



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **AND THE SURVEY SHOWS ... MANUFACTURING ALIVE AND WELL IN ST. CHARLES COUNTY**

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO** -- Local manufacturers participated in a survey on the “state of manufacturing” in St. Charles County, and the consensus is: Manufacturing is alive and well! The survey was distributed by the Manufacturing Task Force of the St. Charles County Workforce Development Board in late 2016, and indicates that businesses are hiring for manufacturing jobs and seeing more technical training opportunities in the community.

“It is important for the community to know that manufacturing is growing in St. Charles County,” says Michael Hurlbert, chair of the task force and director of the County’s Community Development Department. “There are more people employed in manufacturing jobs in our community today than there were a decade ago, and that isn’t the case everywhere. We are definitely not in the norm, and that’s great news!”

Hurlbert says that because St. Charles County had a strong manufacturing base prior to the recession, recovery was faster than in many areas of the country. He said another contributing factor is the number of suppliers that came into the county as a result of the Wentzville General Motors expansion in 2014; those companies now are expanding themselves. Additionally, the community has been a regional leader in aerospace-defense manufacturing and has a strong and growing plastics sector, he says.

Results of the survey show that the top local manufacturing jobs available in the next two years are expected to be in assembly/production, engineering, computer numerical control (CNC) machining, quality/inspection, warehouse/shipping and receiving, sales and welders. To meet those needs as they arise, 62 percent of businesses that responded to the survey indicated they plan to hire full-time employees with benefits.

Asked about their areas of need for technical skills training, respondents identified SOLIDWORKS® 3-D CAD, AutoCAD®, CNC operation, machine maintenance, blueprint reading, electrical, forklift operation and welding, among others. This information is assisting the task force in connecting manufacturers with programs already available through local tech and vocational schools, as well as helping them determine what programs need to be developed.

The survey had a 20 percent response rate, and Hurlbert was pleased with both the quantity and quality of responses. “Feedback from the surveys, as well as from one-on-one meetings with manufacturers over the past nine months, has helped us make strategic planning decisions for the county,” he says. “We are making recommendations to manufacturers regarding training opportunities, about target marketing, and about planning, to help them continue to grow and prosper in St. Charles County.”

Since 2016, several major accomplishments in manufacturing can be cited, showing the community overall is in line with the task force goals and survey findings. Those accomplishments include:

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- St. Charles Community College's recent purchase of the former Barat Academy facility in Dardenne Prairie, and its plans for expanded technical training
- Consideration of a countywide Centers for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) program by the five local St. Charles County school districts
- Opening of a second location in the EDC Business & Community Partners incubator in St. Peters this spring for Inventor Forge Makerspace, a creative ideas lab and creation space
- Growth and expansion of the Missouri State Technical College on the campus of Lewis & Clark Career Center in St. Charles
- Recognition of the Advanced Manufacturing Technology program at Ranken Technical College – Wentzville as a Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship

"We can't say it enough," Hurlbert says. "Manufacturing is alive and well in St. Charles County, and we salute all the work of local businesses, educational institutions and civic groups that are moving the needle when it comes to technical training, technical careers and technical business success in the community. We'll be celebrating more milestones during Manufacturing Day 2017 activities being planned for this fall. Stay tuned!"

To download a copy of the Manufacturing Workforce Survey Results and Recommendations, visit [sccmo.org/workforce](http://sccmo.org/workforce). Click on Manufacturing Workforce Report in the left column.

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*Founded in 1812, St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri, and the state's third largest county in both population and economic share. St. Charles County consistently ranks one of the healthiest places to live in Missouri in the County Health Rankings report published by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. It is home to 12 scenic county parks encompassing more than 2,800 acres with additional land under development and more in reserve for future development.*

*With a population of 385,840, St Charles County is home to large employers including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.*

*St. Charles County Government employs nearly 1,100 in more than 30 departments and offices, who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit [www.sccmo.org](http://www.sccmo.org).*