



MANUFACTURING

PATHWAYS

for Career and Business Success

Manufacturing on the Upswing in Parts of the Region ●

What a difference a year makes!

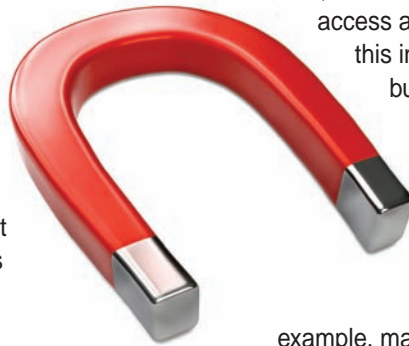
Last year, when you talked to leaders of local manufacturers and processors on their economic condition, you regularly heard terms like “very slow” or “survival mode.”

While conditions remain slow in some sectors, the overall outlook has improved significantly from last year. In fact, in the northern part of our region alone, Putnam County is becoming a magnet for growth in manufacturing, as \$1.2 billion in investment is projected for this year that will directly or indirectly benefit local manufacturers. For example:

- Whirlpool Corporation’s purchase of WC Wood in Ottawa. The purchase was approved last December after the plant was closed, eliminating 150 jobs at that time. The plant had employed over 400 as recently as 2007. Since the acquisition in which 125 employees were recalled, Whirlpool was awarded more than \$820,000 in a state jobs tax credit to be paid out over seven years that will add 300 jobs to the plant.
- Silgan Plastics of Ottawa was awarded a six-year, \$180,000 Job Creation Tax Credit for a six-year term. This project includes the expansion of the current 270,000-square-foot facility. The \$11.1 million expansion project is expected to create 30 jobs and retain 146 positions.
The company would be required to maintain operations at the project site for nine years.
- Pro-Tec Coating Co. in Leipsic will undergo expansion, as announced by its parent companies, U.S. Steel and Kobe Steel. The size of expansion and jobs created were not released. The company coats and treats sheet steel for the automotive industry.
- Procter & Gamble Pet Care of Leipsic, makers of Iams and Eukanuba brand pet foods, has confirmed plans for a \$20.5 million expansion. It is expected to create 36 new jobs. P&G officials indicate that further expansion at the Leipsic plant is anticipated as the company’s premium pet food business continues to grow in North America, Asia, Latin America and Europe.



Doug Durliat ●
*Director,
Manufacturing Pathways*



- The Village of Leipsic was awarded a \$3.5 million grant from the Ohio Department of Development, to assist in developing its 244-acre industrial site. Leipsic will have to match \$700,000 under terms of the grant. The grant will enhance access among the three railroads that are located at this industrial site, which should also attract new businesses to this area.

There are reports of laid off workers being recalled and other reports of expansion in the region. During the recession, employees at many manufacturers who avoided layoffs found themselves performing duties they weren’t originally hired to perform. For example, machine operators may have to now become more involved in quality or environmental/safety functions of their employer. Indications are that the new and recalled workers will need more skills than required if they had been hired with that same company prior to the recession.

This will be an opportunity for colleges, universities, workforce training agencies and career centers to provide the training to meet these needs in a format that the manufacturers can use. Are we ready for the challenge?





WCOMC Member an Indicator of Future Economic Conditions ●

WCOMC member Westchester Plastics of AMETEK is the nation's leading independent toll compounder of engineering resins, alloys, blends, reactive modifiers and other thermoplastic materials. The company began in Westchester, New York in 1948 and established operations in Wapakoneta in 1959 to serve customers in the Midwest and South.

Compounding is the formulation and processing of thermoplastics resulting in specific properties of the product. Companies like AMETEK don't make plastic products. Rather, they make the materials that go into the products, putting them at the front of the production chain of many products. This gives AMETEK early signals on the state of economy.

Plant Manager Ron Gasior recalled the fall of 2008, saying, "The industry saw an abrupt halt in orders. It was unprecedented. It was pretty dramatic." Other sectors of the economy, meanwhile, were not experiencing such conditions.

Since the recession, customers have changed their way of doing business, he said. For example, they now tend to make smaller, more frequent orders with very little inventory. Lead times for orders that were three months before the recession are now three weeks.

As the economy rebounded and demand for thermoplastics spiked, smaller competitors could not obtain the financial support to meet these orders, enabling companies like AMETEK to acquire greater market share. Since business for AMETEK began rebounding in the fall of 2009, Gasior said the biggest challenge has been to assure adequate supplies of materials to establish an operating schedule.

How does the economic picture look today? "I'm hearing cautious optimism," Gasior said. "That's been the rule the past six months." Gasior said customers have not given indications of a double-dip recession to date, but he should be getting a clearer picture for the first quarter of 2011 soon. All laid off production workers at AMETEK in Wapakoneta have since been recalled, he added.

Like many prominent companies in the region, AMETEK provides local jobs and actively supports its community and organizations. Gasior keeps up with the local economic development picture through his company's involvement in the local community economic development council and serving as chair of the WCOMC Board of Directors and the board of the Advanced Materials Commercialization Center, a joint venture of Rhodes State College and American Trim in Lima.



Apollo Welding Program Earns Accreditation ●

Apollo Career Center has just been named an Accredited Test Facility (ATF) by the American Welding Society - one of only four in the state of Ohio.

This accreditation means Apollo can test and upon successful completion, grant American Welding Society (AWS) certification. "If you want to get a good paying job as a welder in today's competitive work environment, it's important you obtain this nationally recognized certification," says Ann Benfield, Diversified Industrial Training Manager, Apollo Adult Education.

Students completing Apollo's long-term welding program will have successfully demonstrated skills needed for entry level employment in ARC, TIG, MIG, Pipe and OXY Fuel welding and cutting applications. Students will also obtain skills in metal fabrication, blueprint reading/metallurgy, mathematics and welding fundamentals/metrology.

The Apollo Welding & Fabrication certificate is one of the Intermediate certifications available under the WCOMC pathway program.

[The WCOMC website has more on the certificate.](#)

Ohio Dept. of Development Officials to Hold Workshop on Foreign Markets ●

Cynthia Cole and Pat Perrin from Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) will hold a workshop, Financing Your Global Business, on Monday, November 8, 1:00 to 3:30 p.m., Room 155 of Keese Hall on the Rhodes State College Campus in Lima.

Cole, Global Trade Development Manager for ODOD, will address the process of connecting companies with Ohio representatives of markets in specific foreign countries.

Perrin, Global Finance Manager for ODOD's Global Markets Division, will speak on the topic of export financing.

Participants will also have the opportunity to network and meet individually with Cole and Perrin.

The workshop is a joint program of Solutions, etc, Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) and the West Central Ohio Manufacturing Consortium.

There is no cost to attend the workshop. To reserve a seat, contact Beth Burnett of Solutions, etc at 419-995-8426 or Doug Durliat of the WCOMC 419-995-8353.

Refer to the [WCOMC website](#) for more information on this workshop after September 6.



WCOMC Launches New Website ●

WCOMC has changed its website to direct persons to education and training opportunities and financial aid offered by the consortium's partners.

Updates on activities and events involving WCOMC and its education and community partners can also be found.

The address is the same www.wcomfg.com but with a new look.

Pathway Student Spotlight – Patrick Walter ●



In 2009, officials from the City of Lima, Rhodes State College, Apollo Career Center and WCOMC collaborated to create the region's first intermediate certificate for chemical and process operations.

Students are completing the program less than a year later.

Patrick Walter of Lima became the first student to earn the Apollo basic and Rhodes State College intermediate certificates by completing an accelerated electronics course in July. At least two other students will have earned the certificates later in the summer.

Walter, who had been an unemployed masonry worker, became aware of the program from a friend. Placement testing was held for over 200 interested persons at the local Job & Family Services and Walter qualified for one of the 20 seats in the Apollo class last fall. Scholarship money was available to Lima city residents under a U.S. Department of Commerce grant that was also used to modify the

already-existing Apollo program and enable Rhodes College to create the intermediate certificate.

"After the first couple of nights in the program, I asked myself, 'What did I get myself into?'" After proceeding through the class with instructors and continuing training through the Rhodes program with Apollo classmates, Walter said the group became like a family, similar to working with colleagues at some of the chemical companies.

After successfully completing the Apollo class, Walter immediately began coursework for the intermediate certificate at Rhodes during the winter quarter. Walter plans to earn an Associate's of Technical Studies degree in process operations with an emphasis on environment and technology.

In the mean time, he is vying for a process operator trainee position at Husky Lima Refinery, having made it to the third round of interviews. The company had received approximately 950 applications for 20 positions. The company plans to fill the positions by early 2011.



Pathway Student Immediately Tries Entrepreneurship ●

At least one pathway student is taking a shot at operating his own business right out of school.

Johnathan Rankin, a 2009 graduate of the Ohio Northern University Technical Studies program and Advanced Pathway student, is CEO of Interactive Robotics (IR) of Ada.

Much of IR's work is product development and creating prototypes. If a client advances the project from there, IR can install the robotics system. Rankin said his company also provides services that include robotics training and theory, programming theory, basic programmable logic control (PLC) and electronics, setting up automation labs, and consulting services. "Interactive Robotics is a research and development company at its core," he said.



Rankin said he began studies at ONU in mechanical engineering, but switched to technical studies because it covered more theoretical design, including computer-aided design (CAD), 3-D drawing and automation systems. During his experience at ONU, Rankin and classmates developed a robot that operates an ice cream shop. A demonstration of the project can be seen on this [video](#).

The group had planned to patent and market the ice cream robot, however, expenses and excessive time involved in obtaining a permanent patent on the robot forced them to put the project on hold until IR becomes more established and has the time and capital to pursue marketing the project. "We may bring this back," he said. "There's more potential for these robots in areas such as grilling food because it's not as seasonal."

"The robot actually increased an ice cream shop's revenue by 35 to 50 percent by reducing waste and operating more efficiently than a person performing the same task, Rankin said. Plus, customers tended to stay around the shop to watch the robot perform, increasing the likelihood of ordering additional food.

IR, LLC was born October 16, 2009, with some help from Rankin's grandmother, who has started five businesses of her own. She provided technical assistance and capital for attorney and other related fees. ONU classmates Scott Nemeth of Cleveland and Cody Grieshop of Versailles are on the IR staff, providing much of the technical work for the company.

For more information on Interactive Robotics and their services, phone 614-537-0528.

WCOMC & MAGNET to Hold Teleconference Series at Rhodes State College ●

WCOMC and Manufacturing Advocacy & Growth Network (MAGNET) are teaming up to hold a series of teleconferences with motivational speakers during the 2010-11 season, designed to improve companies' business performances.

These programs will be held at 120 Keese Hall, Rhodes State College. The teleconferences allow for interaction among participants at the teleconference sites across the state.

Dates, speakers and topics include:

September 30 – Dianna Booher – Communicate With More Confidence

November 18 – Jeffrey Hayzlett – An in-depth look at your business to see if it is alive enough to survive

February 10 – Jim Carroll – Providing unique guidance on cutting edge trends, and identifying opportunities for innovation

April 21 – Richard Ruhe – Productivity improvement, change and customer loyalty

All programs will begin with registration at 8:00 a.m. Programs will run 8:30 to 11:00 a.m.

These programs are available at no cost. For reservations, contact WCOMC at 419-995-8353. Information on these programs and speakers can be found on www.wcomfg.com as it becomes available.

