

FOCUS ON ADVANCED MANUFACTURING IN BERKS COUNTY

The Good News

Manufacturing remains Berks County's largest industry sector by economic output and by employment with over 31,000 jobs (17.5% of local employment). Berks County's more than 500 manufacturing establishments provide *jobs that pay*, with average annual earnings of more than \$56,000 per year. The above average benefits packages that accompany manufacturing jobs increase average total compensation to more than \$75,000 per year. Investments in advanced manufacturing technology and productivity improvements supported steady wage growth over the past decade and above average wage growth is expected to continue going forward.

Most Berks County manufacturers find current business conditions to be favorable and the sector continued to add jobs at a modest rate in 2016. Layoffs among Berks County manufacturing workers are at historically low levels and any experienced manufacturing workers who were laid off in the past year have generally found appropriate opportunities for re-employment in the sector. Skilled manufacturing technicians in particular are in great demand with plentiful employment options.

Continued productivity growth will likely allow the Berks County manufacturing sector to retain its position as the region's leading sector in economic output for the next decade. However, these same productivity improvements will mitigate job growth in the sector. At the same time, the ever-changing shop floor environment will require workers with increasing education and skills. The Berks County Workforce Development Board (WDB) expects that a thriving advanced manufacturing sector will still employ approximately 30,000 workers in 2025.

The Problem

Berks County manufacturing employers face unprecedented demographic changes and skills shortages. Quite simply, the 31,000 workers who make up Berks County's experienced manufacturing workforce continue to age and many are approaching retirement or retiring at an alarming rate: 54 percent of incumbent workers in the sector are age 45 or older and 25 percent are age 55 and older.



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As a result, the Berks County Workforce Development Board (WDB) projects that local manufacturing employers will need to hire at least 6,000 skilled and semi-skilled replacement workers by the end of 2025. At the same time, these employers will need to up-skill new entrants as well as their existing employees in order to remain internationally-competitive. Particular attention must be paid to developing critical technical skills in industrial maintenance (mechatronics), precision machining, welding technology and quality systems which make up an increasing share of essential skills in the modern advanced manufacturing workplace. In fact, the viability of many semi-skilled production and other manufacturing jobs depend directly on employer success in attracting, training and retaining skilled technicians. Employer judgments about their ability to find and develop the skilled talent they need will impact their expansion planning decisions

regarding capital investment in technology. Simply put, companies will not invest in plants and equipment that they cannot effectively operate and maintain.

The current reality is that most semi-skilled and entry-level production workers lack the technical skills needed to advance into higher-paying technical positions without additional education and training. As a result, these individuals may lack employment security in a changing technology-driven environment and could be at risk for job elimination or forced replacement. While not all production workers need to acquire higher level technical skills, more and more will need to do so if their employers are to thrive and expand. In addition, many skilled manufacturing technicians are challenged to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to stay current with increasing-sophisticated and integrated advanced manufacturing equipment and systems.

Employment Retention / Layoff Aversion Strategy

This manufacturing demographic and skills problem has been decades in the making and local employers, especially small-medium size firms, cannot solve it with their own resources. As a forward thinking job retention, layoff aversion and economic development strategy, the Berks WDB supports a return to the historical practice of capitalizing on incumbent worker technical training to build advanced manufacturing worker competencies, while matching newly-entering talent with experienced employees for knowledge transfer. Individual production and maintenance workers will benefit by avoiding future job losses and attaining broad-level employment security in the sector. In cases where up-skilled workers do become dislocated, the enhanced technical skills provided by such training will enable them to be more quickly reemployed in similar well-paying jobs at other more successful local manufacturers.

(Source: Berks County Workforce Development Board)

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Proto-Cast, LLC, backed by over 50 years of experience, is a custom design injection molder and mold fabricator located in Douglassville, PA. Our one stop shop for designing and building molds, maintaining and running molds, and various secondary operations needed ensures customers are receiving the time and attention needed to get the best quality parts. Also contributing to quality and customer service is our quality management system, which is ISO 9001:2008 certified.

Proto-Cast, LLC serves different industries and provides many services throughout the United States and the world. Industries such as Industrial and Medical which may need special materials and handling of parts, Aerospace and Defense which often requires additional quality certifications or consumer products that require simple assembly or packaging. □ Whatever your plastic injection molding needs may be or where you are in the process, Proto-Cast, LLC is here to help. Please feel free to visit our Contact Us page to fill out a form and one of our experienced staff will be in contact with you.

Proto-Cast, LLC is located at 1460 Benjamin Franklin Highway, Douglassville, PA 19518. For additional information, please call 610.326.1723; email: contactus@proto-cast.com; and visit www.proto-cast.com.



Morgan Celebrates 65 Years of Advanced Manufacturing

Morgantown, Pennsylvania — Morgan Corporation celebrates its 65th anniversary this year as North America's premier designer and producer of light- and medium-duty truck and van bodies, and has grown to be the largest on the continent.

"From our humble beginnings in 1952 as a truck repair and welding shop located just off the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Morgantown, Pennsylvania, the story of how Morgan came to be is one of the great business success stories of our time," Paul Jarossy, Director of Marketing, stated. "Since our inception, the Morgan name has been synonymous with innovative engineering, uncompromising quality and a superior customer service experience."

Morgan is always hiring for top talent to lead our initiatives for continuous innovation!

Upcoming Positions:

Advanced Manufacturing Engineer – Joining: Leads research, design and development of safe manufacturing processes including production flow, assembly methods and production equipment.

Advanced Manufacturing Engineer – Welding: Leads research, design and development of safe welding manufacturing processes including production flow, methods and production equipment

To learn more, apply, or see a full list of open positions, please visit: Morgancorp.com/careers

Recently, Morgan Corporation announced plans to open new manufacturing and service facilities in the U.S. Midwest as well as in New England in 2017 and 2018. Morgan's 12 current manufacturing and service facilities are located in strategic areas across the United States and Canada.

"The evolution of our products is evidence of our ability and commitment to meet the unique and ever-changing needs of our customers," Jarossy continued. "With the launch of new products and designs, as well as the introduction of breakthrough technologies, Morgan continues to set new standards. These standards impact the transportation industry one body at a time, while fulfilling our own vision for the future in advance of market demands."



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