



Jackson Area Career Center Excels in Manufacturing Education Wins National Recognition

The SME Education Foundation has selected Jackson Area Career Center, Jackson, Mich., as an exemplary school to participate in its PRIME (Partnership Response In Manufacturing Education) program, a comprehensive, community-based approach to manufacturing education.

DEARBORN, Mich., JACKSON, Mich., November 20, 2012 — The Jackson Area Career Center, Jackson, Mich., has been named one of nine [exemplary schools](#) in eight states selected by the SME Education Foundation for its 2013 [PRIME](#) (Partnership Response in Manufacturing Education) program. Launched in fall 2011 with the selection of six schools in six different states, PRIME takes a community-based approach to manufacturing education by creating strong partnerships between organizations, businesses and exemplary schools.

The PRIME designation for the Jackson Area Career Center comes with a three-year commitment by the SME Education Foundation to provide assistance in creating and fostering strong partnerships with the local manufacturing base to provide job shadowing, mentoring, and internships. In addition, PRIME schools receive funds totaling \$35,000 for the three years to support equipment upgrades, continuing education for instructors, STEM-based camps for middle school students, and classes like the manufacturing program at the Career Center, which includes Engineering PLTW (Project Lead The Way), Precision Machining/CAM, and Welding Technology. The SME Education Foundation Scholarship Program provides students with access to scholarship funding.

“The Jackson Area Career Center is successfully working to develop the core of Michigan’s future manufacturing skilled labor force,” says Bart A. Aslin, CEO, SME Education Foundation. “All the critical components are in place for what we consider a premier program, all integral for the development of a highly skilled technical workforce. They have a disciplined manufacturing course of study, the involvement of business and industry, and are offering tech-based summer camps, scholarships and robotic competitions.”

John Riedeman, Career Center Engineering/PLTW instructor, says, “We pride ourselves on motivating students to set a career path and working with us to develop the technical skills that support their abilities. We want to maximize the effectiveness of this funding by focusing on our Engineering/PLTW, Precision Machining/CAM, and Welding Technology courses of study. The funding will also support program development, instructional training, scholarships, field trips, and participation in the FIRST Robotics Competition.

The Jackson Area Career Center is a technical education hub for more than 1,200 students from over 15 different area high schools who are currently enrolled in the Center’s 30 different programs —over 30 percent of all juniors and seniors in Jackson. Students who chose to attend the Career Center do so at no cost to the student or local school district. The focus of the Career Center is to allow students a seamless, cost-free elective in their local school schedule in which to explore opportunities for their future and get a jump-start on college credits.

At the Career Center, community employers and partnerships are important to their operation and technical education programs. Each program utilizes the services of Advisory Committee members (over 200 in all) to assist in keeping curriculum current with industry standards. Job placement coordinators

work with area employers to assist students with non-paid work experience, cooperative education, and graduate job placement.

The Jackson Area Career Center sets high standards for rigorous, focused, and engaging study to develop students' innovative, collaborative, cooperative, and problem-solving skills through the different offerings of the manufacturing program.

The PLTW series of courses includes Intro to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Digital Electronics, and Engineering Development and Design. These courses introduce students to Computer Integrated Manufacturing, Computer Aided Design, all major concepts that students will encounter in their postsecondary course of study. The classes are generally taken sequentially and introduce students to the basics of product development, mechanical design, engineering and manufacturing technology.

In addition to the well-rounded course offerings for Engineering at the Jackson Area Career Center, innovative and highly applicable programs are also in place for Precision Machining/CAM and Welding Technology. The Career Center's program not only provides students with strong, fundamental knowledge, and skills, but also exposes them to advanced manufacturing processes and technology, including robotics.

These component course areas of the manufacturing program prepare college and trade school, or apprenticeship bound students for success by ensuring that they are academically strong, with strong problem solving skills, self-motivation, and are goal and career oriented. Project collaboration is encouraged between each class within the program, replicating the nature of real life manufacturing.

The value of this talented staff goes beyond the classroom to encourage future students to pursue engineering and manufacturing careers prior to attending the Career Center through their involvement with community affiliates. John Riedeman has worked as an instructor for the Academy for Manufacturing Careers' "Engineering is Elementary" program and leads the Career Center's FIRST Robotics team, which is open to all Jackson County high school students. Joseph Lienhart sits on the board of directors for the Academy for Manufacturing Careers and instructs their "Machining U" program, and in 2012 Eric Johnson was named Educator of the Year by Jackson Area Manufacturers Association. They also work closely with the Shop Rat Foundation and Academy for Manufacturing Careers to provide guidance and resources raising the bar higher and higher for student success and adequate preparation for their future careers.

PRIME was developed as a response to the growing skills gap crisis in the United States along with its greater mission to inspire, prepare and support STEM-interested students. Upon graduation, students leave school with the tools to further their education and become skilled future innovators and contributors to industry. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in professional, scientific, and technical services is expected to grow by 29 percent, adding 2.1 million new jobs between 2010 and 2020. "

In February 2012, a special report, "[A National Strategic Plan for Advanced Manufacturing](#)," issued by the Executive Office of the President, National Science and Technology Council," states, "Education and training that anticipates and satisfies the skill requirements of advanced manufacturers while remaining consistent with long-term projections of labor demand, is a key component of the national strategy for advanced manufacturing. Federal actions should include such efforts as (a) support for the coordination of state and local education and training curricula with advanced manufacturing skill-set requirements, and (b) expanded support for advanced manufacturing career and technical education.

The intent of the PRIME initiative is to change outdated perceptions of manufacturing and the careers it offers by reinforcing technical education and providing students with real-world connections, which will ensure a pipeline of more qualified employees. Access to a new website, www.CareerMe.org, funded by the SME Education Foundation, provides links to advanced manufacturing companies whose real-world professionals provide job descriptions and requirements for the in-demand, highly skilled jobs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in professional, scientific, and technical services is expected to grow by 29 percent, adding 2.1 million new jobs between 2010 and 2020.

PRIME sites for 2013 include: **Alabama:** Calera High School, Calera, Ala.; **California:** Esperanza High School, Anaheim, Calif.; Petaluma High School, Petaluma, Calif.; **Indiana:** McKenzie Center for Innovation and Technology, Indianapolis, Ind.; **Iowa:** Cedar Falls High School, Cedar Falls, Iowa; **Massachusetts:** Westfield Vocational Technical High School, Westfield, Mass.; **Michigan:** Jackson Area Career Center, Jackson, Mich.; **Ohio:** Centerville High School, Dayton, Ohio, and **Wisconsin:** Bradley Technical High School, Milwaukee, Wis.

To-date, the SME Education Foundation has provided funding of more than \$285,000 through PRIME to model high schools to help manufacturing and its advanced technologies drive the economic vitality of local communities. This initiative builds on a five-year, \$5.2 million investment in their [STEM](#)-based manufacturing education workforce development programs.

Education Partners:

Baker College, Davenport University, Jackson Community College, PLTW affiliated universities nationwide, including Eastern Michigan University.

Industry Partners:

Advanced Turning, American Welding Society, Classic Turning; Commercial Contractors Association; Home Builders Association of Jackson; Jackson Area Manufacturing Association; Scott Machine; Shop Rat Foundation; Silver Bullet Sportsman Group, and South Central Michigan Works!

About Jackson Area Career Center (JACC):

The Jackson Area Career Center is a service of Jackson County Intermediate School District and provides its students with career and technical educational classes, industry certifications, and free college credit, and guidance counseling services. More than 38,000 students have experienced Career Center CTE opportunities and possibilities through hands-on and applied learning. JACC maintains strong relationships within the community, which includes employers, local school districts, and higher education institutions. Visit www.jacc-mi.net.

About the SME Education Foundation:

The SME Education Foundation is committed to inspiring, supporting and preparing the next generation of manufacturing engineers and technologists in the advancement of manufacturing education. Created by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers in 1979, the SME Education Foundation has provided more than \$31 million since 1980 in grants, scholarships and awards through its partnerships with corporations, organizations, foundations, and individual donors. Visit the SME Education Foundation at www.smeef.org. Also visit our award-winning website for young people at www.ManufacturingisCool.com, and www.CareerMe.org for information on advanced manufacturing careers.

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