

MiMfg Magazine

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INDUSTRY

Collaboration & Community

CELEBRATED

A photograph of construction workers on a solar farm. In the foreground, a man and a woman, both wearing white hard hats and yellow safety vests, are kneeling on a row of solar panels. The man is pointing at a panel while the woman looks at a clipboard. In the background, another worker is visible, and the landscape features green hills under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

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In this issue: The 2023 Manufacturing Excellence Awards was a night of collaboration, community and celebration as a sold-out crowd gathered in East Lansing to recognize the best of the best in Michigan's most vital industry. Read highlights beginning on page 6.



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First & Foremost



John J. Walsh
President & CEO
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1

A sold-out crowd of manufacturing supporters and industry leaders joined us to celebrate the 2023 Manufacturing Excellence Awards winners and finalists in early November. I am always awed not only by the accomplishments of our winners but their humility — each award recipient acknowledged their communities and collaborations as the basis of their success. Learn more about our annual celebration and meet this year’s winners beginning on page 6.

2

The Legislature adjourned after a whirlwind of action on bills and new regulations that will impact our members in 2024 and beyond. With a newly changed partisan make-up of the legislature, the coming year will be one for the history books.

3

MMA’s upcoming Calendar of Events is full of ways to learn and engage in 2024. Mark your calendar with the events listed on page 39 and watch for details in the coming months. I look forward to seeing you as we again travel to communities near you to connect you with experts and your peers on topics top-of-mind and of critical importance to manufacturers. Learn more at mimfg.org.



Mike Johnston
Executive Vice President of Government Affairs & Workforce Development
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MMA-led legislation to update Michigan’s personal property tax to recognize today’s hybrid workforce will soon become law, allowing manufacturers to avoid the administrative nightmare of tracking the location and the local tax rate for all remote personal property.



Delaney McKinley
Executive Vice President of Operations
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MMA carefully curates a portfolio of cost-saving services to boost your bottom line and support your day-to-day operations. Contact me to learn about new services launched in 2023 and even more to be announced soon.



Bill Rayl
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MMA is working to develop sustainable talent eco-systems that serve the workforce needs of MMA members around the state. Watch for exciting details to come about our efforts to provide a sustainable talent development pipeline that’s flexible and focuses on core industry needs.



Ashley Wakefield
Director of Membership, Marketing & Events
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Take your brand further with opportunities to engage with MMA members and beyond through event sponsorship, thought leadership and advertising. Check out the 2024 Media Kit and reach out to build a strategy that works for you.



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MMA's trusted service providers are also invested in the Association as Premium Associate Members. Learn more at mimfg.org.

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For leaders of all experience levels, the methodology of the Dale Carnegie Course™ provides the mindset and the skillset to achieve better and different results. Develop leadership and communication skills to inspire and motivate others with the world-famous Dale Carnegie Course. See mimfg.org to access exclusive savings to support professionals at all levels who wish to optimize their performance, lead with conviction and positively impact the bottom line.



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Success in today's competitive market depends on strong leadership and a skilled workforce. That's where MMA's exclusive partnership with Davenport's Institute for Professional Excellence (IPEX) cuts through the noise, offering targeted training solutions for the busy working professional of today. Targeted training programs with Davenport University IPEX create a competitive advantage for your team. Login to access MMA-exclusive savings on management training at mimfg.org.



Simplify Your Retirement Plan Management

Managing investments for your retirement plan can be a daunting task, especially when it comes to making important investment decisions that could impact the future of your employees. That's why MMA partner CAPTRUST offers the best in 3(38) arrangements which allows you to outsource the burden of investment decisionmaking to a qualified expert, resting assured that your investments are in good hands. See mimfg.org to learn how to simplify your retirement plan management and achieve better investment outcomes.



Effective Training for Operators

As senior operators retire, many companies struggle to maintain strong output on their lines with inexperienced operators and without a comprehensive operator training program. Certifying Operator Training (COT) from MMA and The Luminous Group teaches manufacturing leaders how to effectively train operators — with exclusive savings and benefits to MMA members. Learn more at mimfg.org.



INDUSTRY Collaboration & Community CELEBRATED

Hundreds of industry leaders, their families and friends gathered on 11/9/23 at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing to celebrate the state's most important industry at the sold-out 2023 Manufacturing Excellence Awards.

The Manufacturing Excellence Awards is an opportunity for manufacturing leaders to connect with friends, old and new, while celebrating the award recipients who represent the very best in their respective fields. While the industry is defined by products and technology, this annual tradition is a reminder that manufacturing is driven by its people and a sense of community.

"I think manufacturing is definitely different in that way," says Ronald Hall, President and CEO of Detroit-based Bridgewater Interiors and recipient of the 2023 Manufacturing Emerging Leader Award. "It does feel a little bit like you find your tribe here."

Several of the award recipients reflected the evening's unwritten theme of community and family, with Three Rivers-based Armstrong International being a prime example. Winner of the 2023 John G. Thodis Michigan Manufacturer of the Year – Large Tier Award, Armstrong is a fifth-generation family owned company that makes thermal utility systems.

Having grown up in the family business, the evening's success was something of an inflection point for Brian Armstrong, Director of North America – Institutional Sector of Armstrong International. He

has seen the company grow and thrive under the leadership of his family and the wonderful people who make the progress happen every day.

"Receiving the Manufacturer of the Year award is just really humbling," says Armstrong who accepted the award along with his brother, Brandon Armstrong, on behalf of the company, its leadership and employees.


The team from Detroit-based Kirlin Lighting also received an unexpected and highly pleasant surprise when it was announced that their INFRARED PRO Motorized Exam Lights won the 2023 Coolest Thing Made in Michigan Award.

Kirlin has been manufacturing precision lighting solutions for the health care industry since 1895 when Chris Brownell's great grandfather began innovating in lighting and was contacted by a doctor in Texas who needed better lighting in his operating room.

Brownell, President at Kirlin, says that winning the Coolest Thing award was a shock while also humbling.

"It's an honor," Brownell says. "It's very fulfilling and this has been a great evening to learn about all of these other companies."

For Matt Carr, President of Livonia-based Storch Products, the Manufacturing Excellence Awards is a highly unique and "essential part of the year."

"So many companies don't take the time to slow down and just appreciate everything that's happening within the industry," he says. "This is a good opportunity to slow down and reflect on what's going on." 





Storch Products took home the 2023 Manufacturing Innovation Excellence Award, which Carr described as an incredible honor. Like many of the recipients, Carr was quick to deflect credit away from himself and onto the team at Storch, who really drive the company's success and culture.

It was definitely a team effort for Bangor-based Getman Corporation which was awarded the inaugural Michigan Manufactured Export of the Year Award for the A64 HD Water Cannon — a product that helps underground miners bore through rock remotely and safely.

President and CEO Erik VanAllen says it feels fantastic to represent all of the employees at Getman.

"Almost everybody in the company was involved in the development of the A64 Water Cannon," says VanAllen. "We're excited to be here individually but we're happy to be representing the rest of the team back at Getman."

Memorable Moments

Despite its scale and dynamic nature, the manufacturing industry remains a tight-knit community filled with relationships that go back many years.

That was evident when Bob Jacquart, Chairman and Owner of Jacquart Fabric Products — home of the iconic Stormy Kromer brand — was able to introduce his longtime friend, Joseph Mooney, President of Breckenridge-based Integrity Fab & Machine Inc. Mooney accepted the 2023 John G. Thodis



It's not too early to start thinking about next year's Manufacturing Excellence Awards...

2024

Nominations open June 2024. Save the date and plan to join us for the Manufacturing Excellence Awards in November 2024.



John G. Thodis Michigan Manufacturer of the Year

With a lineage dating back to 1981, past winners of the Michigan Manufacturer of the Year Award represent some of Michigan's most well-known brands. The Award was established to honor the important, positive and tangible contributions individual manufacturers make to their employees, customers and communities.

Coollest Thing Made in Michigan

This People's Choice Award highlights the coolest product manufactured in Michigan. Anyone can nominate a Michigan-made product for the Coolest Thing Made in Michigan.

Manufacturing Lifetime Achievement

The Lifetime Achievement award is given to a manufacturer who has excelled in the industry and inspires his or her peers, emerging leaders, lawmakers and educators to strive to make significant contributions to their company, industry and community.

Manufacturing Innovation Excellence

The Innovation Excellence award recognizes a company that has introduced noteworthy innovations to advance the industry. This award showcases a company that not only has brought an innovative concept to market but has developed and maintained a culture focused on engaging the workforce to bring new ideas to life.

Manufacturing Woman of the Year

The Woman of the Year Award honors the roles women play in manufacturing as well as their significant achievements in the industry and positive impacts within their companies and communities. An individual woman at any level of manufacturing, from the factory floor to the C-suite, is eligible to be nominated.

Manufacturing Community Impact

The Community Impact award recognizes a manufacturing business that has shown exemplary leadership in serving its community or state, and is an example of the involved and giving nature of manufacturers.

Manufacturing Talent Champion

The Talent Champion works to bring focus to the critical need of attracting Michigan's next generation workforce to manufacturing's variety of careers. This award has been recognizing Michigan's manufacturing talent champions since 2013.

Michigan Manufactured Export of the Year

Awarded to a product that has benefited from effective leveraging of export resources to expand into global markets, grow and diversify revenue and support Michigan jobs.

Manufacturing Emerging Leader

The Emerging Leader is awarded for noteworthy contributions to the industry and the potential for future accomplishments within Michigan manufacturing. This Award recognizes and honors a new manufacturing leader who has been involved in the industry for less than 12 years.



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MMA Anniversary Members

These companies celebrated milestone member anniversaries with MMA in 2023.



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The Douthitt
Corporation
Meier Screw
Products & Mfg. Co.

50 Years
Cornerstone
Alliance
Rubenstein
Isaacs P.C.

Michigan Manufacturer of the Year – Small Tier Award on behalf of the Integrity team, but he also received a surprise from Jacquart in the form of a personalized Stormy Kromer hat – or six of them to be more accurate.

“I didn’t know what hat size you were so I had six made,” said Jacquart.

Another memorable moment came when the crowd recognized a very special guest in the audience, Yusuke Shindo, Consul General of Japan in Detroit. Shindo attended the evening to celebrate the industry and also to honor the 2023 Manufacturing Woman of the Year Award winner, Sachiko Johnson from Jordan Manufacturing, who was born in Japan.

In congratulating Japanese honorees Sachiko Hosaka-Johnson and DENSO Manufacturing Michigan, Shindo stated “Talent has always been the key to Michigan manufacturing. I am thrilled

that Sachiko — a talented businesswoman and author — and DENSO Manufacturing Michigan — the largest employer of Michigan manufacturing talent among all in-state Japanese companies — are being recognized for their achievements in this vital economic sector.” Shindo continued, “It is my hope that tonight’s honorees will continue to actively promote mutual understanding, strengthen bonds between the United States and Japan, and contribute to the growth of Michigan’s manufacturing sector.”

Indeed, the Manufacturing Excellence Awards gala was a night of celebration and reflection on the industry’s truly collaborative energy. ⚙️

Read the spotlights of the individual and program award category winners beginning on page 14 and watch for company and product spotlights in 2024. Learn more about the Manufacturing Excellence Awards at mimfg.org/excellence.



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JON HALL, KIM NORRIS, TODD HALL
Glastender

RYAN SULLIVAN
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Rehmann applauds the remarkable commitment and inventive spirit of the 2023 Manufacturing Excellence Award nominees and recipients, as they persistently make a positive impact on lives, both locally in Michigan and beyond.

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Armstrong International

Three Rivers

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The company offers products, services and solutions for heat transfer, waste heat recovery, steam and condensate system management, trap management, hot water generation, humidification and thermal utility system engineering. Among Armstrong’s innovative technologies is its SAGE® Steam and Hot Water System Management software tool, which uses Armstrong’s patented steam system efficiency algorithm for optimal thermal utility system management.

Through Armstrong University’s online course curriculum and Global Learning Centers located

“ Receiving the Manufacturer of the Year award is just really humbling. ”

— Brian Armstrong, Director of North America – Institutional Sector of Armstrong International

throughout the world, Armstrong offers industry-specific learning opportunities for professionals and students. Armstrong further demonstrates its dedication through Western Michigan University scholarship and internship programs and by supporting Southwest Michigan First, the Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce and the Renewable Thermal Collaborative. ⚙️

Learn more about Armstrong International in 2024 spotlights.



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MMA OPS CONFERENCE

Thursday, March 14, 2024  The Lansing Center



Finalists

Miller Industries

Fenton

Miller Industries is a glowing example of how a small business can grow into a powerful entity. Founded in 2014 as a family business backed by decades of experience, Miller Industries is now the parent company of several divisions, including Flex Air, MiFarmPod™ and Miller Industries Representatives.

Based in Fenton, its specialties, solutions and products include custom steel fabrication, air supply systems, design engineering, software development, custom HVAC, modular electrical, custom steel structures, mechanical enclosures, laboratory grow facilities, conveyor systems, powder coat finishes, detailing and welding. They have set the standard in modular construction by introducing innovative designs and techniques, evolving with the needs of today's workforce.

Miller Industries sponsors numerous community and organizational events. The business has apprenticeship programs with Mott Community College and the



University of Michigan-Flint, and it supports and engages with various engineering and manufacturing societies nationwide. ⚙️

RoMan Manufacturing

Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids-based RoMan Manufacturing has made a significant impact in the manufacturing of water-cooled, high-current, low-voltage power sources since its founding in 1980, but its community involvement is also a core reason for its nomination as the Michigan Manufacturer of the Year.

The company, which established the RoMan Manufacturing/IRCO Automation Scholarship in 2016, has collaborated with Ferris State University and hired over 100 of its interns and graduates. The business has been heavily involved with local high schools, such as by participating in career days and piloting a student CNC program at Innovation Central High School. RoMan also works with industry partners for equipment donations to use for students' education, and the company invests in its own employees' training and development.



The company's leaders are actively engaged in state, national and local industry groups and are dedicated supporters of the American Welding Society. ⚙️



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Integrity Fab & Machine Inc.

Breckenridge

At Breckenridge-based Integrity Fab & Machine Inc. (IFABM), “Integrity” isn’t just in the name. It’s a way of doing business and a way of life, and that’s a significant reason why the company has been chosen for the 2023 John G. Thodis Michigan Manufacturer of the Year Award – Small Tier.

Specializing in custom die sets, plates and parallels, IFABM was founded in 2007 with only a couple of team members. Today, the company employs more than 80 individuals and is a pillar of the community.

“Our growth has been due to the dedication and hard work from all our employees,” says Trent Holland, Inside Sales Director. “At Integrity Fab & Machine, we live what the name is. We focus on accountability and integrity and doing the right thing, even when no one’s looking.”

A Culture of Dedication

Operations Manager Roland Koutz, who started Integrity with Kirk Smith in 2007, says that upon hearing about their honor, he began thinking about the company’s accomplishments and contributions to the industry over the years.

“It’s just amazing in this day and age,” he says. “We started in 2007, and in 2008 the economy was so bad. But we kept pushing forward and pushing forward and we never quit. This award is for everybody that works here and has worked here in the past. That’s what got us here.”

“Starting a business, running the business, and even during the good times and the bad times, you just got to keep the drive going,” Koutz continues. “It takes a team, and it takes focus. It takes dedication. We strive to be better each and every day. We want to be better for our customers. We want to get results. We want to help drive this industry forward.”

General Manager and Vice President Joe Mooney says when he heard about the award, he was overwhelmed. He says it’s validation for their team’s hard work over the past 16 years, and that it’s an honor to be grouped with so many outstanding manufacturers in the state.

“Michigan makes things. The rest of the world looks to us,” he says. “I mean, you’ve got the car. You’ve got cereal. You’ve got hospital beds. Most people probably don’t know that the four-way stop light was first made in Michigan. We make so many

things in Michigan, and for Integrity Fab & Machine to be pointed out with, ‘You’re the Manufacturer of the Year,’ it’s mind boggling.”

A Culture of Positivity

While updating the company’s core values several years ago, the leaders of the business agreed that placing customers first was the top priority and that integrity should continue to be an overarching principle in everything they do.

At the same time, the leadership team encourages team members to take a step back, have a little fun, have a few laughs and really celebrate their successes, Holland says.

All of those principles combined contribute to the existing culture at IFABM. It is made up of “inspired” team members who come to work every day and challenge themselves to continue advancing and delivering the best product to customers, Mooney says.

Their community involvement further illustrates how they live out their core values. IFABM, which has historical ties to the Gratiot County and Breckenridge community through the Smith family, participates in many civic and social events, such as the Gratiot County Fair and the Breckenridge Homecoming Parade. Several of the team members also work with various charitable organizations as well, Mooney says.

It’s this kind of culture, dedication to the industry, encouragement of professional development and support of the community that makes Integrity Fab & Machine this year’s John G. Thodis Michigan Manufacturer of the Year Award – Small Tier. ⚙️



“ Michigan makes things. The rest of the world looks to us. I mean, you've got the car. You've got cereal. You've got hospital beds. Most people probably don't know that the four-way stop light was first made in Michigan. We make so many things in Michigan, and for Integrity Fab & Machine to be pointed out with, 'You're the Manufacturer of the Year,' it's mind boggling. ”

— Joe Mooney, Integrity Fab & Machine Inc. General Manager and Vice President and 2023 Michigan Manufacturer of the Year – Small Tier





INFRALED PRO Motorized Exam Lights

Kirlin Lighting • Detroit

INFRALED PRO is Kirlin’s revolutionary recessed, remote-aimable motorized exam lighting system. Designed for ultimate infection control in critical environments, the system includes five unique luminaires that cater to the needs of specific areas in healthcare, such as Labor/Delivery. INFRALED PRO provides a safe, easy-to-operate alternative to boom-mounted exam lighting systems. ⚙️

“[Winning the Coolest Thing award is] an honor. It’s very fulfilling and this has been a great evening to learn about all of these other companies.”

— Chris Brownell, President of Kirlin Lighting



Learn more about Kirlin Lighting and the INFRALED PRO Motorized Exam Lights in 2024 spotlights.



Finalists

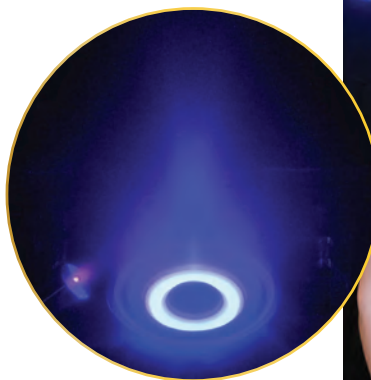
Aluminum Fishing Lure Molds Angling Ai Jackson

Angling Ai produces the most advanced fishing bait molds on the market and ships them worldwide. Their product allows anglers to design and create their own fishing bait. Their product has helped many anglers win competitions and awards. ⚙️



Aurora Plasma Thruster Orbion Space Technology Houghton

Aurora is a xenon plasma thruster that is used by satellites to maneuver in space. The product uses electromagnetic forces to expel ionized xenon and create gentle yet efficient force on a satellite. Orbion's Houghton factory builds Aurora systems and provides them to customers throughout the solar system. ⚙️



Thousands of votes cast over two rounds of voting in the Coolest Thing Made in Michigan People's Choice Award determined the Top 3 Finalists and Winner for 2023.

Learn more about the Coolest Thing Made in Michigan contest — including all nominees and Top 10 Finalists — at micoollestthing.org.

Next year's nominations open June 2024.



Jon D. Hall

Glastender Inc. • Saginaw

For Jon Hall, CEO of Saginaw-based Glastender, manufacturing is a story of innovation and change. Jon got his start in the foodservice industry working in the company his father founded, which sold and leased commercial ice machines. It was during this time that Jon developed and patented the first automatic ice dispenser in the U.S.

From those early days, the company adapted to meet ever-changing market dynamics. Or as Jon puts it, whenever they started running out of customers, they would move on to the next idea.

“At a certain point, we were running out of customers so I developed a rotary glass washer,” says Jon who started in the industry in 1961 when he was just 21-years-old. “We just keep making new products and selling more things.”

Glastender is now an international bar and food-service manufacturing business that keeps growing and evolving largely thanks to Jon Hall’s passion and drive, which is why he’s been named the 2023 Manufacturing Lifetime Achievement recipient. The company also remains a family affair primarily led by Jon’s children — Todd Hall, President, and Kim Norris, Vice President of Administration. Kim’s husband, Mark Norris, is Vice President of Operations.

Innovation and Hard Work

Jon is a natural-born innovator focused on continual improvement. He has a passion for tinkering and developing new products which is something that attracted him to manufacturing from an early age.

“I enjoy doing the work,” says Jon. “I like to learn different processes and be able to pass them on to other people. It’s kind of fun.”

Jon’s emphasis on innovation, having a relentless work ethic and a passion for his work has influenced his children and helped lay the foundation for Glastender’s culture and success.

“His drive, spirit and integrity have created the values that really guide our company,” says Todd Hall. “He’s the backbone of it all, really.”

Jon is also a very driven person, according to his son. He has been in the industry long enough to have seen lots of good days and bad, and his determination helped guide the company through lean times.

“What comes to mind when I think about my dad is his determination, his drive, and his passion,” says Todd Hall. “He has always believed if you work really hard you can make it happen. He’s not someone who accepts defeat.”

Collaboration Drives Success

Roughly 20 years ago, Jon made the decision to empower his children as the next generation of company leadership while simultaneously removing himself from day-to-day operations. Since that time, Jon has focused on teaching, mentoring and collaboration.

In fact, Ed Cunningham, Engineering Manager, says Jon’s success over a storied career has been influenced by his drive to help others succeed.

“Everything that he’s done and achieved, he’s done with a mindset towards making sure that others were successful,” says Cunningham.

Collaboration has been a key driver of Jon’s success in the industry and has been ingrained into the culture at Glastender. By empowering your people, you increase ownership and accountability, he says.

“When you have people with you, you get them involved in a piece of equipment and let them take a little ownership of it,” Jon says. “Once they have ownership, that makes them lead better.”

He adds, “Every job in the building is important, from packaging the equipment to designing the equipment. All the people here are great at teamwork. We work together with everybody.”

Giving Back

Over the years, Jon estimates they have supported as many as 170 of the regional non-profits in the Great Lakes Bay Community, which includes Saginaw and the surrounding areas. And the economic impact of Glastender by providing jobs and revenue for local businesses has been invaluable.

“Roughly 97 percent of our revenue comes from outside of the state,” says Todd Hall. “There’s basically a lot of money that comes into the area because of what we do. I think of us as kind of a net importer, effectively. We help to import funds into the area and support the community. We take our responsibility for our employees, their families and the community very seriously.”

Now that Jon Hall is looking back on a long and successful career, one of his biggest thrills is being able to pass his own knowledge to his family and employees and to see his legacy cemented for years to come. He is somebody who has left an indelible mark on the industry and being awarded the Manufacturing Lifetime Achievement Award is a fitting next chapter. ⚙️

Excellence in Manufacturing

“ I enjoy doing the work. I like to learn different processes and be able to pass them on to other people. It's kind of fun. ”

— Jon Hall, Glastender CEO and
2023 Manufacturing Lifetime
Achievement Award Winner





Storch Products

Livonia

Under the leadership of President Matt Carr, Storch Products fosters a culture of innovation through visionary leadership, employee empowerment and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

Its groundbreaking product, the SuperMag, is a revolutionary green alternative to standard diesel- and gas-powered electromagnetic sweepers. As a permanent magnet, the SuperMag requires no power source, and it's the first of its kind that can be front-mounted on municipal trucks, potentially saving road agencies and motorists tens to hundreds of thousands per year in damages from ferrous metal debris. The magnet is hydraulically actuated, hinging upward and away from the working surface, separating the magnetic field from the debris that has been collected. Unlike traditional electromagnets, this solid-state magnetic system has no wires or coils.

“So many companies don't take the time to slow down and just appreciate everything that's happening within the industry,” he says. “This is a good opportunity to slow down and reflect on what's going on.”

— Matt Carr, President of Storch Products

Matt's commitment to pushing boundaries and setting ambitious goals has inspired the organization to think beyond the status quo. By investing in research and development and adopting cutting-edge technologies, Storch Products develops innovative solutions that address market needs effectively. ⚙️

Learn more about Storch Products in 2024 spotlights.



Finalists

DC's LEDs

Rochester Hills

Derek Washington, owner of DC's LEDs in Rochester Hills, has harnessed the power of LED lighting in ways that increase safety and provide entertainment value.

The inventor of the world's first patented LED, sound-activated guitar/saxophone strap, Washington has designed LED safety vests that can be turned on and off via a remote-controlled key fob. As a result, roadside construction workers, tow truck drivers, valet parking attendants, police officers, firefighters, security officers and others who must work at night can stay safer on the road.

Additionally, Washington has designed LED leashes, collars and vest-harness combinations for cats and dogs. DC's LEDs also provides lighting solutions for musical instruments, flexible LED displays for various uses and a "Sip-N-Say" cup with scrolling words on an LED display.



Depending on the product, DC's LEDs' solutions are waterproof and feature long-lasting battery life, detachable power sources and rechargeable batteries. ■

Wire Wizard Welding Products

Jackson

Based in Jackson, ELCo Enterprises has nearly 90 welding industry related patents globally, which reflects the company's core commitment to continuously "create innovative industry-leading products that disrupt the status quo."

ELCo, manufacturer of the Wire Wizard® product line, is recognized for welding wire delivery products, high-performance torch products and weld cell support equipment. They include PowerBall® Torch Products; Torch Wizard® robotic torch reaming stations and accessories; Wire Pilot® weld wire feed assist products; Blue Magic® and Blue Chill® anti-spatters and dispensing equipment; WizardGear® robot cable management products and more.

PowerBall® welding torches, consumables and ultrasonically welded power cable work together to optimize current transfer, resulting in better welds and reduced energy use. Another highlight is ELCo's Weld Central data acquisition system, which monitors



key inputs to GMAW welding and sends the information to ELCo's Wizard OS which analyzes data and enables the customer to troubleshoot issues before they occur. ■



Sachiko Johnson

Jordan Manufacturing Company • Belding

Chief Financial Officer Sachiko Johnson has brought a fresh perspective to Jordan Manufacturing Company, which has helped the nearly 75-year-old company continue to grow and keep up with the modern workplace.

As its CFO and Human Resources Specialist, Johnson uses her diverse background, education, training and experience to help lead the company, which specializes in tooling, stamping and assembly and prides itself on being a powerful partner for other manufacturers throughout the state.

Giving Back

After meeting and getting married in Japan, Sachiko and Justin Johnson relocated to New York in 2005. In 2007, they moved to Michigan and took over Jordan Manufacturing, Justin's family's business, located in Belding in Ionia County.

"My position is CFO, but my role is Integrator," Sachiko Johnson says. "The leadership dreams about something, and my job is to make that happen in a financially secured way."

She says that before the pandemic began, they came up with the company's core values, which are based on coworkers, customers, the community and continual improvement.

"The most difficult part for me was to figure out how we could give back to the community," she says. "As a small company, we sometimes struggle financially, so we have a tendency to give back to our employees before we do something for the community. So that was my goal: to decide how to give back to the community."

They started small, she says, by hosting a Staff Appreciation Day and donating about \$200 at a local elementary school, which has a day care that some Jordan employees use for their children. Today, the company continues to give back to the community by sponsoring local festivals, charity runs and other events.

"We want to manufacture happiness, which is our passion, and we want to give back to people who work for us, the community we are in, builders and peers in the industry and even competitors," Sachiko Johnson says. "We just want to give back to make the community better and make the world better."

Employee-Centric Culture

Charles Korson, Director of Engineering and Operations at Jordan Manufacturing, says Sachiko Johnson always puts others before herself and their needs before her own.

"Sachiko has an unwavering dedication and selflessness to others, whether that is her family, a single visitor, an employee or the whole community," he says.

Justin Johnson adds that Sachiko has created more of an employee-centric culture at the business, and her compassion has contributed to that environment.

"She's a great listener. She's not just 'hearing' you," Johnson says. "She always tries to take into account what's on your mind when she's speaking to you. If employees have problems, if employees are struggling with things outside of work — personal problems, family problems, anything — she knows all that stuff, and that's always the first thing out of her mouth.

"And it's something that I've learned from her as well because I've always just stuck to the business: 'How is work? How is business? How are things going?' But she always finds time to show people that she's thinking about them outside of work."

As a successful woman in manufacturing, Sachiko Johnson says that she highly recommends that young women consider manufacturing careers.

From her experiences, she has learned that nearly every industry has the same core principles, she says.

"You communicate with people, and you take care of them nicely," she says. "Manufacturing is not different. You can still be fun, and you can make people happy with the product you make."

Justin Johnson says Sachiko is an "unsung hero" at Jordan and thought that nominating her for the MMA's prestigious Woman of the Year Award would be a great opportunity to show her how much he and the team appreciate all that she does.

Due to her genuine compassion for the team, leadership skills and the impact she has had at Jordan Manufacturing and within the community, Sachiko Johnson is certainly a deserving recipient of the 2023 Manufacturing Woman of the Year Award. 🏆

Excellence in Manufacturing

“ We want to manufacture happiness, which is our passion, and we want to give back to people who work for us, the community we are in, builders and peers in the industry and even competitors. We just want to give back to make the community better and make the world better. ”

— Sachiko Johnson, Jordan Manufacturing Company Chief Financial Officer and 2023 Manufacturing Woman of the Year



Award Sponsored by



Case Systems and BOSTONtec

Midland

Giving back to the community through local philanthropy and engagement is fundamental to the culture that drives Midland-based Case Systems, Inc and its subsidiary company, BOSTONtec.

For over 65 years, Case Systems has been a leader in designing and manufacturing laminate cabinet solutions for health care, education and laboratory environments. The company acquired industry-leading commercial furniture maker, BOSTONtec, in 2003.

The combined company has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars and many volunteer hours to a wide variety of local causes. In the last two years alone, Case Systems has supported over 30 different organizations ranging from the American Cancer Society, the Great Lakes Bay Veterans Association, Girl Scouts of Michigan and more.

“We don’t do this for the recognition. We do this because we believe it’s the right thing to do not only for our organization, certainly for our employees but also for the communities in which we work and live.”

— Jeff Clark, Case Systems
Director of Human Resources

Case Systems and BOSTONtec have established longstanding partnerships with educational institutions, allowing students to explore and better understand employment opportunities in manufacturing. ⚙️

Learn more about Case Systems and BOSTONtec in 2024 spotlights.

Excellence
in Manufacturing



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2023 Manufacturing Community Impact

*Finalists***DENSO Manufacturing Michigan Inc.****Battle Creek**

DENSO may be the world's second largest automotive supplier, but each site around the globe is responsible to engage and support their local communities. In Michigan, DENSO has nearly 40 years of local impact in the Battle Creek region.

DENSO's company culture is deeply rooted in its Two Great Causes — Green and Peace of Mind — with goals to support a healthy planet and safe, worry-free mobility. The company supports FIRST Robotics, a key driver for skilled trades and STEM education, has provided scholarships through the Battle Creek Area Math and Science Center and donated a mobile learning unit through Kellogg Community College.

As the largest employer in Calhoun County with approximately 3,000 employees across several facilities, DENSO provides ample opportunities for community engagement. They raise more than \$200,000 each year through their United Way



campaign, and utilize five employee-led teams, called Business Resource Groups, to engage and activate in the community. ⚙️

Gerdau Special Steel**Jackson**

For more than a century, the success of Jackson-based Gerdau Special Steel North America has been driven by industry-leading steel products and its commitment to supporting the communities they serve.

Gerdau's community goals are focused on social development in local communities. Through employee-led social responsibility committees, the company identifies local needs and mobilizes their employees to engage and volunteer.

One of the company's strategic pillars focuses on recycling. Gerdau is the largest recycling company in Latin America and transforms 11 million tons of steel each year into a variety of products used in the transportation, construction, agriculture and energy markets.

The company has donated millions to local organizations in support of its other community pillars — education and housing. Gerdau is a regular supporter of Coding 4 Change, a non-profit that



connects under-represented high school students to free computer coding classes, Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers Big Sisters and a variety of local non-profits. ⚙️



DENSO Manufacturing Michigan Inc.

Battle Creek

One of DENSO Manufacturing Michigan's core priorities is to build the next generation of manufacturing leaders, both through training and by crafting innovative solutions. These are just a couple of the reasons why DENSO has been chosen as the 2023 Manufacturing Talent Champion.

The second-largest tier one automotive parts supplier in the world, DENSO has a legacy of supporting local communities and advancing green initiatives. Although it is a humble company, DENSO has lofty ambitions, says Matt Briden, Vice President of Business Planning for DENSO's North American Thermal Business at its Battle Creek manufacturing facility.

"We're involved in really advancing humanity itself," Briden says, "and that includes everything from advanced agricultural solutions to carbon neutrality as well as advanced mobility."

Talent Development

The struggle to locate talent affects the manufacturing sector as a whole, but it can be especially challenging to find individuals who are skilled in highly technical trades. Brenda Dredge, Director of HVAC Operations, says DENSO is therefore focused on providing educational opportunities that enhance their associates' skills.

"We develop a lot of our own processes and processing equipment," she says. "It is very specific to what we do here, so we have to develop a lot of the talent in-house. We have multiple layers of technical talent here, from lead associate all the way up to apprenticeships and journeymen."

DENSO partners with Kellogg Community College and its Regional Manufacturing Training Center to create a technical training foundation for all of its skilled positions. DENSO opened its own specialized North Technical Training Center in 2019 as well, she says.

Externally, DENSO works with local schools to help students recognize the many career opportunities available to them in the manufacturing sector and provides scholarships through the Battle Creek Area Math and Science Center.

Briden says they frequently invite students to tour their facility and that DENSO sponsors GED programs

through Battle Creek schools for its associates and students in the community. They also sponsor STEM days at local schools, taking their interactive robot, Henry, with them for a visual experience.

"He'll play tic-tac-toe with the kids," he says. "It's quite the conversation starter at the schools. The kids really love Henry, so we take him everywhere."

Shuichi Kamakura, President of DENSO Manufacturing Michigan, says DENSO's approach to growing talent in manufacturing is to build both individual and team skills and culture first.

"We believe that to create the best-quality product, we must first create the best human," Kamakura says. "This is our culture. For that reason, DENSO positions human resource development as its most important management resource."

Resource Groups

In addition to promoting education in the skilled trades, DENSO has five Business Resource Groups focused on inclusion that also highlight career development opportunities: DENSO Women's Network, DENSO Black Resource Group, DENSO Burmese Network, DENSO Hispanic Network and DENSO Veterans Network.

The groups provide associates with a safe space to communicate their challenges and solve problems, Dredge says.

"It allows them to support, communicate with and learn from each other, which is really important," she says.

The Business Resource Groups have strong external partnerships in the community as well, leading to mutual benefits such as community event support, professional development and cultural awareness, Dredge says.

"Diversity and inclusion is something that we value immensely," Briden says.

By promoting and embracing diversity, inclusion and belonging, DENSO associates can feel more engaged, thrive in their careers and make a positive impact in their communities, he says.

The DENSO team's dedication to education, diversity and community makes the company a highly deserving recipient of this year's Manufacturing Talent Champion award. ⚙️

Excellence in Manufacturing

“ We believe that to create the best-quality product, we must first create the best human. This is our culture. For that reason, DENSO positions human resource development as its most important management resource. ”

— Shuichi Kamakura, President of
DENSO Manufacturing Michigan





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MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

A64 HD Water Cannon

Getman Corporation • Bangor

The A64 HD Water Cannon from Getman Corporation represents significant improvements in safety for the underground mining industry, as well as an expansion into export markets across the globe.

Thanks to statewide export resources such as grants for international travel and translations, Getman machines have seen action in remote places as far as Mongolia and Indonesia. Getman equipment is sold into 30 different countries across five continents but all are manufactured right here in Michigan at the company’s facilities in Bangor and Kalamazoo.

The newly developed Water Cannon is a perfect example of the company’s dedication to worker safety. Prior to its introduction, Getman customers

“Almost everybody in the company was involved in the development of the A64 Water Cannon. We’re excited to be here individually but we’re happy to be representing the rest of the team back at Getman.”

— Erik VanAllen, Getman Corporation
President and CEO

would use secondary explosives or even long metal poles to loosen clogged draw points, exposing workers to enormous risk. The Water Cannon removes personnel from the area entirely to provide a safer and more productive solution. ⚙️

Learn more about Getman Corporation and the A64 Water Cannon in 2024 spotlights.



Finalists

Equipment for Aluminum Extrusion Granco Clark Inc. • Belding

Gross sales for aluminum extrusion equipment from Granco Clark has experienced a 30 to 40 percent growth over the past several years thanks in part to the company's success in global export markets.

Based in Belding, Granco Clark delivers its industry-leading machines and products to customers all over the world, including Japan, Vietnam, Australia, Taiwan, India, Mexico and other countries. Incentive resources offered by the state have helped the company expand its global footprint through offsetting the cost of participating in foreign trade shows.

All machines are custom built according to customer specs and produced at the company's 90,000 square-foot facility in Belding. Their equipment covers everything needed to transform an aluminum billet into a commercial product.



Granco Clark employs roughly 100 people from engineers to skilled trades and the company is 100 percent employee-owned. ⚙️

Save the Date!

Go Behind the
Scenes of State
Policymaking with
MMA's Government
Affairs Team

**MMA LEGISLATIVE
DAY**

Tuesday, April 30, 2024
MMA Headquarters & State Capitol, Lansing



Ronald E. Hall

Bridgewater Interiors • Detroit

Ronald Hall, President and CEO at Bridgewater Interiors in Detroit, is not only carrying on his father's legacy to maintain the company he started 25 years ago but Hall is also driving the company into the future with insightful advancements.

Bridgewater Interiors is an automotive interiors manufacturing firm, currently concentrated in automotive seating systems. It also offers just-in-time assembly and sequencing and delivery of complete seat systems for multiple car makers on multiple car platforms. With a team of 2,400 employees in four locations throughout the United States, the company makes about 10 percent of the car seating systems built in North America.

"There's not a day that goes by that I'm not reminded that I'm following in my father's footsteps here, and there is a different level of personal accountability that comes with it," Hall says.

Doing Something Tangible

Leadership. Excellence. Focus. Intentional. Unwavering. Totally Committed.

Those are the words that come to Dr. William Pickard's mind when he thinks of Ronald Hall.

Pickard, an original partner in the business, longtime board chairman at the company and career-long mentor to Hall, says he is very proud that Hall continued his family's legacy of excellence and service.

"He has exceeded all my expectations for business and family," Pickard says. "His parents would be proud of how he has made the company grow and surpassed even their vision."

Before taking over the company started by his father, Ron Hall Sr., Hall served in the military, earned a law degree and practiced law for eight years. He holds a bachelor's degree in international political economy from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., and served several years as a field artillery officer in the U.S. Army. He attained the rank of Captain and was decorated for meritorious service in the Persian Gulf War.

Although he enjoyed the legal field, he found himself leaning toward a career that's more tangible, making manufacturing the ideal fit for him.

"I like that at the end of the day, we can point to things — such as cars going down the road — and we're able to say, 'Our product is in that vehicle. That car looks great. It's 12 years old!' It feels good to be doing something tangible."

Hall says he also likes the fact that the manufacturing field is very process driven and requires collaborative team efforts.

"In that sense, it's very much like military service was," he says. "I think about my years in the Army and what I missed about that when I was in legal services, and I got some of that back coming over into the manufacturing space."

Supporting the Community


Community relations efforts start with strong vision and mission statements, and in Bridgewater's case, one of their goals is to "live to the ideals of minority business enterprise leadership," Hall says.

"That doesn't mean just existing and buffering your bottom line but really trying to show up as a strong corporate citizen in the communities where you operate," he says.

For instance, his father and his father's partners started a business venture model that led to revolutionary results. The model entailed going into an inner-city community, building on a greenfield and then training a fresh workforce to deliver world-class products. The idea was a success, and it is an example of Bridgewater's many contributions to the city of Detroit.

"Being able to continue to do that — continue to employ people in communities that disproportionately have not had some of these opportunities — and to execute at such a high level is very, very gratifying," Hall says.

In addition to his business pursuits, Hall has served on multiple boards, including Business Leaders for Michigan, the Skillman Foundation, Beaumont Health, Wayne County Airport Authority, Original Equipment Suppliers Association and the Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council.

Hall's life experiences, energy, creativity, commitment to the community and passion for the manufacturing industry truly make him an Emerging Leader. 

Excellence in Manufacturing

“There’s not a day that goes by that I’m not reminded that I’m following in my father’s footsteps here, and there is a different level of personal accountability that comes with it.”

— Ronald Hall, Bridgewater Interiors
President and CEO and 2023
Manufacturing Emerging Leader



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Support a strong MMA-PAC to lead the way for a competitive business environment for MMA members and the manufacturing industry. A strong MMA-PAC:

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Consider spreading your investment throughout the year. Contact MMA's Jacob Duberville, at 517-487-8532 or duberville@mimfg.org, to find out what regular contributions to the MMA-PAC would look like.

MMA Calendar of Events 2024



MMA-PAC Winter Golf Classic

February 22, 2024 • XGolf Grand Rapids

Supports the MMA-PAC at the annual inaugural winter golf “outing” at an indoor simulator golf facility.



MMA Operations Conference

March 14, 2024 • The Lansing Center

Brings together manufacturers with operational issue specialists to tackle operational roadblocks and leap forward on industry trends.



MMA Legislative Day

April 30, 2024 • MMA Headquarters and Capitol Complex, Lansing

Connects manufacturing leaders, legislative decision makers and regulatory officials in Lansing for hands-on lobbying experience.

2024 | clearing the air



Clearing the Air in 2024

April 2024 • MMA Headquarters

MMA and the Environmental Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan present a must-attend half-day event on air quality issues.

MMA Workforce Solutions Regional Meetings

May 2024 • Central Michigan, Southeast Michigan, Southwest Michigan

Connect and network with localized talent resource professionals and manufacturing peers to learn ways to bridge your own workforce talent gap.



ImPACt Summer Golf Classic

Aug/Sep 2024 • To be announced

Support the MMA ImPACt Fund at the annual summer golf outing at one of Michigan's prestigious golf courses.



Manufacturing Excellence Awards

November 2024 • To be announced

Celebrates and elevates the significant contributions manufacturers make to their employees, their communities and the state economy.

Nominations for the 2024 Manufacturing Excellence Awards, including the Coolest Thing Made in Michigan People's Choice Contest, open June 2024.



MMA Ballots & Brews Regional Meetings

Fall 2024 • Gaylord, Grand Rapids, Southeast Michigan, Jackson, Frankenmuth

Connect with manufacturing and community leaders at regional events focused on the impact of the 2024 Election and local networking.

WILL WE SEE YOU IN 2024?

Learn more about MMA events at mimfg.org



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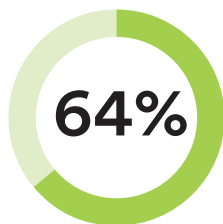




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Findings of MetLife's 21st Annual U.S. Employee Benefits Trends Study

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