



2024 MFG DAY[®]



The Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association (TRMA) and Joliet Junior College (JJC) recently celebrated their ninth annual Manufacturing Day, drawing over 800 high school students from 16 schools in Will and Grundy counties. The event aimed to broaden students' understanding of the diverse career paths available in manufacturing.

Attendees engaged with 42 participating organizations, explored a dynamic STEM expo, and participated in "Manufacturing Jeopardy," an interactive game designed to educate students on industry knowledge. The day was highlighted by various speakers who shared insights into the potential of a career in manufacturing. TRMA Chairman Ted Raymond, Site Director at Aux Sable Liquid Products, opened the event by sharing his own experiences in the field and stressing the significance of Manufacturing Day.

Yolanda Farmer, Executive Vice-President of Joliet Junior College, spoke about JJC's role in providing the necessary education and training for students interested in pursuing careers in manufacturing. Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant emphasized the industry's importance to the local economy and expressed her gratitude to the students for exploring these opportunities.

The day kicked off with an inspiring keynote by Jordan Dixon, a Constellation employee and motivational speaker. His message encouraged students to recognize the potential within the manufacturing sector and emphasized the importance of pursuing education and training that aligns with industry needs.

Manufacturers took center stage to highlight the evolving nature of the field, emphasizing advancements in science, technology, and innovation. Through hands-on displays and interactive discussions, students learned about cutting-edge processes and the growing demand for skilled professionals in areas like robotics, automation, and process safety.

The TRMA-JJC Manufacturing Day event aligns with a nationwide initiative led by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), which celebrates Manufacturing Month each October. These events aim to build a grassroots movement to address common industry challenges and cultivate the next generation of skilled workers.

TRMA Executive Director Ray Woodworth shared that the event's primary goal was to connect businesses with the future workforce early on, inspiring students to consider manufacturing as a viable and rewarding career option. "We want to expand students' understanding of the industry and encourage them to explore pathways that can lead to fulfilling careers," Woodworth noted.

Manufacturers in Will and Grundy counties play a crucial role in the local economy. As of 2024, the region has become a leader in job creation within Illinois, adding over 12,000 jobs since 2020. By engaging local students, area manufacturers are investing not only in their future workforce but also in the continued economic growth and vitality of their communities.



