



Manufacturing Day Participation Increases Among Springmakers

Manufacturing DaySM is an annual national event that brings together thousands of manufacturers to host students, teachers, parents, job seekers and other local community members at open houses designed to showcase modern manufacturing technology and careers.

Manufacturing Day 2016 officially took place Oct. 7 with more than a dozen SMI member companies participating (some of the events were held before or after the official day). Here are a few highlights of what took place.

Ironmonger Spring Company

Students from Lewis Cass Jr.-Sr. High School stepped out of the classroom and onto the factory floor at Ironmonger Spring Company in Walton, Indiana Oct. 7 for Manufacturing Day. This year marked the first time Ironmonger Spring participated.

Other area manufacturers and businesses also hosted open houses, including Myers Spring Company in Logansport, Indiana. Myers Spring hosted their second Manufacturing Day event that included 320 Logansport area fifth-grade students.

In an article in the *Pharos-Tribune* in Logansport, JoEllen Ironmonger,

whose parents founded the business in 1977, said the spring company wanted to show the public and high school students the importance of manufacturing.

“Manufacturing exists,” she said. “We need employees. We need good, dependable people. It can be a job. It can be a career.”

Most of the employees at Ironmonger Spring have been working there for 20 to 30 years and many are approaching retirement, Ironmonger said. She added that the company knows they need younger workers who are skilled and prepared for the demanding job.

Ironmonger Spring creates several spring products at its facility on U.S. 35 in Walton, ranging from .007- to .25-inch thick diameter wire. Ironmonger, who’s been working at the company for 39 years and has been sole owner since her parents died, said the business makes springs for companies that make air tools, road construction equipment and water systems.

Lewis Cass seniors Garrett Cain and Jerad Morey, who were two of many agriculture and engineering students at the school, had never been to a spring company. They said the machines at Ironmonger Spring interested them because of their specific designs and functions.

“It’s nice to get out of the classroom and learn new things and see how things are made,” Cain said. “It’s good to see it from a different standpoint than just on TV.”

Wolverine Coil Spring

In Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wolverine Coil Spring (WCS) held their event Oct. 3. U.S. Senator Gary Peters visited the WCS manufacturing plant along with 35 students from Grand Rapids Public Schools’ Innovation High.

WCS president Jay Dunwell said the morning began with the senator meeting with business and education leaders in a private session to discuss the talent needs of manufacturers and the efforts taking place in West Michigan and nationally. “The senator then met up with students who were already participating in plant tours, and the event concluded with remarks from the podium and a big group photo,” said Dunwell.

Ace Wire Spring & Form Co.

Ace Wire Spring & Form Co., Inc. in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania also participated in Manufacturing Day for the first time Oct. 7, 2016.

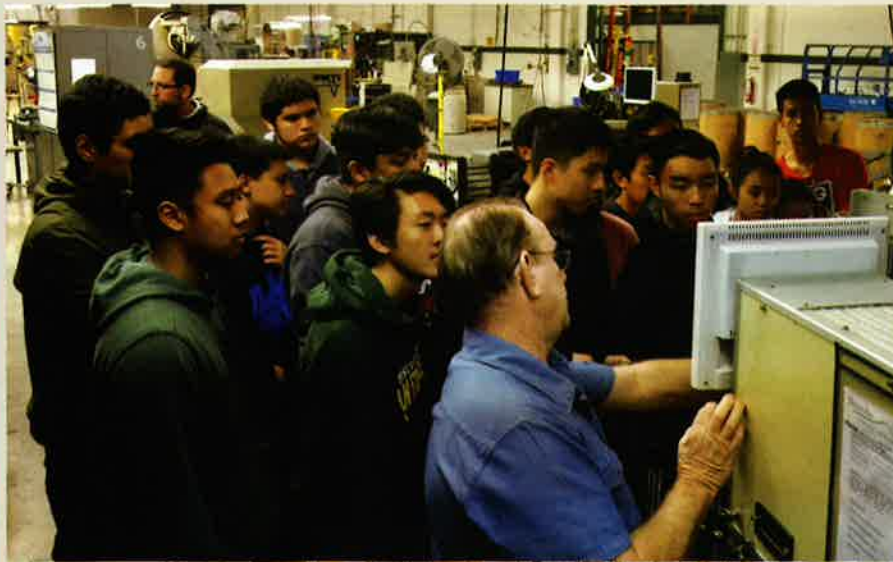
Ace Wire Spring hosted two separate groups of students for a presentation and tour of the company’s facility. In the morning, the company welcomed a group of Montour High School students and Katelyn Lamm, regional manager for U.S. Senator Pat Toomey’s office.

In the afternoon, Ace Wire Spring hosted a group of Robert Morris University students and employees from Catalyst Connection.

In a news release the company said, “The hope is that this event helped expand the minds of the students



Manufacturing Day activities at Ace Wire Spring & Form Co.



Above: Manufacturing Day event at Scandic.
 Right: Students watch a demonstration at Perfection Spring & Stamping.



that visited Ace Wire Spring, and that they saw the many opportunities for a career in the manufacturing industry.”

Perfection Spring & Stamping

Based in the Chicago suburb of Mount Prospect, Illinois, Perfection Spring & Stamping Corp. held its first Manufacturing Day events in November 2016 when they hosted visitors from two Chicago schools. Rachel Kahn says her family-owned business plans to continue inviting other students with the goal of changing the perception of what working in manufacturing is currently like.

Kahn said that to grow and keep up with the always changing technology, “we look to educate and employ the youth around us. Manufacturing Day is a great way to showcase to students around the country the rewarding, highly skilled careers available in manufacturing today. Manufacturers across the nation, like us, have been participating as sponsors, hosting open houses, public tours, career workshops and other events.”

Finding skilled workers has become a national epidemic that Perfection Spring & Stamping has found can best be overcome by offering several apprenticeship programs.

“Being an apprentice is a great option for students right out of high school (or older), as we provide them with skills to succeed and build a career,” explained Kahn. “We want students to know that they don’t have to go to college to have a great career and make a great living. In fact, they can get paid while they learn through our programs. By opening up shop floors around the country, we are able to show modern manufacturing for what it is—a sleek, technology-driven industry that offers secure, good-paying jobs.”

Scandic

Scandic in San Leandro, California held three open houses in the fall of 2016 including a national Manufacturing Day event Oct. 7. They also held separate days for high school students and for Stanford University engineering students. Visitors included city officials and a



staff member who works for the member of Congress for the area where Scandic is located.

“We had the opportunity to demonstrate that manufacturing is thriving, and we gave students and teachers a close look at career possibilities,” said Scandic president Hale Foote.

Foote says hosting a Manufacturing Day event is worth the effort.

“Holding an open house for Manufacturing Day lets us showcase our technology and lets the community know what we are doing. It opens the eyes of our next generation of workers,” Foote explained. “We learn the names of the high school shop teachers and guidance counselors, and they talk about Scandic in their classes. We now know who to call for recruits. It also makes our city officials a bit friendlier to us, as we know from having undertaken a recent facility expansion.”

Foote says showcasing your plant gives your workers a chance to shine so they can demonstrate their expertise to visitors and they receive well-deserved praise. He added, “It’s a great morale booster.”

“Hosting a Manufacturing Day event costs nothing and the rewards are great,” Foote concluded. ■

We invite other SMI member companies to participate in Manufacturing Day 2017 and encourage those who held events in 2016 to send us your stories. To learn more about Manufacturing Day and to get started planning your 2017 event, visit www.mfgday.com.