2020 ECONOMIC OUTLOOK
Cautious Economic Growth is Predicted

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

14  SHOP PROFILE
MDI: Local Nonprofit in the Manufacturing Supply Chain

18  FEATURE
Building One Minnesota: Hand in Hand with a 21st Century Workforce

22  SMART SHOP
Strategic Financing: Funding Automation on the Manufacturing Floor
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FEATURES
14 Shop Profile: MDI: Local Nonprofit in the Manufacturing Supply Chain
18 Building One Minnesota
Hand in Hand With a 21st Century Workforce

COLUMNS
16 Made in Minnesota: Yetti Fish Houses
Meeting the Needs of an Ever-Changing Industry
20 Policy & Government Relations: 2020 Session Preview
Strengthening Career Pathways to Manufacturing
22 Smart Shop: Strategic Financing
Funding Automation on the Manufacturing Floor

ASSOCIATION NEWS
4 President’s Letter
7 Executive Director Letter

SUPPORTING MINNESOTA IN BECOMING THE WORLD LEADER IN PRECISION CONTRACT MANUFACTURING AND RELATED TECHNOLOGIES.

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2020 Predictions?
Instead, Make Positive Long-Term Decisions

by Jesse Schelitzche

As a society, we love to make predications. I can predict how my children will act because I know them well. I can predict how well the Vikings will play by watching their previous games. I can predict how a project will run through my shop based on the complexity, the employees, and the equipment.

What’s amazing is my kids rarely react exactly as expected, the Vikings battle twists throughout a game no one could expect, employees have family emergencies, and equipment breaks down. In short, we can always make predications, but rarely do they work out exactly as we expected.

Looking ahead to 2020, most experts predict moderate growth and continued low unemployment. When I hear information like this, I assume a few things: 1) business will be steady, but a lack of strong confidence in the market might hold customers back from optimistic purchasing plans, and 2) I will continue the struggle to find strong employees while also making a conscious effort to be sure my current workforce is satisfied.

A recent Deloitte Manufacturing Industry Outlook report noted a few major trends manufacturers are carrying into 2020. They are:

- Continued investment or divestment to get the “house in order.” In short, many companies are focusing on their core competencies and making sure they can continue to deliver strong results on what they do best. If investing, are you purchasing equipment to expand your primary service? Are you interested in buying a like business that might expand your reach or capacity? If divesting, are you shifting your focus to areas of business you know or do well rather than trying to be everything to everyone? Is there anything you’re holding on to but aren’t sure why?

- Building their “digital muscle.” Parts of this relate to the advances in 3D printing and speed to market of products. Much more of it relates to automating your business to be able to react quickly to customer needs and demands. As a small manufacturer, I struggle at times to implement new digital strategies that I believe will improve my business in the long term while justifying the investment. I will note that small upgrades in ERP and reporting have not only made our company run smoother, but also have increased communication and transparency with our customers resulting in a much better relationship.

- Cultivating deeper partnerships. In 2020, manufacturers will be seeking out opportunities, either with new or existing customers, to deepen their relationship while continuing to grow alongside the customer. In many cases, this includes either a digital or process “stickiness” that can forge stronger bonds and reliance between the two parties. When looking at your customers, are you providing a service that several other competitors could simply replicate or are you designing processes and helping problem solve complex customer requirements that might make you stand out in a crowd? Being the “go-to” supplier for a specific service or process might be a great way to create deeper bonds and partnerships with your customers in 2020.

- Being a socially-responsible business. In Deloitte’s report, they note that many manufacturers are taking steps to use renewable energy sources and lower their total carbon output. It also reports that 40% of so-called “Social Supers” report opening up new revenue streams by doing so. While I can’t speak to much movement regarding renewable energy within my own company, I do believe there are other socially conscious ways we can run our businesses in 2020. One example I like is a company pledge drive where employees donate to their favorite causes with some type of match from the company. This is a great way to engage employees, motivate them to get involved, and set the example that giving back is important.

Since I haven’t found a crystal ball to predict the future and the weather still seems difficult to predict even one week out, I’m not holding my breath that all the experts will be spot on regarding their 2020 economic outlook. What I am confident in is the ability we have to continually make small improvements to our businesses that will have positive long-term effects and continue to cultivate workplaces where people enjoy going to work and being part of something greater. Best of luck in 2020!
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Filling the Pipeline
More Crucial Than Ever in Tough Economic Times
by Steve Kalina

This year we’ll celebrate MPMA’s 65th anniversary. In the upcoming issues of the 2020 Journal, I’ll be highlighting the top 65 influential people in MPMA’s history. I hope you enjoy!

In this issue we’re going to look at the 2020 economic forecast for manufacturing. After a banner year in 2018 and a sluggish 2019, many are waiting to see what’s next, especially with an election in 2020. Manufacturers continue to struggle with workforce development, especially when they don’t have the workload to support new hires. No doubt, when there’s talk about a possible recession, legislators and educators alike might yet again be hesitant to invest in manufacturing. It also strikes fear in young people who are looking for stable careers.

Now flash forward five to 10 years. According to the Minnesota State Demographic Center, the number of Minnesotans turning 65 in this decade will be greater than the past four decades combined! When we experience a recession, we typically lose the opportunity to invest in apprentices, and encourage youth and diversity. We’re now, more than ever, at risk of failing to feed the pipeline for an inevitable exodus of retirees.

I don’t mean to sound all doom and gloom, because there is hope. We just have to seize it. Many high schools are redeveloping strong career and technical education programs. Community programs are improving the image of manufacturing. MPMA is taking action on increasing the pipeline and its diversity, and producing advanced training that can expedite skills development faster.

There’s a catch. Manufacturers need to take on much of this responsibility by partnering with education and the community on a grassroots level. They must bring in apprentices of their own, and then collaborate on a multi-year apprenticeship model that includes in-house structured training, evaluation, and mentorship. Let’s not worry about the tens of thousands of workers we need in the future, rather worry about the few that YOU need now.

MPMA is going to help each business find the resources and tools necessary to do this, even at times when you don’t have the workload to justify it. But MPMA needs our members to partner in this effort because there is no one else who is going to do it for you. Together, I’m confident we can make solid progress.

On a side note, it’s important we celebrate and show gratitude to those that help us accomplish our goals. I want to take a moment to thank our 2019 annual sponsors, listed below. MPMA would not exist without their support and I ask that you take a moment to thank them and consider them for your business needs.

I look forward to working with you in 2020, and I wish you all a safe and prosperous new year!
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Will cautious predictions about the 2020 economic outlook impact manufacturers as traditional economic indicators – interest rates, unemployment, and consumer confidence – mingle with productivity on the shop floor in the midst of tariffs and trade wars?

“My best-case scenario is continued economic growth,” said Neel Kashkari, President of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve, at the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce’s Annual Meeting in November. “I’m not forecasting a recession, but there are risks on the horizon - the biggest risks being around tariffs and trade and the uncertainty that creates.”

Kashkari acknowledged that businesses are pulling back a bit due to tariffs, trade wars, and economic changes in Europe and Asia, but the overall outlook for the state and national economies remains positive.

In 2019, the Fed made three rate cuts, and concluded in October that “these are sufficient to support moderate growth, a continued strong job market, and inflation rising toward the Fed’s 2% target.” The benchmark rate is now in a range of 1.50% to 1.75%.

In late November, the Fed was upbeat in its latest assessment of business conditions, but noted that the majority of the Fed’s 12 districts were not experiencing growth in manufacturing, which has been hurt by a widening trade war with China.

[ continued on page 10 ]
CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

According to the experts, consumers are shoring up the U.S. economy. Kashkari points to the 3.6% unemployment rate to support his conclusion. “Most people who want to work are working. Workers have more money in their pockets, and they are spending it on themselves and their families. They are powering the economy,” he said.

Federal Reserve Vice Chair Richard Clarida agrees, and was quoted in a Bloomberg Economics report saying: “I cannot think of a time when the U.S. consumer has been in better shape,” citing that debt levels relative to income are at their lowest in 40 years, the savings rate is high, and real consumer spending is growing at a rate of almost 3%.

Furthermore, the University of Michigan’s Surveys of Consumers showed consumer sentiment remains at favorable levels. “The early November reading on consumer sentiment was nearly identical to last month’s and the average 2019 level (95.6). Consumers did voice a slightly more positive outlook for the economy, which was offset by a slightly less favorable outlook for their own personal finances. Spontaneous negative references to tariffs were still mentioned by one-in-four consumers in early November. References to the impact of impeachment on economic prospects were virtually non-existent, mentioned by less than 2% in October and November,” according to U-M economist Richard Curtin, Director of the surveys.

A series of government reports issued by the U.S. Commerce Department in late November painted a similar picture – the U.S. economy is growing and is being fueled by solid consumer spending – in spite of threats from a U.S.-China trade war and a global shutdown.

The economy grew at a moderate 2.1% annual rate over the summer, according to the Commerce department, because businesses didn’t cut back on investment spending as much as first estimated.

MINNESOTA BENCHMARKS

For the past five years, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce has commissioned the Minnesota Business Benchmarks, an analysis of data from economic indicators that illustrate the impact on businesses throughout the state. The 2020 Benchmark Report concluded:

- Minnesota’s economy is still growing slower than the national average.
- Tax reforms in other states and federal reform have widened the tax competitiveness gap.
- Innovation continues to be a bright spot for Minnesota’s economy.
- Long-term transportation investment helped support global business connections.
- Solutions to workforce challenges will come from private-sector innovations and systemic changes in education and immigration.
- In the current labor market, the cost of doing business is inextricably tied to the cost of living for workers.

Doug Loon, President of the Minnesota Chamber, noted that critical questions are raised in the 2020 Benchmark report and in the trends analysis from data collected for the past five years. “Do Minnesota businesses have the necessary tools to match the challenges of today and turn them into the successes of tomorrow? What policy decisions are elected officials making that help or hinder Minnesota from being an attractive and affordable place to work and live?” he asked.

The Chamber’s Benchmark report concluded the answer is not certain: “Minnesota’s business climate continues to be a mixed landscape for fostering statewide economic growth.”

For instance – “as the nation experiences the longest economic expansion in history, Minnesota’s economy is growing slower than the national average,” the study declared. The #1 driver of this is annual job growth, which has fallen over the past two years to 0.4%, compared to the national average of 1.41%.

“The ongoing talent shortage is presumably contributing to this trend, but other self-imposed roadblocks, such as high taxes and costs, are likely to blame as well,” according to the Benchmark report. “A more competitive tax climate and keeping Minnesota more affordable will help usher talented workers into the state. Collectively, these factors will counteract barriers to growth and foster economic well-being.”

Taxes are a perennial problem that plague business growth, as stated in the Chamber’s report. Minnesota is ranked fourth in the nation in the
Small Business and Entrepreneurship Tax Index and it is ranked fifth in pass through and individual income top tax rates. Overall state and local taxes per capita are $6,090, compared with the national average of $4,946.

“Taxes are a top concern. It is a potential barrier to growth,” Loon said, pointing out that Minnesota’s high ranking is not favorable.

Furthermore, “data show that other states are outpacing Minnesota’s economic growth,” Loon continued, “The tight labor market, high taxes, and regulatory burdens may be hampering economic performance.”

In spite of all of these challenges, Minnesota businesses are resilient and agile. The Benchmark report highlighted positive trends – improved highway performance, lower workers’ compensation costs, and state-to-state and international migration, which is resulting in more talent coming into the workforce.

### TRADE

Canada is the leading market for Minnesota exports, China is second, and Mexico is third, Japan fourth, and Germany fifth, according to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

In 2018, Minnesota exports (including agricultural, mining, and manufactured products) reached a record high of $23 billion, a growth rate of 10% from 2017 – and within an environment of continuing uncertainty due to changing U.S. trade policies, U.S. exports grew 8 percent during the same time period.

Overall, Minnesota exports more than 1,050 different products to 208 countries, which supports 118,000 jobs. Minnesota ranked 20th in exports among U.S. states in 2018, up from 23rd in 2017.

But in the first two quarters of 2019 there was a slowdown in exports, “which likely reflects uncertainty from U.S. trade policies and some countermeasures on U.S. exports by major trading partners,” according to the Benchmark report.

Business experts and economists agree that The United States-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA), which replaced NAFTA, is imperative. And a year after it was first proposed, an agreement on the trade agreement was reached in early December.

After representatives from the three countries signed the pact in Mexico, President Donald Trump tweeted: “The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) will be “the best and most important trade deal ever made by the USA. Good for everybody - Farmers, Manufacturers, Energy, Unions - tremendous support.”

Charlie Weaver, Executive Director of the Minnesota Business Partnership, penned an editorial in the St. Paul Pioneer Press in mid-November and stated: “The benefits of global trade are undeniable. Trade creates jobs and boosts economic growth, reduces consumer prices, and expands choices. And global trade is responsible for raising the standard of living in the U.S. and across the world.”

Weaver cited a new study from the Business Roundtable that found “more than 750,000 jobs in Minnesota are supported by trade – that’s one out of every five jobs in the state – and the share of jobs tied to trade has nearly doubled in the past 25 years. The goods and services exported by Minnesota businesses account for nearly 10% of the state’s GDP. What this means is that the success of Minnesota’s economy is inextricably linked to the strength of our global trading relationships.”

Furthermore, Weaver wrote, “Preserving strong trade relationships with Canada and Mexico is important for Minnesota’s leading agricultural producers, manufacturers, medical device companies, and other large employers. It’s perhaps even more important for small and medium sized

[continued on page 12]
companies, given that the vast majority of exporters in Minnesota have fewer than 500 employees.”

TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS

In November 2019, Creighton University’s Mid-America Business Conditions Index, went below growth neutral - its lowest level in three years. This is the third time in the last four months that the overall reading has fallen below a growth neutral 50.0. The Business Conditions Index, which ranges between 0 and 100, slumped to 48.6 from October’s 52.6.

“Slow global growth and trade skirmishes and wars are negatively affecting growth among manufacturers in the region. For 2019, manufacturing in Mid-America lost jobs at a pace of minus 0.1% compared to a positive job growth of 0.04% for U.S. manufacturing,” said Ernie Goss, PhD, director of Creighton University’s Economic Forecasting Group and the Jack A. MacAllister Chair in Regional Economics in the Heider College of Business.

But looking ahead six months, economic optimism, as captured by the November Business Confidence Index, climbed to 52.9 from October’s very weak 47.3, the survey concluded.

“I expect business confidence to depend heavily on trade talks with China, and the passage of the nation’s trade agreement with Canada and Mexico, or USMCA. Quick passage of USMCA is very important for the regional economy and business confidence,” said Goss.

When USMCA was signed, the National Association of Manufacturers’ (NAM) President and CEO Jay Timmons said: “The signing of the USMCA is a landmark milestone for American manufacturing workers. Manufacturers called for a trilateral agreement, and this moves us one step closer to restoring certainty to the North American market, the biggest market for U.S. exports in the world. By securing the relationship with our North American allies, we are also better positioned to demonstrate a strong and united front against China’s unfair trade practices and end the harm they inflict on manufacturers in America.

“Manufacturers need certainty now, not later,” Timmons continued, “With 2 million American jobs dependent on exports to Canada and Mexico, Congress should move expeditiously to review the USMCA before the end of this year.”

RECESSION TALK?

By late summer of 2019, most economist were predicting there would be a recession in 2020, and then in November, talk of a 2020 recession faded.

The Economics Group of Wells Fargo Securities said in its November monthly outlook that “Worries about an impending recession have diminished considerably since this summer, when the yield curve briefly inverted sending financial markets into a frenzy and sparking fears that this record-long business expansion was near its end. Most of the concern stems from the trade war with China, which has slowed global economic growth and led to a pullback in manufacturing orders and output.”

“Now that the Federal Reserve has cut the federal funds rate three times and the yield curve is once again upward sloping. The Fed has shown that it will do what it takes to offset the headwinds from slower global economic growth and continued uncertainty around U.S. trade policy.

“While data from the manufacturing sector remain weak, the overall macro data have continued to come in slightly better than expected, with job growth remaining strong and real GDP expanding at a 1.9% pace during the third quarter.”

The Wells Fargo economic report characterized average job growth gains for the third quarter of 2019 as “stellar” with 176,000 jobs. “Moreover, the factory sector looks like it would have posted a slight gain in employment if not for the GM strike. The resilience in factory sector employment is surprising to some, but should be reassuring to everyone. Even with the lack of visibility surrounding trade issues and global supply chains, most firms continue to cite a lack of skilled workers as one of their greatest immediate challenges.”

MOVING AHEAD

In order to move the economy forward in 2020, experts agree that a trade deal with China is imperative, especially now that the USMCA has been ratified. Together, both will create confidence and boost business spending.

The Conference Board, an independent, member-driven think tank that has provided economic insight since 1916, said in its November report that U.S. real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) performed better than consensus forecasts in the third quarter of 2019, and “we anticipate growth to tick up to 2 percent in Q4, but then to moderate slightly into 2020.”

Consumer spending in the third quarter was the “primary driver of growth,” according to the Conference Board, and it “expects robust demand over the holiday season in Q4. This trend is underpinned by solid job growth and wage increases. However, as employment growth will likely slow into 2020, which is our expectation, there’s likely to be a cooling in consumer spending growth as well. This will serve as a headwind to overall GDP growth.”

Bloomberg Economics concluded that “the business community might be spooked by Trump’s trade wars, but so far American households are not. As long as that continues to be true, the U.S. should avoid a recession in 2020. But there’s not a lot of room for error.”

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“The benefits of global trade are undeniable. Trade creates jobs and boosts economic growth, reduces consumer prices and expands choices.”

Charlie Weaver, Executive Director, Minnesota Business Partnership
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Each year one of the largest providers of mailing and shipping services in the world orders millions of plastic totes from MDI, a manufacturer with four locations in Minnesota that also happens to be a nonprofit.

Most people have seen these white totes. They're often used by postal workers to store, sort, or deliver mail. But many people aren't familiar with the manufacturer – and employees – behind making these totes.

About half of the MDI's 400 employees have disabilities, yet they have found a place within the state's local supply chain, having been trained on everything from sonic welding to medical device assembly.

Over the years, MDI has produced almost 100 million totes or "flat tubs" for the U.S. Postal Service and many other Fortune 100 and 500 companies. But they also offer other services, such as medical assembly and kitting, that may be of interest to local manufacturers.

"Plastics manufacturing is one component of our business," said MDI Vice President of Sales Barbara Majerus. "A lot of companies order plastic totes and trays to organize, transport, and store a variety of goods, both within and between facilities. We can customize the size, color, weight, and other features of these plastic storage products based on our customers' specific needs."

One major customer, for example, needs plastic bins with extra weight on the bottom so they don't roll off the conveyor belts. Some manufacturers order color-coded bins for their production lines so they can visually see where parts are at in the manufacturing process. Other companies benefit from containers with space-saving dividers designed around the products they need to hold.

Unlike cardboard boxes, plastic totes are durable and reusable. They can be easily stacked or collapsed when not needed.

"We operate in a cell type manufacturing environment. And we implement lean principles and hold everyone to a high standard for quality, efficiency, and on-time performance."

Barbara Majerus, MDI Vice President of Sales

RANGE OF SERVICES

The second component of MDI’s business is contract labor and production services.

"We offer a range of kitting and packaging services – anything that requires manual intervention," Majerus said. "A lot of companies don't have the space or resource capacity to do the hands-on work needed for some jobs. If something needs to be assembled, packaged or re-worked, we can help with that."

Recently, MDI opened a “White Room” for medical device assembly, where employees cut, fold, and package surgical drapes, assemble and package medical devices, and label and test certain products. One customer, for example, contracts with MDI to assemble diabetes monitoring kits prior to retail.

MDI believes they are the only nonprofit in the Midwest with ISO 13485:2016 certification along with FDA registration for medical assembly and packaging.

"We're looking to grow our commercial services business, particularly in the medical device area,” Majerus said. “Manufacturers can tap into MDI’s employees as an extension of their workforce. We’re happy to help with certain jobs that require testing, assembly, labeling, packaging, or even re-working or re-inspection.”

MDI has nearly 300,000 square feet across its four Minnesota facilities located in Minneapolis, Hibbing, Grand Rapids, and Cohasset. In addition to ample space and resources, MDI is equipped with shrink wrap machines, conveyor belts, box erectors, cutting tables, and other machines to assist with manual labor services.

Recently MDI also invested in a new 3D wire bender to begin manufacturing specialty wire – another relatively new capability to support the plastics

MDI is ISO 13485:2016 and FDA registered offering contract manufacturing for medical kitting and assembly in their Minneapolis warehouse.
manufacturing operation and market opportunities.

In addition to post offices and manufacturing floors, MDI’s footprints can be found inside retail stores. For example, the company assembles cardboard displays for Peets Coffee, loads it with different flavors, and ships it directly to grocers. It also receives truckloads of certain products, such as juice beverage pouches, that need to be sorted, grouped, and put on pallets – saving the customer both time and space while offering the variety of juices they want. Additionally, a large board game manufacturer contracts with MDI to box up the contents of several types of games before they hit store shelves.

“MDI prides itself on providing a variety of standard and custom products and services at the right price with short lead-times,” Majerus said.

PUTTING CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES FIRST

Because MDI employs people with disabilities, some people may be worried about less than satisfactory turnaround time or quality. However, MDI has earned high ranks for customer satisfaction rankings, on-time delivery scores, and other measures, allowing it to be competitive on multiple fronts.

“We operate in a cell type manufacturing environment,” Majerus said. “And we implement lean principles and hold everyone to a high standard for quality, efficiency, and on-time performance. Our customers would be the first ones to verify that we run a pretty tight ship.”

Over the years, MDI has built a reputation among several Fortune 500 companies, such as 3M, which contracts with MDI for a range of services, including shingle testing, air conditioning filter packaging, and medical assembly. Other major customers include Andersen Windows, Amazon, and Frito Lay.

As a nonprofit, MDI is also committed to the greater good. The organization’s mission is to serve people with disabilities by offering inclusive employment opportunities and services. Employees earn at least minimum wage with full benefits.

“We have a very loyal and committed workforce and do a lot of skills training,” Majerus said. “These people show up to work every day and are fantastic employees. Best of all, they’re happy to be here. In fact, some folks have been with us for 30 to 35 years.”

In addition to offering in-house employment, MDI provides job coaching, training, and skill development for all people with disabilities, not just its employees. In 2018 it helped 52 people secure jobs in the community.

MDI was founded in 1964 by a nun in Saint Paul who wanted to build an occupational training center for 14 high school students who were about to graduate without job opportunities. The idea was simple: train and empower people with disabilities to become self-sufficient.

Today MDI is continuing that mission for hundreds of people with disabilities and is 95 percent self-sufficient itself – meaning it relies on grants and donations for only 5 percent of its revenue. It puts purpose ahead of profits.

“We will always strive to be a high-performing organization. Our customers, employees, and communities deserve nothing less,” Majerus said.

MELISSA DEBILZAN is a writer for Precision Manufacturing Journal. She can be reached at melissadebilzan@yahoo.com.
As an aluminum manufacturing company based out of Brandon, Minn., Voyager Industries can create just about anything out of aluminum. And it does.

One of Voyager’s most recognized products coming through its production line is Yetti Outdoors, an all-season fish house.

In 2010, Voyager began welding ice fishing houses out of aluminum, making them virtually maintenance-free and lightweight. That was back when Voyager’s facilities housed around 30 employees and before it added machining capabilities, which would open doors to new customers.

Today, Voyager’s 70,000-square-foot building is sandwiched between corn fields and farmland, and poses a stark contrast to the grain bins and small developments surrounding the facility.

The building bustles with 100 employees who tackle projects many Minnesotans consider must-haves: aluminum docks with maintenance-free decking, utility trailers, and fishing houses.

Voyager’s growth has exploded since it was founded more than 21 years ago. Founder Gary Suckow started the company as an aluminum distributor. Back then, the employees used basic saws and drill presses to add value to the aluminum they distributed. Now, Voyager has router tables and machining centers and its employees cut, weld, and distribute aluminum parts for everything from mom and pop operations to companies as large as 3M, where Voyager assists in the production of little-known safety-related products that help lift construction workers out of manholes.

“The secret to the growth hasn’t been entirely on the addition of new equipment or more employees,” said Mike Draper, Voyager’s Sales & Marketing Manager. “It has also been the quality and consistency of the product. It seems simple, but if we can deliver good product in a timely manner, we and our customers will be successful.”

YEAR-ROUND FISH HOUSES

This year, Voyager is celebrating its 10th year creating Yetti fish houses. Throughout the last decade, the luxury ice houses have evolved to meet the needs of an ever-changing ice fishing industry.

“We started out with smaller, more traditional houses,” Draper said. “Now, we have full units with showers, air conditioning, and heating units. People are using their fish houses year round.”

Yeti Outdoor houses are prime examples of Voyager’s commitment to consistency and quality. The houses are fully welded from the floor to the walls to the roof, with insulation and furnishings like beds and a kitchen to complete the product. The houses have set the new standard for ice fishing, combining the thrill of the outdoors with the comfort and warmth of a small cabin.

The ice houses double as trailers, with impact-resistant wheel wells that are both “functional and stylish.” The roofs, which are made of fiberglass, reduce the weight of the ice houses, allowing customers to carry more inside. And the aluminum studs on the interior are coated with foam insulation tape to eliminate condensation.

“Yeti’s all-aluminum construction makes it lighter than the competition,” Draper said. “Combine this with a fully engineered and tested product and we have one of the most durable houses available on the market.”

Draper said Voyager puts Yetti houses through a rigorous testing process before sending them out to retailers.

“We’ve been known to pull fish houses for 15,000 to 20,000 miles over rough roads and raise and lower them hundreds of times,” Draper said. “We also overload the ice houses to see when or where it will stress or break. This all ensures a more well-built product that we can stand behind. It’s a lot easier to put an extended warranty on a product when you know it’s not going to fail.”

The Yetti houses, which are sold with five-year warranties, can be purchased as empty shells or completely furnished with cabinets, kitchens, beds, and even full bathrooms and fireplaces. Voyager works with nine dealers out of 14 different locations in the upper Midwest and Canada.

“We take pride in building a high-quality product,” Draper said of the Yetti fish houses.

MADDIE DEBILZAN graduated with a journalism degree from Bethel University in 2019. She has been published by the Associated Press, Pioneer Press, Salon Media, and Star Tribune. She is currently a full-time reporter for Southwest News Media.
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trevor.kendall@fadcorp.com

Managing Your Pressure Efficiently
Everything is made somewhere, but many people don’t appreciate how many things are made right here in Minnesota. In all parts of our state, small and mid-sized precision manufacturers are welding, stamping, machining, and forming parts that are used across a wide array of industries and by people all over the world. These manufacturers also are providing family-sustaining careers with good pay and benefits for their employees.

But for too long we have downplayed the value of a career in manufacturing and told young people that there is only one path to success - a four-year degree. Ensuring we have educational pathways into careers in manufacturing isn’t just important for students, it’s also critical to the future economic success of our state. A recent report by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) found that manufacturing employers had difficulty filling 62% percent of job vacancies. According to a recent survey by Enterprise Minnesota, nearly half of manufacturing executives identified the inability to attract qualified workers as
their most significant barrier to future growth. Finding skilled workers can be an especially acute challenge in greater Minnesota and workforce shortages threaten the prosperity of communities across our state.

Fortunately, manufacturers are already stepping up to help address this challenge through innovative partnerships with school districts, technical colleges, and the state.

Bemidji High School is partnering with local employers and professionals to give their students non-traditional classroom experiences that could lead them to important trade jobs right after graduation. Allowing students to succeed in a variety of settings now means our state will succeed across the board in the future. That’s what a strong, diverse economy looks like.

During manufacturing month, I toured Ajax Metal Forming Solutions, a metal forming shop in Fridley, and learned about the successful registered apprenticeship program they have with the Department of Labor and Industry. They are providing their apprentices with an opportunity to earn a good wage while building their skills. This is a win-win for the company and the worker. Minnesota manufacturers are ready to put our young people to work, and I’m working to make sure educators are getting them there.

As governor, I’m working to expand and deepen these partnerships. My One Minnesota budget included an increase in funding for Youth Skills Training - a program spearheaded by the MPMA - that pairs classroom instruction with on-the-job learning opportunities for high school students in high-demand industries like manufacturing. Programs like these are a great way for young people to build skills and get hands-on experience in the industry. During the legislative session, I worked across the aisle to secure increased funding that will allow more students and businesses to participate in the YST program.

But we need to do more. This upcoming year, I will be fighting for a robust bonding package to include much-needed capital investments in our higher education facilities - including two-year technical colleges. These institutions are a critical part of our workforce development infrastructure. It is crucial that they have the resources they need to meet our 21st century workforce needs.

In Minnesota we don’t fear the future - we create it! Through strong partnerships and by investing in students, workers, and manufacturers. Together we can build a 21st century workforce, a strong manufacturing sector, and a state where all Minnesotans have the opportunity to build the future they want for themselves and their families.

Gov. Tim Walz

GOV. TIM WALZ is Minnesota’s 41st governor. His career has spanned public service – from serving in the military, to serving as a high school teacher and football coach, to serving Minnesota in Congress.
In November, MPMA joined state legislators for a statewide workforce development tour to highlight innovative partnerships between Minnesota businesses and local schools and colleges.

Led by Sen. Paul Anderson (R-Plymouth), Chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee, the tour made stops in communities throughout Minnesota that have developed robust public-private partnerships to train the next generation of workers.

The first stop was in Faribault, where tour members met with MPMA member MRG Tool and Die. President Rod Gramse provided the group with a plant tour, which was followed by a roundtable discussion. Anderson spoke about the importance of “modernizing vo-tech” through programs like Youth Skills Training (YST). Sen. John Jasinski (R – Faribault) added that career-focused training programs for students require teamwork from employers, high schools, and colleges - and such programs can be powerful economic development tools for communities like Faribault as well as Red Wing and Winona, which the group visited later in the day.

On the second day, the tour stopped at Wyoming Machine in Stacy. Sisters and Co-Presidents Lori Tapani and Traci Tapani provided a shop tour and then shared insights about how small employers can create internal talent pipelines. Over the past several years, manufacturers like Wyoming Machine have become increasingly active in training their own talent, and they are tapping tools like the workforce system and grant programs.

Heading northwest, the delegation traveled to the Brainerd Lakes Region, where they met with representatives from Pequot Tool & Manufacturing (another MPMA member) and the Lakes Area Manufacturers Alliance. Following an interactive tour, the group heard from several area manufacturers about their workforce challenges and how they have pulled together regionally to develop strategies that better connect high school students to career opportunities. One key strategy utilized by Pequot Tool is the PIPELINE Program run by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry – which is designed to help employers upskill employees through on-the-job training paired with classroom instruction.

The workforce tour demonstrated to policymakers that manufacturers throughout Minnesota are actively leading efforts to launch the next generation on career pathways in high-demand industries. Additionally, the workforce tour helped reinforce MPMA’s work as the primary driver of workforce training initiatives at the Capitol, which will continue in the 2020 Legislative session (see legislative priorities listed with this article).
The Minnesota Legislature will reconvene on February 11, for the second year of the biennial cycle. The state’s two-year budget was set during the 2019 session, so only minimal work will be done toward a supplemental budget this year. The focus for 2020 will be on policy issues as well as a capital projects (aka bonding). A $1.3 billion budget surplus has been projected by the state; however, there are many competing demands for surplus dollars, including several areas that did not receive significant funding last session and shortfalls at the Department of Health.

In line with what was discussed on the workforce tour, MPMA anticipates being active on workforce issues again this session. Much work has been done to strengthen career pathways for manufacturing, but more roadblocks still need to be removed in order to build Minnesota’s skilled workforce.

MPMA will be working to expand the ability of high school students to do meaningful training on the shop floor, strengthen high school manufacturing programs, and help remove licensure barriers for technical education teachers and experts. MPMA will also weigh in on other issues impacting manufacturers, including fixing the new wage theft law that passed last session, continuing to push for Section 179 conformity, and lending our input to the emerging conversations on how proposed green energy, paid sick leave, and recreational marijuana laws will impact our industry.

MPMA serves as the voice of manufacturers like you at the Minnesota Capitol, and in doing so helps strengthen the manufacturing industry.

AMY WALSTIEN is the former Director of Government Relations for MPMA and currently serves as the Education Policy and Workforce Development Director for the Minnesota Business Partnership, a business organization comprised of 120+ CEOs and senior executives from Minnesota’s largest employers.
Automation is a growing trend in the manufacturing industry with manufacturers turning to it as a method for solving business needs.

Twin City EDM & Manufacturing, a machine shop in Fridley, with customers in the health care industry, recently invested in a robot to do a job that it couldn’t fill because of worker shortages facing the manufacturing industry. “Finding labor was very difficult, so we decided to bring in a robot to do the job,” said Steve Lindell, Vice President at Twin City EDM. “That robot is able to run multiple machines and work through the night.”

Twin City EDM has a few robots doing very labor-intensive work, such as running the wire EDM, and it plans to invest in more. “We’ll add another robot to do our milling work, with the goal of having this robot be flexible and move from job to job,” says Lindell.

Tolerance Masters, a Circle Pines-based contract manufacturer for the aerospace industry, purchases new CNC machines regularly to help meet their customers’ increasingly tight turn-around times.

“We don’t produce a high enough volume that would justify investing in robotics,” said Jim Mackin, CFO and Controller of Tolerance Masters. “Instead, we’ve been buying new CAD and CNC machines every year to address the needs of our customers.”

Mackin says the company purchases rather than leases the equipment because it makes sense economically. There’s also a fairly quick return on the investment – sometimes in as little as 18 months – and the company can get the benefit of the depreciation. What’s more, state-of-the-art equipment can be used for multiple utilities as the business expands.

Whatever the reason, automation can help manufacturing companies increase productivity, efficiencies, and competitiveness. Whether it’s robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), or simply additional machines, automation can equate to big gains for manufacturing companies.

But of course, the big question is how do companies pay for the investment?

The good news is there are options. If a manufacturer wants to simply write a check for the full amount of the new automation equipment, they can. However, most manufacturing companies do not have the capital to spend or do not want to spend it out-of-pocket.

Instead, they look to purchase or lease automation equipment through financing. Manufacturers have several financing options available when looking to invest in a new piece of automation equipment.

- Current Banking Relationship: This option is typically straightforward and simple since an established relationship exists and the bank is usually familiar with the business and business assets. As a result, there is generally less documentation and work required to determine eligibility as compared with a new bank relationship. While there aren’t many downsides to financing through an existing banking relationship, some businesses choose to use their equipment financing needs as an opportunity to diversify their financing relationships. That is, they maintain the relationship with their bank, but choose to work with a different financial institution to finance new equipment.

- Bank-owned Leasing Company: These companies are specialized divisions within a bank that are usually able to get financing completed quickly. Most bank-owned leasing companies hold the transaction for their own portfolio. This is an important point when a company finances equipment. Some equipment finance companies will sell the transaction unbeknownst to the customer and suddenly the company is unaware of who owns or finances the assets on the manufacturing floor. This can be problematic as not having a point-of-contact eliminates the company’s ability to know who to contact if they need to renegotiate equipment financing agreement terms or have questions relating to the contract.

- Vendor Financing: Getting financing from the company that manufactures the equipment or the dealer selling the equipment is a good option for a few reasons. First, a vendor financing program may offer a subsidized interest rate, which could save money over the life of the loan. In addition, they may take a higher residual position on a true lease, providing lower monthly payments over the term of the lease. This can be advantageous if there are no
plans to buy the equipment at the end of the lease. It’s always a good idea to ask the vendor if they offer financing and if so, to investigate the terms. Depending on the situation, vendor financing could be a good option.

- Independent Equipment Financing Company: Another financing option is to use an independent equipment financing company. This may be a viable option for some, as these companies operate independently from banks and may be able to offer financing solution that a bank will not.

**Other Financing Considerations**

Along with choosing the right financing partner, there are other considerations related to financing new automation or other equipment.

One key consideration is how to structure the financing. Sometimes it can take several months after a new piece of equipment is ordered to get it manufactured to specifications, installed, and producing to its full capacity. In this case, it may be important to consider a step-up payment structure where the initial payments start lower and increase every year thereafter as the equipment operates more efficiently and at capacity.

It also makes sense to consult with a tax expert to determine if the purchaser can fully utilize the depreciation benefit. Depending on the answer, a knowledgeable equipment financing company will help structure the most beneficial financing product, which may or may not be a “True Lease.”

**Relationships Are Important**

It’s important to work with someone who understands the business, its goals, and the reasons why an investment is being made into equipment. Lenders will need to know if the equipment is needed to help with one customer and the duration of that customer contract. They also will want to know plans for the equipment once the contract ends; will the equipment be sold or used for a variety of applications? This level of business understanding will help a lender offer the best financing solution based on the situation.

What’s more, sometimes automation technology is so new – think 3D printing when it first came onto the scene – that the financing company needs education before being comfortable financing it. While they can do their own research, a company can add value in the education process by providing any research that has already been conducted within the organization.

It is fair to say that automation is here to stay. As manufacturing companies consider new equipment to improve manufacturing processes or to help with labor shortages, there are many financing options. Collaborating with a trusted expert is key to identifying the best financing solution for equipment investments.

MARK PAETZNICK is Vice President, Equipment Finance and Leasing at Fidelity Bank in Edina. He can be reached at 952.830.7203 or at markp@fidelitybankmn.com.

“Finding labor was very difficult, so we decided to bring in a robot to do the job. That robot is able to run multiple machines and work through the night.”

Steve Lindell, Vice President, Twin City EDM
Ellison Technologies
John Schwartz
13400 10th Ave N
Plymouth, MN 55441-5514
www.ellisontechnologies.com
jschwartz@ellisontechnologies.com
PHONE (763) 559-6099
FOUNDED 1961 MPMA 01/01/89
EMPL 25 SQ FT 17,000
IND SERVED All
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Electrical Discharge Machining
- Machine Tool Sales Chip Cutting
- Turning

Enterprise Minnesota, Inc.
John Connody
2100 Summer St. NE, Suite 150
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1041
www.enterpriseminnesota.org/
john.connolly@enterpriseminnesota.org
PHONE (612) 373-2900
FOUNDED 1987 MPMA 08/30/10
EMPL 29
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Economic Development
- ISO Certification Services

Erickson Metals of MN, Inc.
Todd Siegfried
501 93rd Ave NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433-5803
www.ermc.com
tseysfried@ericksonmetals.com
PHONE (612) 785-6554
MPMA 04/25/90 EMPL 2,700
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Insurance

Fidelity Bank Equipment Finance
Mark Pfanznitz
7600 Parklawn Avenue, Suite 150
Edina, MN 55435
markpf@fidelitybankmn.com
PHONE (952) 830-7283
FOUNDED 1970 MPMA 01/31/88
EMPL 45
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Banking/Financing

Fredrickson & Byron, P.A.
Jeffrey T. Barta
200 5th St Ste 400
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1431
www.fredlaw.com
www.fredlawusa.com
jborgen@fredlaw.com
PHONE (612) 492-7193
FOUNDED 1948 MPMA 05/28/15
EMPL 563 SQ FT 204,459
IND SERVED Distribution, Manufacturing
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Employee Benefits
- Legal
- Mergers & Acquisitions

Haimer USA
Craig Schepers
134 E Hill St
Villa Park, IL 60181-1805
www.haimer-usa.com
info@haimer-usa.com
PHONE (630) 833-1300
FOUNDED 1990 MPMA 03/03/15
EMPL 25
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Machine Tool Sales Chip Cutting
- Machine Tool Sales Fabrication

Hales Machine Tool, Inc.
Dan Arlett
2730 Hiawatha Ln N
Plymouth, MN 55447-4843
www.halesmachinetool.com
sales@halesmachinetool.com
PHONE (763) 553-1711
FOUNDED 1983 MPMA 01/01/84
EMPL 25 SQ FT 13,100
IND SERVED Agricultural, Defense, Electronics, Medical, Mining
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Additive Manufacturing/Industrial
- 3D Printing
- Machine & Electrical Repair
- Machine Tool Sales Chip Cutting
- Machine Tool Sales Fabrication
- Machine Tool Sales (used)
- Workholding

Harfst Automation, Inc.
Myron Moser
6533 Flying Cloud Drive #100
Elden Prairie, MN 55434
www.harfst.com
myron.moser@harfst.com
PHONE (952) 974-2500
FOUNDED 1958 MPMA 02/28/18
EMPL 95
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Automation Integration
- Robotics/Automation

Hennepin Technical College
Matt Leaf
9000 Brooklyn Blvd
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445-2389
www.hennepintech.edu
matt.leaf@hennepintech.edu
PHONE (952) 995-1345
FOUNDED 1972 MPMA 06/09/98
EMPL 300
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Technical Colleges/Education

Hibbing Fabricators, Inc.
Sandy Bryant
525 W 41st St
Hibbing, MN 55746-3062
www.hibfab.com
sandy@hibfab.com
PHONE (218) 262-5575
FOUNDED 1985 MPMA 11/01/91
EMPL 27
IND SERVED Aerospace, Automotive, Computer, Medical, Telecommunication
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Fabricating
- Laser Cutting
- Sheet Metal Fabrication
**Hdruck Machine Company**
Steve Kingdon
1281 16th Ave N
Plymouth, MN 55441-3840
www.hdruckmachine.com
skingdon@hdruckmachine.com
PHONE (763) 566-3792

FOUNDED 1985 MPMA 12/07/10
EMPL 30
SQ FT 46,000

IND SERVED: Medical

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Milling
- Production Machining
- Turning - Swiss

**Huet Manufacturing Company**
Paul Huet
550 Wheeler St
Saint Paul, MN 55104-1701
www.huet.com
p.huett@huet.com
PHONE (651) 646-1869

FOUNDED 1926 MPMA 04/04/00
EMPL 35
SQ FT 46,000

IND SERVED: Aerospace, Industrial

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Powder Coating
- Sheet Metal Fabrication

**ICA Corporation**
Steve Hogland
12130 Brockton Ln N
Maple Grove, MN 55369-9325
www.icacorp.com
steveh@icacorp.com
PHONE (763) 428-2800

FOUNDED 1993 MPMA 10/01/96
EMPL 82
SQ FT 60,000

IND SERVED: Electronics, Optical

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Assembly
- Sheet Metal Fabrication
- Turning

**Ideal Industries, Inc.**
Tom Kipping
7630 363rd Ave NW
Ponca, MN 55371
www.idealindustriesinc.com
tom@idealindustriesinc.com
PHONE (763) 389-2736

FOUNDED 1981 MPMA 08/02/94
EMPL 35
SQ FT 30,000

IND SERVED: Agricultural, Computer, Contract Manufacturing, Fluid Power, Manufacturing, Medical, Precision Manufacturing, Railroad, Stamping, Telecommunication

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Milling
- Production Machining
- Prototypes/Short Run
- Stamping
- Turning

**IFC-Industrial Fabrication Services, Inc.**
Matt Dobkett
460 Commerce St
Lake Crystal, MN 56055-4589
www.ifcsteelfab.com
matt@ifcsteelfab.com
PHONE (570) 726-6000

FOUNDED 1984 MPMA 06/02/09
EMPL 75
SQ FT 70,000

IND SERVED: Machining, Waterjet Cutting, Structural Fabrication; Sheetmetal, Plate Fabrication; AWS D1.1 Welding

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Assembly
- Engineering & Design Services
- Fabricating

**Image Machining Machine Inc.**
Jesse Scholl
6831 Osage St
St. Louis Park, MN 55426-4412
www.imagemachiningmachine.com
jms@imagemachiningmachine.com
PHONE (520) 922-9311

FOUNDED 1984 MPMA 07/22/13
EMPL 16
SQ FT 10,000

IND SERVED: Aerospace, Industrial, Medical, Semi-Conductor, Microelectronics

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Electrical Discharge Machining
- Milling
- Turning

**Industrial Safety Group, Inc.**
Mike Antolik
12655 Industrial Blvd NW
Elk River, MN 55330-2446
www.isandmachinemachine.com
sales@isandmachinemachine.com
PHONE (763) 421-0114

FOUNDED 1977 MPMA 08/15/06
EMPL 48
SQ FT 43,000

IND SERVED: Medical

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Machine Tool Manufacturer (OEM)
- Production Machining
- Prototypes/Short Run

**Jet Edge Waterjet Systems**
Steve Murray
12070 43rd St NE
St. Michael, MN 55376-8427
www.jetedgewaterjets.com
SteveMurray@jetedge.com
PHONE (763) 497-6780

FOUNDED 1984 MPMA 06/07/19
EMPL 38
SQ FT 100,000

IND SERVED: Aerospace, Automation, Automotive, Contract Manufacturing, Defense, Die Casting, Fabricating, Industrial, Machine Job Shop, Machining, Manufacturing, Metals, Metalworking, Precision Manufacturing, Rubber Molding, Tool & Die

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Machine Tool Manufacturer (OEM)
- Water Jet Cutting

**Jonaco Machine LLC**
Bill Russell
3990 Peavy Rd
Chaska, MN 55318-2300
www.jonacomachinc.com
sales@jonacomachinc.com
PHONE (952) 488-5544

FOUNDED 1997 MPMA 04/01/02
EMPL 130
SQ FT 7,000

IND SERVED: Aerospace, Medical

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Machining - Large Capacity
- Production Machining
- Prototypes/Short Run

**KDI Precision Manufacturing**
Steve McKown
14150 Northdale Blvd.
Rogers, MN 55374
www.kdimfg.com
steve.mckown@kdimfg.com
PHONE (763) 428-5140

FOUNDED 1982 MPMA 07/12/18
EMPL 22
SQ FT 22,000

IND SERVED: All

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Assembly
- Laser Marking
- Production Machining
- Prototypes/Short Run

**Jones Metal, Inc.**
Tony Begnud
3201 3rd Ave
Mankato, MN 56001-2725
www.jonesmetalinc.com
tbegnud@jonesmetalinc.com
PHONE (507) 625-4436

FOUNDED 1942 MPMA 06/02/09
EMPL 100
SQ FT 120,000

IND SERVED: Agricultural, Assembly, Automation, Banding, Construction, Contract Manufacturing, Defense, Energy, Fabricating, Food, Forestry, Heavy Equipment, Industrial Equipment, Machining, Manufacturing, Medical, Metalworking, Military, Nuclear, OEM’s, Off-Road Equipment, Oil & Gas, Power, Precision Manufacturing, Railroad

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Fabricating
- Laser Cutting
- Laser Marking
- Metal Finishing
- Milling
- Plating/Coatings
- Prototypes/Short Run
- Sheet & Plate Rolling
- Sheet Metal Fabrication
- Water Jet Cutting
- Welding - Robotic

**K & G Manufacturing Co.**
Bob Basiqi
PO Box 187
Faribault, MN 55021-0187
www.kgmgf.com
basiqi@kgmgf.com
PHONE (507) 334-5501

FOUNDED 1937 MPMA 05/06/97
EMPL 65
SQ FT 41,000

IND SERVED: Aerospace, Agricultural, Construction, Defense, Marine, Medical, Technology, Recreational

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Milling
- Production Machining
- Turning

**Korin Electronics Repair**
Tom Klein
8950 County Road 6 NW
Princeton, MN 55371-5248
www.korinelectronicsrepair.com
tom@korinelectronicsrepair.com
PHONE (612) 899-6425

FOUNDED 1984 MPMA 03/04/14
EMPL 2
SQ FT 1,000

IND SERVED: Manufacturing, Machine tool

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Machine & Electrical Repair
- Machining - Large Capacity
- Production Machining

**Kurt Manufacturing Company Inc.**
Steve Carlen
5280 Main Street NE
Minneapolis, MN 55421-1594
www.kurt.com
stevec@kurt.com
PHONE (763) 572-1500

FOUNDED 1946 MPMA 10/01/55
EMPL 100
SQ FT 120,000

IND SERVED: Aerospace, Defense, Energy, Off Road Equipment, Semi Conductor

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Assembly
- Machining - Large Capacity
- Milling
- Production Machining
- Screw Turning
- Workholding

CERTIFICATIONS
- ISO 9001:2008, AS9100C

**Lake Engineering, Inc.**
Mike Magnuson
2085 Daniels Street, P.O. Box 787
Long Lake, MN 55356-0787
www.lakeengineering.com
MikeM@lakeengineering.com
PHONE (952) 253-2400

FOUNDED 1951 MPMA 12/21/87
EMPL 43
SQ FT 25,000

IND SERVED: Aviation

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Milling
- Production Machining
- Turning

**Lake Superior College**
Max Udovich
2101 Trinity Rd
Duluth, MN 55811-3349
www.lscl.edu
m.удович@lscl.edu
PHONE (218) 733-7732

FOUNDED 1970 MPMA 11/07/00
SQ FT 5,000

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Technical Colleges/Education

**LaMott Enterprises, Inc.**
Steve LaMott
3005 California St NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55421-3511
www.lamottenterprises.com
steve@lamottenterprises.com
PHONE (763) 781-0900

FOUNDED 1994 MPMA 08/01/01
EMPL 1
SQ FT 23,000

IND SERVED: Aerospace, Automotive, Defense

PRODUCTS / SERVICES
- Precision Grinding
- Production Machining
- Turning - Swiss
MEMBER DIRECTORY

Larkin Hoffman Attorneys
Mark Genter
8300 Nerman Center Dr Ste 1000
Bloomington, MN 55437-1060
www.larkinholman.com
mgenter@larkinholman.com
PHONE (952) 963-3282

FOUNDED 1958 MPMA 05/06/08
EMPL 157
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Employee Benefits
Legal
Mergers & Acquisitions

Larson Building Inc.
Andy Larson
200 1st Street South
Buffalo, MN 55313
andy.larson@larsonbuilding.com
PHONE (763) 634-5600

FOUNDED 2011 MPMA 03/27/18
EMPL 12
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Construction
Real Estate

LB Carlson, LLP
Dea Johnson
600 US Highway 169 N, Suite 650
Minneapolis, MN 55441
www.carlson-advisors.com
dpjohnson@bcarton.com
PHONE (763) 971-4819

FOUNDED 1974 MPMA 05/04/93
EMPL 55
SQ FT 12,000
IND SERVED Construction, Energy, Manufacturing, Precision Manufacturing, Professional Services, Transportation, Real Estate, Graphic Arts, SOCs, Estate, Construction not for profit, Home Health Care
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Accounting
Mergers & Acquisitions
R & D Tax Credit Consultants

Lion Engineering Plastics, Inc.
Scott King
1207 Cliff Road E.
Burnsville, MN 55337
www.lineop.com
sking@lineop.com
PHONE (952) 641-6300

FOUNDED 2008 MPMA 03/03/09
EMPL 5
SQ FT 7,200
IND SERVED Automated, Machine Job Shop, Machining, Manufacturing, OEM’s
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Plastic Sheet Rod & Tube
Sawing

Lowell Inc.
Jim Steritz
9425 E 3rd Ave N
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445
www.lowellinc.com
js@lowellinc.com
PHONE (612) 775-2693

FOUNDED 1964 MPMA 03/07/16
EMPL 60
SQ FT 51,000
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Production Machining

Lube-Tech & Partners, LLC
Mike Jordan
858 Transfer Rd
Saint Paul, MN 55114-1411
www.lubetech.com
mikejordan@lubetech.com
PHONE (651) 636-7990

FOUNDED 1993 MPMA 12/31/93
EMPL 225
SQ FT 300,000
IND SERVED Machining, Metalworking
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Coolants/Lubricants
Lubrication Equipment & Systems
Recycling

M. Vincent & Associates, Ltd.
David Hannah
9431 Penn Ave S
Bloomington, MN 55431-2320
www.vinecentmetals.com
dhannah@vincentmetals.com
PHONE (952) 884-7373

FOUNDED 2013 MPMA 03/04/14
EMPL 12
SQ FT 800
IND SERVED Automotive, Automotive, Contract Manufacturing, Fabricating, Heavy Equipment, HVAC, Industrial Equipment, Manufacturing, Metalworking
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Automation Integration
Machine Tool Sales Fabrication
Tool Repair/Serviceing

Manufacturers Alliance
Kirk Sweeney
8421 Wayzata Blvd.
Golden Valley, MN 55426
www.mfrall.com
kirsweeney@mfrall.com
PHONE (763) 533-8229

MPMA 02/12/15
Manufacturing Solutions of MN Inc.
Jim Lemons
7130 E Point Douglas Rd S
Cottage Grove, MN 55016-3023
www.msmni.com
jim.lemons@msmini.com
PHONE (651) 294-7799

FOUNDED 2009 MPMA 06/02/09
EMPL 30
SQ FT 7,500
IND SERVED Automotive, Automotive, Medical, Professional Services
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Coolants/Lubricants
Cutting Tools Distributor
Workholding

Mars Supply/Walter Hammond
Bob Mars
215 E 78th St
Bloomington, MN 55420-1249
www.marssupply.com
rmars@marsupply.com
PHONE (952) 763-6624

FOUNDED 1924 MPMA 11/01/56
EMPL 20
SQ FT 33,000
IND SERVED Manufacturing, Medical
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Cutting Tools Distributor
Machine Tool Sales Chip Cutting
Supply Sales

Machining Technology
Laurent Deconinck
7885 Ranchers Rd NE
Fridley, MN 55432-2507
www.machining-technology.com
ldeconinck@machining-technology.com
PHONE (763) 571-1772

FOUNDED 1995 MPMA 07/22/13
EMPL 14
SQ FT 22,000
IND SERVED CNC Machining
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Machine Tool - Large Capacity Turning

Mack Engineering Corp.
Jennifer Salisbury
3150 Mike Collins Drive
Eagan, MN 55122-2991
www.mackengineering.com
jtroy@macktool.com
PHONE (651) 452-4400

FOUNDED 1953 MPMA 10/01/56
EMPL 20
SQ FT 33,000
IND SERVED Manufacturing, Medical
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Cutting Tools Distributor
Machine Tool Sales Chip Cutting
Supply Sales

Mathies Die Company, Inc.
Lake Matthews
391 Malden Street S
St Paul, MN 55075
www.mathies-die.com
lmthies@mathies-die.com
PHONE (763) 541-9507

FOUNDED 1963 MPMA 11/01/69
EMPL 13
SQ FT 21,000
IND SERVED Electrical Distribution
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Electrical Discharge Machining
Precision Grinding
Tool and Die

Matrix Machine Tool LLC
Brian Fegan
10433 Hidden Oaks Lane N
Champlin, MN 55316
www.mmt-cnc.com
bfegan@matrix-tool.com
PHONE (320) 267-5808

FOUNDED 2010 MPMA 03/02/17
EMPL 2
IND SERVED All
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Machine & Electrical Repair
Machine Tool Sales Chip Cutting
Machine Tool Sales Fabrication
Tool Repair/Serviceing

Matsushita Machinery USA
Craig St. John
325 Randolph Ave Ste 100
Saint Paul, MN 55102-3610
www.matsushitausa.com
Craig.StJohn@matsushitausa.com
PHONE (651) 289-9700

FOUNDED 1935 MPMA 04/02/13
EMPL 28
SQ FT 40,000
IND SERVED Aerospace, Automotive, Medical, Electronics, Medical, Telecommunication, Motorsport; Mold & die industry
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Machine Tool Manufacturer (OEM)
Machine Tool Sales Chip Cutting
Tool Repair/Serviceing

Maxcam Corp.
Bret Bjerken
4205 White Bear Lake Pkwy
Suite 100
St Paul, MN 55110
www.maxcamcorp.com
bretb@maxcamcorp.com
PHONE (651) 653-0969

FOUNDED 1998 MPMA 06/14/18
EMPL 17
IND SERVED Automation, Computer, Contract Manufacturing, Data Storage, Electrical, Electronics, Energy, Engineering, Environmental, Fabricating, Fluid Power, Food, Hydraulics, Industrial, Industrial Equipment, Machining, Manufacturing, Material Handling, Medical Devices, Material, Motion Control, OREM’s, Oil & Gas, Packaging, Plastic Injection, Plastics, Prototype, Semi Conductor, Technology, Telecommunication, 3D Printing - Service Bureau
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Milling
Production Machining
Prototypes/Short Run

Metal Craft & RiverSide
Machine & Engineering
Trish Mahony
13760 Business Center Drive NW
 Elk River, MN 55330-4811
www.mcmardis.com/index.html
trishmah@metal-craft.com
PHONE (763) 441-1925

FOUNDED 1978 MPMA 09/18/07
EMPL 145
SQ FT 83,000
IND SERVED Aerospace, Aviation, Defense, Medical Devices
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Assembly
Production Machining
Prototypes/Short Run

Metal Services of Bloomington Prairie, Inc.
Dennis Homaner
PO Box 848
605 S 5th St NE
Bloomington, MN 55917
www.metal-services.com
dennis@metal-services.com
PHONE (507) 583-2144

FOUNDED 1984 MPMA 12/03/13
EMPL 40
SQ FT 43,000
IND SERVED Agricultural, Construction, Contract Manufacturing, Fabricating, Farming, Heavy Equipment, Industrial, Manufacturing, Metalworking, OEM’s, Precision Manufacturing, Railroad
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Fabricating
Laser Cutting
Plasma Cutting/Oxyfuel
Protoypes/Short Run
Sheet & Plate Rolling
Tube/Wire Bending & Fabrication
Welding

CERTIFICATIONS
ISO 9001:2015

MHTA-Minnesota High Tech Association
Andrew Wittenberg
400 S 4th St Ste 416
Minneapolis, MN 55401-1419
www.mhta.org
awittenberg@mhta.org
PHONE (952) 230-4535

FOUNDED 1982 MPMA 08/22/12
EMPL 9
SQ FT 3,000
IND SERVED Automation, Information Technology, Robotics, Life Sciences, Advanced manufacturing, Clean, Green, Ed Tech
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Economic Development
Programming

Micro Parts Inc.
Robert Nichols
3680 Douglas Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55123-1185
www.mpi-dms.com
robert@mpi-dms.com
PHONE (651) 452-1017

FOUNDED 1982 MPMA 08/30/12
EMPL 22
SQ FT 20,000
IND SERVED Electronics, Medical, Military, Prototype
PRODUCTS / SERVICES
Fabricating
Metal Finishing
Plating/Coatings

CQW 000498

30 PRECISION MANUFACTURING
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Products/Services</th>
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<td>Jarmo Kumpula 79 E. 8th St</td>
<td>Manufacturing, Medical</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waconia, MN 55387-9541</td>
<td>Northern</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.nordicmanufacturing.com">www.nordicmanufacturing.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jarmo@nordiccomp.com">jarmo@nordiccomp.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PHONE (952) 442-8914</td>
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<td>OEC5 - Workplace Safety Experts</td>
<td>Tim Sheehan</td>
<td>Industrial, Medical Devices, Medical,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1000 Sheehan Parkway #140</td>
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<td>St. Louis, Park MN 55426</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.oecc5.com">www.oecc5.com</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:tims@oecc5.com">tims@oecc5.com</a></td>
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<td>PHONE (612) 617-5959</td>
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<td>Olympic Steel, Inc.</td>
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<td>Plymouth, MN 55441-5561</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.tsacco@olysteel.com">www.tsacco@olysteel.com</a></td>
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<td>Omnitool, Inc.</td>
<td>Walter Waffensmith</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3500 48th Ave N</td>
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<td>Brooklyn Center, MN 55429-3931</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.omnitool.com">www.omnitool.com</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:walter@omnitool.com">walter@omnitool.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PHONE (763) 335-4240</td>
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<td>On Time Delivery Service, Inc.</td>
<td>Tim Halitan</td>
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<td>Bloomington, MN 55420-4238</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:tholman@bontime.com">tholman@bontime.com</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>PHONE (952) 684-4066</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orca Machine Tools, Inc.</td>
<td>Theron Horn</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6531 Jarnum Ave NE Ste 203</td>
<td>Aerospace, Agricultural,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Albertville, MN 55301-4317</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.orca-inc.com">www.orca-inc.com</a></td>
<td>Devices, Fabricating, Medical Devices,</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:theronhorn@orca-inc.com">theronhorn@orca-inc.com</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>PHONE (763) 944-9825</td>
<td>Oil &amp; Gas, Tool &amp; Die</td>
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<td>Permac Industries</td>
<td>Darlene Miller</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:mmlner@permacindustries.com">mmlner@permacindustries.com</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>PHONE (952) 894-2341</td>
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<td>PetroChoice</td>
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<td>7670 215th Street West</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.petrochoice.com/">www.petrochoice.com/</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:mmartin@petrochoice.com">mmartin@petrochoice.com</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>PHONE (952) 655-500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pine Technical College</td>
<td>Joe Mulford</td>
<td>Manufacturing, Medical,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>900 4th St SE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pine City, MN 55063-1728</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.pine.edu">www.pine.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jmr.mulford@pine.edu">jmr.mulford@pine.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PHONE (320) 629-5120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plastics International</td>
<td>Paul Carter</td>
<td>Manufacturing, Medical,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7600 Anagram Drive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eden Prairie, MN 55344-7309</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.plasticsintl.com">www.plasticsintl.com</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:paul@plasticsintl.com">paul@plasticsintl.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PHONE (952) 934-2303</td>
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<td>Plex Systems</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2928 Dean Parkway 82K</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.plexsystems.com">www.plexsystems.com</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:ddelisle1@plex.com">ddelisle1@plex.com</a></td>
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<td>PHONE (612) 599-8766</td>
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<td>PRODUCTS / SERVICES</td>
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</table>
MEMBER DIRECTORY

PRECISION MANUFACTURING 33
WELCOME!

Welcome to the 2020 edition of MPMA’s Buyer’s Guide, a trusted resource that provides readers with buying resources to our members.

It is split into three sections: Manufacturers, Distributors, and Professional Services.

• Need fabricating services? Look in the Manufacturer section.
• Need metrology assistance? Look in the Distributor section.
• Need legal representation? Look in the Professional Services section.

KEEP THE GUIDE! USE IT OFTEN!

• It’s the Yellow Pages where you can reach your fellow MPMA members when you need specific services. There’s also an index on the next page for reference.
• Don’t forget to cross reference the Guide with the extended Member Directory in this edition of the magazine, which gives individualized information about all MPMA members.
• The information printed in the Guide is available online at mpma.com. Go to “Members” in the top menu bar, and select “Member Search.” You can search by a company name, location, services, or industries served to find a fellow MPMA member to meet your needs.
• Members can update their profile at any time of the year by logging into their company account on mpma.com to change your information – from the company address, phone number, services provided, and many more.

THANK YOU for being a member of the MPMA, your trusted resource for precision manufacturing in the state of Minnesota.
Additive Manufacturing/Industrial 3D Printing ...................... 38
Aluminum Coil ......................................... 38
Aluminum Extrusion - Plate & Sheet .................................38
Assembly .................................................. 38
Coil Springs / Wire Forms ........................................38
Cold Heading ............................................. 38
Cutting Tools ............................................. 38
Deburring .................................................. 38
Deep Hole Drilling ........................................ 38
Electrical Discharge Machining ....................................38
Fabricating .............................................. 38 - 39
Foundries & Casting ......................................39
Gear Cutting & Broaching .....................................39
Honing - Lapping & Finishing ...................................39
Laser Cutting .............................................39
Laser Marking ........................................... 39
Machine Tool Manufacturer (OEM) .............................. 39
Machining - Large Capacity .................................. 39
Metal Finishing ......................................... 39
Micro Machining ........................................ 39
Milling ...................................................... 39 - 40
Mold Making ............................................. 40
Plasma Cutting / Oxyfuel ..................................... 40
Plastic Injection Molding ..................................... 40 - 41
Plastic Sheet Rod & Tube .................................. 41
Plating / Coatings ....................................... 41
Powder Coating ........................................ 41
Precision Grinding ............................................. 41
Production Machining ......................................... 41 - 42
Prototypes / Short Run ...................................... 42 - 43
Sawing ................................................................ 43
Screw Machining ........................................... 43
Sheet & Plate Rolling ........................................ 43
Sheet Metal Fabrication ..................................... 43
Stamping ..................................................... 43
Tool & Die .................................................. 43 - 44
Tube/Wire Bending & Fabrication ................................. 44
Turning ....................................................... 44
Turning - Swiss ........................................... 44 - 45
Water Jet Cutting ........................................... 45
Welding ....................................................... 45
Welding - Robotic ......................................... 45
Abrasives .................................................... 45
Automation Integration ....................................... 45
Calibration - Test & Inspection ..................................45
Cleaning Supplies .......................................... 45
Coolants / Lubricants ........................................ 45
Cutting Tools .............................................. 45
Gauging ...................................................... 45
Hydraulic / Pneumatics ......................................... 46
Industrial Supplier .......................................... 46
Lubrication Equipment & Systems .............................. 46
Machine and Electrical Repair ..................................46
Machine Tool Sales (used) ....................................46
Machine Tool Sales Chip Cutting ............................... 46
Machine Tool Sales Fabrication ................................46
Material Handling ........................................... 46
Metal Service Center ........................................ 46
Metrology ..................................................... 46
Robotics / Automation ...................................... 46
Safety Equipment .......................................... 46
Supply Sales .............................................. 46
Tool Repair / Servicing ...................................... 46 - 47
Workholding ..................................................47
Accounting ................................................... 47
Banking / Financing ........................................ 47
Capital Equipment Financing ................................. 48
Computer Software & Training ..................................48
Construction ............................................... 48
Economic Development ...................................... 48
Employee Benefits ......................................... 48
Engineering & Design Services .................................48 - 49
Environmental Services ...........................................49
Expense Reduction Advisors ....................................49
Human Resources (HR) ..................................... 49
Insurance ..................................................... 49
ISO Certification Services .................................... 49
Legal .......................................................... 49
Mergers & Acquisitions ...................................... 49
Programming ............................................... 49
R&D Tax Credit Consultants ...................................49
Real Estate ................................................... 49
Recycling ..................................................... 49
Retirement Services .......................................... 49
Safety Consultants .......................................... 49
Shipping & Delivery ......................................... 49
Staffing ....................................................... 49
Technical Colleges / Education .................................49
Wealth Management ..........................................49

2020 BUYER’S GUIDE  

PRECISION MANUFACTURING 37

When you succeed, we succeed. That’s why we strive to deliver exactly what you need to satisfy your customers. Like top quality virgin resins for razor-sharp EDM. Excellent resin regeneration to extend resin use at high speeds. Certified EPA compliance for your peace of mind. And ABA’s 100% satisfaction guarantee. Let us show you. abawatersystems.com

It’s not how ions exchange. It’s how you exchange the ions.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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About G&A Partners

A leader in the HR outsourcing industry for 20+ years, G&A Partners has 11 offices across the U.S. and Latin America — including right here in Edina, Minnesota — providing HR, benefits and payroll services to more than 800 clients and 30,000 worksite employees.

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