STATS-AT-A-GLANCE

Skilled Workers Wanted

- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), by 2030 the last of the Baby Boomers will have reached retirement age and 77 million Baby Boomers will have left the workforce.¹

- By 2030, there will be twice as many retirees as there are today, but only 18% more workers, according to BLS.²

- By 2010, BLS data forecasts a shortage of more than 10 million workers – just warm bodies.³

- The Hudson Institute predicts the supply of skilled labor in the U.S. will not catch up to demand until 2050.⁴

- In 1950, 60% of all manufacturing jobs could be handled by unskilled labor. By 2005, less than 15% of all manufacturing positions were unskilled.⁵

- 83% of U.S. manufacturers surveyed in 2005 for the National Association of Manufacturer’s Skill Gap Report indicated a shortage of skilled manpower already affecting their ability to serve customers.⁶

- Biggest skill gaps as reported by The Conference Board:⁷
  - Reading, writing, math.
  - Technical and professional skills, including computer technology and other technical skills plus skills for specialized industries.
  - Self-motivation, teamwork, time management, communication, and problem-solving.

- Every aspect of industry will be affected:⁸
  - Half of America’s scientists and engineers are over 40 and the average age is rising annually.
  - Almost half of NASA employees are age 50 or over. Only 4% of NASA workers are under 30.
  - Two-thirds of the nation’s math and science teachers will retire by 2010.
  - Profile of Teachers’ 2005 survey showed half the public school teachers who were working at the time expected to be retired by 2010.

- According to the 2009 Manpower Talent Shortage Survey, among the most difficult jobs to fill in North America are those of the skilled manual trades, with electricians, carpenters/joiners and welders as the most in-demand employees.⁹

- According to a 2009 Manpower Survey, in the last two years engineer is the hardest job to fill in the U.S.¹⁰

Manufacturing Offers Rewarding Careers

- According to the Department of Commerce, the average salary-and-benefit package for manufacturing workers was $62,700 in 2003. The national average for all jobs was $51,000.¹¹
Salary.com reports that the average salary for a manufacturing engineer is approximately $64,000 per year.  

More than 80% of manufacturers still take care of most medical benefits, including dental.  

Within the private sector, workers in manufacturing have the highest median tenure among the major industries.  

**Education Focus Needed**  

The U.S. average from the National Center for Education Statistics indicates that only 75% of students who start high school will graduate.  

In some states the graduation rate is as low as 56%. The states with the highest rate still only achieve an 88% graduation rate.  

54% of all the people who try for a GED don’t achieve that certificate until they are age 20 or older, and more than half of that group are over 25.  

It used to be true that high school dropouts could find a home in the military and would be able to finish their education there but today, you must have a high school diploma or a GED to enlist. Out of 32 million Americans age 17-24, 75% do not qualify to serve in the military.  

As recently as 2003, only 78% of manufacturing production employees in the U.S. had at least a high school education. In maintenance and repair occupations the percentage with at least a high school education was 87%.  

When shop classes began seeing a decline in the 1970s, coinciding with a push toward college-bound classes, so did the number of young people entering skilled trades. Shop classes were largely eliminated from American high schools in the 1990s because they were expensive to run, and sometimes dangerous. Now, industries facing a worker shortage are pushing for the classes' return.  

**U.S Manufacturing and Prosperity**  

More than 70% of Americans view manufacturing as the most important industry for a strong national economy and national security. However, only 17 percent named manufacturing as among their top two industry choices to start a career and only 30 percent of parents said they would encourage their children to pursue careers in manufacturing.  

The manufacturing process leads to increased economic activity in other sectors of the economy. For every $1 of goods produced, an additional $1.43 is generated – more than any other economic sector.  

Manufacturers are responsible for almost two-thirds of all private sector R&D, which ultimately benefits other manufacturing and non-manufacturing activities in the United States.
1 Dr. Ira S. Wolfe, “The Perfect Labor Storm 2.0,” 2007
2 Dr. Ira S. Wolfe, “The Perfect Labor Storm 2.0,” 2007
3 Dr. Ira S. Wolfe, “The Perfect Labor Storm 2.0,” 2007
5 Employment Policy Foundation
8 Dr. Ira S. Wolfe, “The Perfect Labor Storm 2.0,” 2007
9 “Manpower’s 2009 Talent Shortage Survey,” Manpower, Inc.
10 “Manpower’s 10 hardest jobs to fill in the U.S,” Manpower, Inc.
12 Salary.com
15 The National Center for Education Statistics, Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2006
16 The National Center for Education Statistics, Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2006
17 The National Center for Education Statistics, Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2006
19 The National Center for Education Statistics, Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2006
21 Annual index (“Public Viewpoint on Manufacturing”) by Deloitte LLP and The Manufacturing Institute, June 2009