

# **NEW Manufacturing Alliance**

## **COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES**

### **July 30, 2025 | 8:30 AM | at C.A. Lawton Co., De Pere**

**ATTENDEES:** **Tonya Dittman**-The Village Companies, **Megan Dorsch**-NorthCoast Media Group, **Terra Fletcher**-Fletcher Consulting, **Ann Franz**-NEWMA, **Kelli Karpinski**-MPTC, **DJ Kast**-Shift Visuals, **Lori O'Connor**-NWTC, **Debbie Thompson**-NEWMA, **Taylor Vande Vyver**-U.S. Lubricants, **Nate Vandergrift**-The Lawton Standard Co., **Jill Waldhart**-FIS

#### **2026 ALL STAR VOTING**

Voting was finalized. Companies will be notified if their employee won on August 4. Companies that do not have a winner will be informed August 13. Voting was difficult, as all the nominees have great qualifications. Members discussed setting more criteria for next year, possibly utilizing AI to assist in the voting process. At the next meeting, we will discuss how to spotlight the new All Star winners early in January 2026.

Insight will publish the *2026 All Stars* magazine in January. The centerfold gets updated every two years and will remain the same for the 2026 issue.

#### **OCTOBER IS MANUFACTURING MONTH PLANNING**

- A Packer game tailgate, in partnership with the Discover Green Bay Visitor Center, is being planned. Tentatively, September 7 (vs. the Lions) is being targeted. Promotional can coolers will be distributed. Volunteers will be recruited for the tailgate.
- WIXX commercials will air for each Packer game and direct listeners to the manufacturing.careers web page. Each game will air a total of three commercials - one before, during, and post-game.
- Ann will contact Kwik Trip to inquire about the possibility of offering a free cup of coffee to regional manufacturing employees that show their company badge.
- October – NEWMA Insights Podcasts 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Anniversary – A live podcast, at a manufacturer member's site, will honor this milestone and kick-off Manufacturing Month. Best places to work could be a theme.
- October 28 – ACP Partnerships Meeting at the Resch Expo
- October 28 – Excellence Awards Dinner / Program at the Resch Expo
- October 29 – Manufacturing First Expo / Conference & Student Event at the Resch Expo
- October - Plant tours will be offered featuring companies that produced any of the Get Real Math and / or Science videos, 2025 All Star companies, in addition to other member companies. Prizes could be awarded to encourage educators to attend. Ann will be sending an email to the full membership to recruit companies to host a plant tour(s).
- A Door County video is being produced to highlight some of their products and careers. Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding, Hatco Corporation, Marine Travelift / ExacTech, and Therma-Tron-X are featured. The video will be sent to regional schools, industry partners, and featured on social media.
- NEWMA can promote member company's manufacturing month activities. Contact Ann for details.

#### **NEWMA INSIGHTS PODCAST**

A celebratory 100<sup>th</sup> episode event is being held on November 12, 2025. A networking reception can host past podcast guests. A highlight reel of mini snips of the most downloaded podcasts could be shared at the event and on social media, with the trajectory of listenership highlighted. A suggestion for promoting the podcast was shared to have the audio/video of the guest sharing their best leadership insight. Potential podcast guests were suggested. Oshkosh Door, AmeriLux, Valley Cabinets, American

Tent/Renegade Plastics are companies with interesting stories and leaders that could serve as great podcast guests. Members can contact Ann with any additional guests they would like to recommend.

### ELECTRO-MECH & MACHINING CAREERS CAMPAIGN

A subcommittee is working on a 2026 campaign promoting electro-mech and machining careers. Members shared their top 3-4 picks, of the list below for areas they would like to invest. Ann will share their top picks with the subcommittee (items in bold were the top picks).

1. **Day in the Life can show viewers what a typical day is like for a machinist or industrial maintenance employee. Host 4 or 5 of these workers with one of them featured each week on YouTube Live and social media, utilizing short videos.**
2. Offer mentorship programs in these career fields for employees and youth.
3. **Work with math, tech ed and physics teachers to show them how their curriculum relates to manufacturing careers. Demonstrate hands-on activities using the core skills taught in their classes. Utilize LTC, MPTC, and NWTC's electro-mechanical and CNC labs at the schools.**
4. Unite electro-mech and machinist workers in a brainstorming event to learn what influenced them to go into their career. Get their help in promoting their career.
5. Engage 19-24 year olds to help them see, if they have an aptitude for the career, the opportunities available to them. Communicate earning potential.
6. **Create training programs to upskill employees working in general labor and assembly to industrial maintenance and machining.**
7. Promote manufacturing careers to people working in hospitality / retail. Host a free training program to get them started in manufacturing, such as a welding boot camp.
8. **Focus on late 20 to 30 year olds looking to reinvent themselves. They may be underemployed, reentering the job market, or desiring a career change. They can be reached through employment offices, job fairs, summer concert series, and county business services initiatives, in addition to other means.**
9. Create a video and information page for students curious about electro-mechanical / machining jobs.
10. Work with the regional business services teams that are part of the Wisconsin Job Centers to identify opportunities to partner in job fairs and other outreach activities. Create materials and programs the business services teams could use to discuss career opportunities with job seekers - possibly have a monthly employer feature.
11. Provide outreach to manufacturers not hiring individuals before they graduate. Discuss allowing the individual to continue their education as they work for the manufacturer.

A suggestion was to highlight someone who switched their career to manufacturing, in addition to using All Star stories. Another suggestion was to encourage youth apprenticeship in these fields.

The Industrial Maintenance Certificate training is going well. NEWMA received an additional grant to run another cohort in fall 2025. Ann has gotten great feedback from the companies regarding employee participant growth. Employees get paid to train and are given a pay increase upon successful completion of the program. Nate Vandergrift shared there is a new metals program that offers apprenticeships, internships, and online training. Nate will follow-up with Ann to share a contact.

### NEWMA EVENTS

- The President's Cup Golf Scramble was held on June 4, 2025 at Blackwolf Run, Kohler. The event netted a record breaking \$60,000 for the Alliance's scholarship fund.
- July 30 – Taps + Tours Business after Hours – at Heyrman Printing – 3:00 to 5:00 PM

### NEXT MEETING

The next Communications Task Force meeting will be on August 20, 2025, 8:30 a.m., at Image Studios, Appleton.