

Manufacturing firms roll out carpet for high school students



Jeremy Cameron, mechanical supervisor at Fori Automation, explains to a group of students from Dakota High School what skills are needed for employment in advanced manufacturing.
DAVID DALTON -- FOR THE MACOMB DAILY

By Frank DeFrank, The Macomb Daily

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Brian Garsky, project manager for Fori Automation in Shelby Township, felt a kinship with the 60 or so students invited to tour his firm's facilities Friday.

So he offered a little advice to his brethren: When choosing a career, don't overlook the path he traveled.

"Once you're in a company, job experience is very important," said Garsky, now an Oxford resident. "I didn't know 16, 17 years ago (when he studied computers at Wayne State University) that I was going to be a project manager.

"But I applied things I knew ... I'm happy with my choice."

Garsky was one of several presenters at Fori Automation, one of 38 manufacturers in Macomb County that participated Friday in

National Manufacturing Day.

The event was coordinated by the Macomb County Department of Planning and Economic is designed to remind high school students that rewarding careers – financially and otherwise – will be readily available to students when they're ready to enter the workforce.

Across the county, some 1,200 students hundreds of students visited more than three dozen facilities and spoke with numerous men and women who make their livings in the industry.

"Manufacturing is very important to the state of Michigan and to Macomb County," said Paul Meloche, vice president of sales for Fori.

"Our manufacturing base over the last few years, unfortunately, has left us. We're short on resources.

"This is our future. It's about how we can get these kids into the manufacturing environment where they can see some application-based engineering to see how they can apply all the things they learned in school into possibly a career."

Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel said National Manufacturing Day serves another purpose. It shines a spotlight on businesses in Macomb County.

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“Manufacturing Day is a great way to showcase today’s high-tech manufacturing environment and the interesting and well-paying job opportunities we have here in Macomb County,” said Hackel, one of several local officials who visited KUKA Systems North America in Sterling Heights on Friday.

U.S. Rep. Candice Miller also stopped by KUKA, which makes sophisticated assembly robotics.

“It was truly inspiring to visit this innovative manufacturing company which, like many others here in southeast Michigan, offers great opportunities for the next generation of ambitious workers.”

Back at Fori, Dakota High School juniors Austin Wargo and Kyle Sherrell listened to the presentations and enjoyed hands-on demonstrations of the machinery and equipment the company uses.

“It looks like it would be fun,” said Wargo. “Something that would be hands and you’d have fun doing it.”

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Students from Dakota High School visited Fori Automation in Shelby Township as part of National Manufacturing Day, an event to highlight manufacturing jobs. DAVID DALTON FOR THE MACOMB DAILY