Label Products (TLP) in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. Tracy advocated for TLP's sponsorship of a program called Second Chance Partners, which helps high school students to gain manufacturing skills. Many of these students come from challenging backgrounds, and they are at risk of not finishing high school. Through Second Chance, they continue working toward their diplomas while beginning to learn a trade. TLP actually installed a classroom at their plant so that these students can continue their academics there for two hours a day. The rest of the time, they are working at TLP and other area manufacturers. TLP is not only introducing them to a new profession; the company has hired two of these students.

Rodon, too, has innovated to develop a solution. The company formed a consortium of about 50 local manufacturers. Together, these firms have approached two-year colleges and trade schools in their area, asking them to send graduates their way. Not only does this help Rodon and neighboring companies to grow; it's a competitive advantage for the schools, who are able to demonstrate a return on their training. In addition, consortium members are presenting at middle schools and high schools to ignite students' interest in manufacturing.

These are just two of many examples of manufacturers who are taking the initiative to help their industry make a comeback. Families, educators, associations, government, and businesses are all stepping up. We were gratified to endorse National Manufacturing Day, another wonderful example, with manufacturers opening their doors to students and their families, and associations offering insights and resources to aspiring and current manufacturers alike.

U.S. manufacturers, after all, have a passion for their industry. Eight out of 10 of those we surveyed would choose their industries all over again, and they want to share their enthusiasm with the next generation. Great things are possible when bright, ambitious young people have the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge to real-world applications, and contribute meaningfully to the growth of a company, a sector -- and ultimately the economic vitality of our nation. To engage this new generation, we must restore -- and elevate -- the U.S. manufacturing brand.