

# The Shelbyville News

Friday, October 26, 2018



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## Local students learn about opportunities on Manufacturing Day

Oct 07, 2018



Students from Southwestern and Waldron high schools take a tour at PMC on Friday morning. Every Shelby County high school visited five local manufacturing companies as part of Manufacturing Day.

By ROSS FLINT - [rflint@shelbynews.com](mailto:rflint@shelbynews.com)

Last year was the peak year in terms of production in the manufacturing industry because of automation, Brian Asher, executive director of Shelby County Development Corporation told 119 Shelby County high school students Friday morning during Manufacturing Day, which is provided in a partnership with Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology.

Their future is up to each of them, he said, and if they want to take the path down a manufacturing career, the opportunities are there.

He said 92 percent of Indiana employers say there is a shortage in skilled manufacturing talent, and noted that the salary average is \$73,000. There are Shelby County residents who make upwards of \$80,000 a year, he said.

"You guys are in the driver's seat right now," he said to 46 Shelbyville High School students in the Intelliplex Conference Center.

During the brief presentation, which preceded five tours at local manufacturing plants for the Shelbyville group, he talked about the options students have if they do decide to enter the field. He encouraged them to look at their options, one of which is Advantage Shelby County.

Most skilled manufacturing jobs require two years or less of college.

"There are tons of opportunities out there," he said.

The five high schools were initially split into two groups, with the Shelbyville group hearing Asher's presentation before walking over to Makuta Technics, Inc. The county school group started at Makuta before hearing his presentation.

From there the county school group splintered into two groups for the other four tours.

Every group toured Freudenberg NOK, Plastic Moldings Company (PMC), PK USA, Inc. and Ryobi Die Casting, Inc., in addition to the Makuta visit.

At PMC, students were split into even smaller groups of 7-10.

In previous Manufacturing Days, PMC offered tours to each of the entire groups to see the entire plant. This year, the company decided to split them, allowing for a more interactive experience, Shelly Carter, HR manager, said.

While that meant students see as much of the plant as previous years, they were able to get a first-hand experience of what that company is like.

For example, at the engineering station, they were allowed to work on the leak testers so they could put the component that is used in respirators together and test its functionality.

PMC wanted students to have that experience of "touching, testing, feeling and being a part of the environment instead of just being an outsider and visually seeing they can be a part of it," she said.

During his presentation, Asher said there are about 5,000 manufacturing jobs in the county and SCDC continues to work to attract more companies to Shelby County.

"If I do my job correctly, we'll have 5,500 because we're going to continue to attract those businesses here in Shelby County," he said.

Manufacturing Day is a way to attract today's students. The idea is to improve the public's perception of modern manufacturing, starting with high school students.

"I believe that the younger we get students in manufacturing, and eliminate the disbeliefs in what manufacturing used to be, and get them to see that there's lots of exciting and fun opportunities in manufacturing ... to see that it's clean, it's technology-based and all those ideas that can provide them with a strong future for themselves," said Asher. "They don't have to go into huge debt. It's more than just a four-year or six-year degree, that there are opportunities that they can see right here in their neighborhood."