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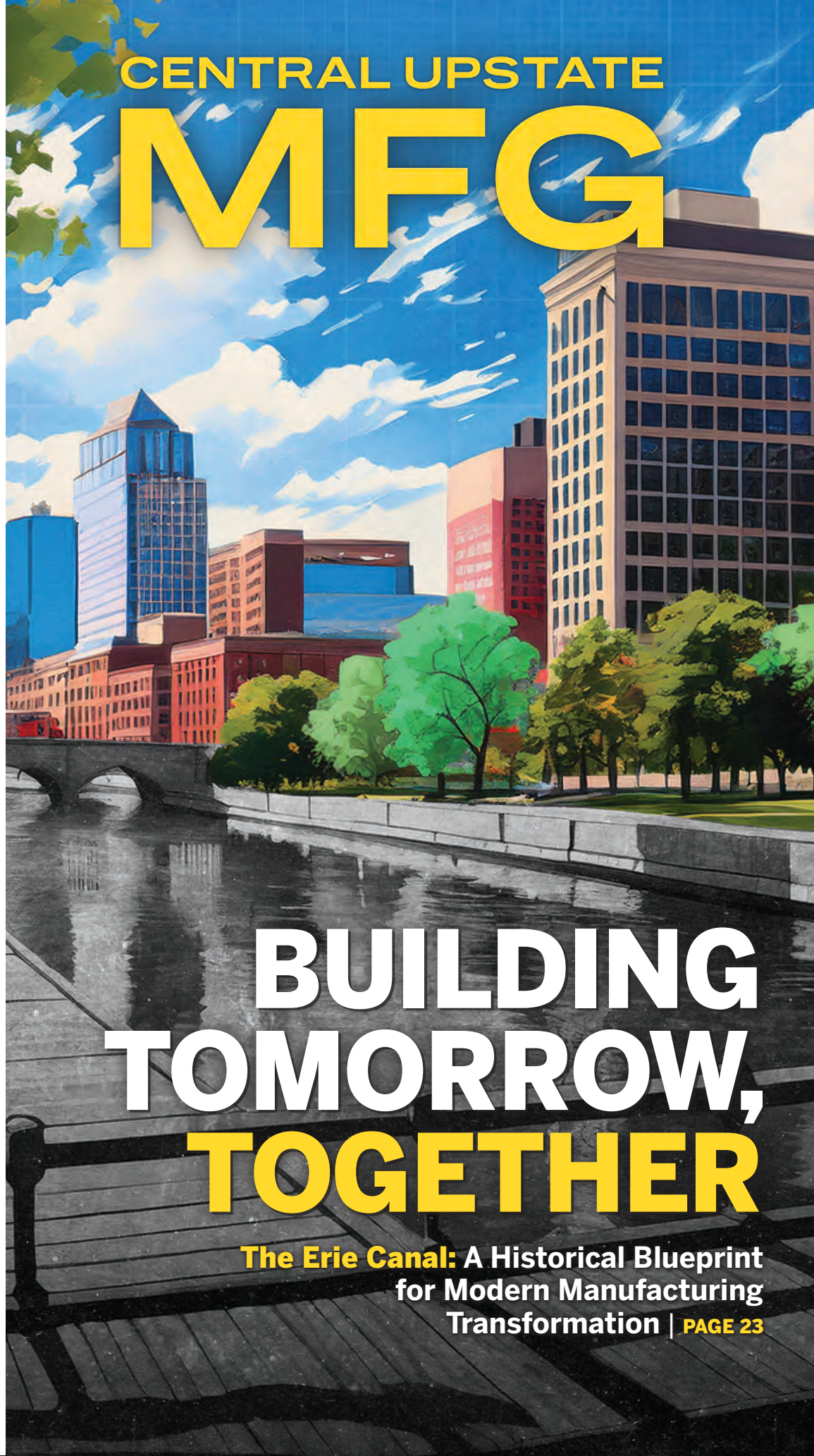
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**EDITION 13** | A publication of MACNY, The Manufacturers Association

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## A Welcome from MACNY's President & CEO, Randy Wolken

**AS WE CELEBRATE** the Erie Canal's bicentennial, we're reminded of the remarkable journey of perseverance, collaboration, and innovation that has shaped Central and Upstate New York and beyond. The Erie Canal served as a catalyst for change, connecting communities, and driving economic progress — a theme that resonates deeply with the transformations we're seeing in the manufacturing and high-tech industries of today.

Over the past 200 years, the manufacturing sector has undergone many dramatic shifts. Each successive technological innovation has added to those already available. New York Companies and their innovations transformed the world. These changes have profoundly altered how people globally work, manufacture, and live their everyday lives.

At MACNY, we believe our future success will be driven by our unwavering commitment to collaboration and adaptation to the ever-evolving needs of the world. Building Tomorrow, Together is the approach we know works — and will work for us for generations to come. Embracing change and adapting our approach will be key to strengthening manufacturing in New York State.

The future ahead is ours to shape, and through our collective efforts, we'll ensure that the next 200 years continue to build upon the foundation laid by those who came before us.

*Randy Wolken*

Randy Wolken, President & CEO



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A section of the Erie Canal in Seneca Falls, just a portion of the 363 miles connecting the Hudson River near Albany to the Niagara River near Buffalo.

# A Masterclass in Innovation



BY DAVID FREUND,  
CHIEF LEADERSHIP OFFICER

**IT'S JULY 4, 1817**, and James Madison, our fifth president, is sitting in the White House as fireworks explode in the sky celebrating our nation's birthday. Meanwhile, in Rome, NY, shovels begin to move the earth in the historic Erie Canal project. When first proposed, skepticism surrounded the canal's construction and people referred to it as folly, but New York State Governor DeWitt Clinton would not be deterred. Through his unwavering resolve and courage to pursue a vision despite opposition, Clinton exemplified what it meant to lead

with conviction, inspiring others to believe in the impossible. This engineering marvel would catapult Syracuse into the future of not only New York but the entire country.

In a time when there were no civil engineers in the U.S., a masterpiece of innovation was beginning. James Geddes and Benjamin Write set out to plot the route. As judges by profession, their expertise in settling property disputes was helpful but didn't prove to be very useful when it came to construction.





**The Erie Canal  
on Clinton Street  
in Syracuse,  
circa 1900.**

*PHOTO COURTESY OF  
ONONDAGA HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION*

It's said that Geddes only used his surveying instruments for a few hours before setting out on the project — a project that would stretch 363 miles and connect the Hudson River near Albany to the Niagara River near Buffalo. Even in the face of immense challenges, these early leaders demonstrated that innovation and leadership don't require perfect qualifications. They required the willingness to learn and grow through experiences. It made so much sense: connect the Great Lakes to the Eastern Seaboard with a simple waterway — The Erie Canal. But wait, the elevation of Lake Erie is 600 feet above that of the Hudson River, and locks of that era could only rise 12 feet. The canal would need 50 locks. Each lock would need to be 40 feet wide and four feet deep, with a towpath on each side. Viaducts were needed to carry the canal over ravines, while aqueducts were needed to maintain water levels, — one of which needed to be 950 feet in length, more than three football fields.

The unique challenges posed by the Canal required Geddes and Write to rally diverse talents, adapt to challenges, and create a shared vision that motivated people to work together for the greater good. The sides of the canal were lined with cut stone, which necessitated hundreds of German stonemasons. I can't possibly do justice to all the obstacles they faced, from naysayers and political opposition to the lack of machinery and skilled labor. Similar to the NASA Apollo program, the technology didn't exist, and builders had to use an iterative process. The approach was simple: do what you know how to do, and the next idea will emerge as you move forward.



**LIKE THOSE WHO WORKED ON THE CANAL, LEADERS  
MUST TAKE BOLD STEPS, EVEN WHEN THE FULL  
PATH AHEAD ISN'T CLEAR, TRUSTING THAT CLARITY  
WILL COME AS THEY MOVE FORWARD. ULTIMATELY,  
TRUE LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT HAVING THE COURAGE  
TO START, THE PERSEVERANCE TO KEEP GOING,  
AND THE BELIEF THAT TODAY'S EFFORTS WILL  
SHAPE TOMORROW'S SUCCESS.**

DeWitt Clinton had a vision and a compelling reason for why the Erie Canal should be built — and built it was. The first canal boat hit the water in May 1821, and the canal was fully operational by October 1825, spreading prosperity and opportunity across the Empire State. The canal was faster than moving over land, cutting transportation costs through the state by 95%. Clinton unleashed on this project the American Spirit of Innovation — a spirit that burns within us to accomplish meaningful things that improve the lives of those around us. True leadership involves nurturing this spirit, encouraging others to push boundaries, and believing in the collective power of a community. We're fortunate to have parts of this incredible canal flowing through our community. The future holds the dual promise of both excitement and trepidation.

Just as the Erie Canal was built through persistence, vision, and ingenuity, effective leadership today requires similar dedication and the willingness to face challenges head-on. In a world that's constantly changing, leaders must be resilient and adaptable, just as the builders of the canal had to navigate uncharted terrain. Strong leadership involves the ability to solve problems, work with others, and adjust strategies to meet evolving demands. Like those who worked on the canal, leaders must take bold steps, even when the full path ahead isn't clear, trusting that clarity will come as they move forward. Ultimately, true leadership is about having the courage to start, the perseverance to keep going, and the belief that today's efforts will shape tomorrow's success.



**A sign on Route 46/49 in Rome, NY, marks the spot where digging for construction on the Erie Canal began.** PHOTO BY JOHN CLIFFORD/

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# Strength in Numbers

The Expanding Impact of the Manufacturers Alliance of New York



BY TIFFANY LATINO-GERLOCK,  
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

**AS DEMANDS FOR** strategic workforce initiatives increase, the Manufacturers Alliance of New York (The Alliance) continues to expand, stretching its reach from Central New York to corners of the state. The Alliance leverages its strength to drive initiatives and influence legislation, policy, and funding. In addition to workforce development, The Alliance's focus areas also include economic growth, tax policy, energy, and labor.

Nearly 20 years ago, MACNY and The Council of Industry founded The Alliance to address the increasing need for statewide advocacy. The Alliance comprises nine manufacturing and business associations and continues to grow, with the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce joining in January 2025. Statewide, The Alliance represents over 5,400 manufacturers and businesses.

"MACNY has had a powerful voice on the issues impacting and supporting the growth of our manufacturing sector in New York State; this partnership is critical now, more than ever, given the resurgence of domestic manufacturing and the positive momentum we've built here in the Southern Tier," said Stacey Duncan, CEO of the Leadership Alliance.

Randy Wolken, President & CEO of MACNY, emphasized, "With the addition of the Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, The Alliance welcomes an amazing partner in helping build our state's manufacturing ecosystem. The Southern Tier is known for its enduring culture of innovation. With recent federal investments and a strong industrial base, the Chamber deepens The Alliance's ability to serve New York State's manufacturers and workforce."

Representing tens of thousands of companies and over 180,000 manufacturing jobs across the state, The Alliance plans to expand by incorporating more boroughs of New York City in the coming years.

The Alliance partners collaborate with the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) and the State University of New York (SUNY) to tackle challenges facing manufacturers. Leveraging grants and specialized programs, they play a key role in strengthening the educational pipeline and addressing critical industry needs, including a skilled workforce to address talent shortages in advanced manufacturing. A cornerstone of these efforts are the Manufacturers Intermediary Apprenticeship Program (MIAP) and New York Registered Apprenticeship Manufacturing Partnership (NY-RAMP), which are employer-led, public-private programs established to support Registered Apprenticeship in manufacturing. The Alliance utilizes Registered Apprenticeship Programs to enhance the skills of manufacturing workers and create rewarding career pathways, particularly for

individuals with diverse backgrounds. In 2024, 60% of the 196 apprentices served by The Alliance came from underrepresented populations. As Registered Apprenticeship Programs continue to grow, they'll expand into new regions introducing innovative trades and forging partnerships with community organizations to further their impact.

As semiconductor companies, including Micron and its historical investment in building a semiconductor fabrication facility in Central New York, boost the state's economy, Registered Apprenticeship Programs will help connect jobseekers to high-paying opportunities in emerging industries. Since the launch of MIAP in 2016, the State Legislature has secured and committed funding to the program through the State Budget.

To meet this demand, MACNY and The Alliance partners are engaged in several Federal and New York State-funded programs to leverage Registered Apprenticeships and Direct Entry programs to address sector-specific needs and increase access for all populations.

## The Alliance Partners

- **Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce**, Brooklyn
- **Buffalo Niagara Manufacturing Alliance (BNMA)**, Buffalo
- **Center for Economic Growth (CEG)**, Albany
- **Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce**, Binghamton
- **Ignite Long Island (Ignite LI)**, Long Island
- **MACNY, The Manufacturers Association**, Central New York, Mohawk Valley, and North Country
- **Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier (MAST)**, Jamestown
- **Rochester Technology and Manufacturing Association (RTMA)**, Rochester
- **The Council of Industry (COI)**, The Hudson Valley

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One of these initiatives is the Real Life Rosies® program, originally funded by the Empire State Development's Office of Strategic Workforce Development with additional grant funding from the NYSDOL. As the first NYSDOL-approved direct-entry, pre-apprenticeship program in advanced manufacturing, it offers a clear path into Registered Apprenticeship. Developed in partnership with Mohawk Valley Community College; The Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida Workforce Development Board; and other local organizations, the program supports women entering manufacturing.

This no-cost program provides training, certifications, and other wrap-around services to address barriers like childcare, transportation, and work-related supplies. Since launching in 2023, Real Life Rosies has trained more than 120 women and is expanding statewide with the help of The Alliance. Additionally, MACNY is committed to expanding access to opportunities for everyone through the Advance 2 Apprenticeship™ program,



**IN 2024, 60% OF THE 196 APPRENTICES SERVED BY THE ALLIANCE CAME FROM UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS. AS REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO GROW, THEY'LL EXPAND INTO NEW REGIONS INTRODUCING INNOVATIVE TRADES AND FORGING PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS TO FURTHER THEIR IMPACT.**

which NYSDOL considers a direct-entry program. Developed in partnership with the University of Rochester Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities, the New York State Council on Developmental Disabilities, and Mohawk Valley

Community College, this initiative offers an inclusive pre-apprenticeship training program for advanced manufacturing careers.

The Alliance advocates with a unified voice for stronger policies at the state and federal levels and collaborates with other business-focused coalitions to support or oppose legislation and policies that could impact the manufacturing industry.

Every year, The Alliance organizes Manufacturing Advocacy Day in Albany, offering members and Alliance partners an opportunity to engage with state representatives during the legislative session. MACNY's success in workforce development and advocacy is a credit to its team and The Alliance, demonstrating that collective efforts across the state will shape a brighter future for the manufacturing industry and the people it serves.

Connect with Tiffany at [tlatinogerlock@macny.org](mailto:tlatinogerlock@macny.org).



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# From Canal Dreams to Career Streams

The Evolution of Apprenticeship Across New York State



BY EILEEN DONOVAN,  
MANAGER OF APPRENTICESHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**NEW YORK STATE'S** Erie Canal, which celebrates its 200th anniversary this year, was considered audacious and improbable when it was first proposed.

"You talk of making a canal 350 miles through the wilderness – [it's] little short of madness to think of it at this day," said President Thomas Jefferson. Connecting the Hudson River in the East to Lake Erie in the West posed seemingly insurmountable logistical challenges, despite the benefits of faster travel and

reduced freight-moving costs. Yet, against all odds, the canal was built, transforming commerce, industry, and settlement across the state.

Historians now regard the Erie Canal as the U.S.' first "school" of civil engineering. They noted that, "the men who planned the canal were well-educated, with knowledge of surveying and architecture; they were not engineers and had to improvise and invent as they went along."

History shows that bold ideas, though initially doubted, can pave the way for remarkable transformation. Big changes in the manufacturing sector are often met with skepticism. Automation, semiconductor production, and workforce diversification have each faced resistance, yet they've ultimately driven progress. Just as the Erie Canal revolutionized trade, today's innovations are reshaping the industry—creating more efficient production methods, expanding worker opportunities, and strengthening the state's economic future.

In 2016, MACNY, in collaboration with the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL), the State University of New York (SUNY), and local manufacturers, designed and established group sponsorship for Registered Apprenticeship in advanced manufacturing. Traditionally, the NYSDOL focused on building trades apprenticeships, but this initiative marked a significant shift: a trade association serving as the program sponsor for individual employers offering manufacturing apprenticeships to employees. MACNY received

approval from the NYSDOL to provide group sponsorship services for skilled worker trades—an essential step to sustain manufacturing across the state. This sponsorship model proved invaluable to employers who lacked the resources or interest to manage Registered Apprenticeship Programs independently. Since then, MACNY and an allied network of manufacturers' associations (known as the Manufacturers Alliance of New York) have been working to expand this training model statewide through programs like the Manufacturers Intermediary Apprenticeship Program (MIAP) and the New York Registered Apprenticeship Manufacturing Partnership (NY-RAMP).

What began in 2016 as a Registered Apprenticeship Program with six advanced manufacturing trades has grown significantly, now enrolling over 1,100 individuals across trades, including some non-industrial roles like software developer. The recent \$6 million NY-RAMP grant awarded to MACNY by the U.S. Department of Labor is fueling the expansion of

apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs into new regions of the state and adding more non-traditional trades. The goal is to broaden access to apprenticeships, creating career opportunities for more New Yorkers, while supplying employers with a skilled, diverse talent pool.

Pre-apprenticeship pilot programs in the Mohawk Valley and Oswego and Onondaga counties have also demonstrated what a robust skilled worker pipeline can achieve. Programs like Real Life Rosies® and Advance 2 Apprenticeship™ have already placed numerous participants in local manufacturing jobs, with 10 graduates advancing into Registered Apprenticeships with local employers as of early 2025. These innovative workforce development programs tackle the state's skilled labor shortage, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the manufacturing industry while also strengthening career opportunities for participants.

Claudine Ciza, a recent Real Life Rosies program graduate employed by Berry Global since her arrival to the U.S. in 2002, is a shining example.

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Claudine started in production, helping other New Americans acclimate to manufacturing processes. She worked her way into human resources where she continued her training and education as a Human Resources Associate apprentice under MACNY sponsorship.

Claudine overcame several challenges while participating in the Real Life Rosies program: being out of school for 17 years, navigating coursework in her second language, and facing her aversion to math. She completed the 12-week program, which covers core manufacturing concepts and prepares participants for entry-level roles in the industry. While three of her Berry Global classmates pursued the Industrial Manufacturing Technician trade, Claudine chose the non-industrial trade path to enhance her current role. These workers are gaining critical skills that strengthen their careers and add value to Berry Global.

Claudine speaks with confidence about the growth she's experienced and her excitement for the future. Individuals like Claudine and her classmates represent the available talent pool and the innovations needed to train and retain this emerging workforce.

The apprentices who helped build the Erie Canal in the 1800s laid the groundwork for the future of engineering in America, much like today's Registered Apprenticeship Programs are shaping the skilled workforce of tomorrow.

Just as early apprentices on the canal had to innovate and adapt to unprecedented challenges, today's apprentices gain hands-on experience while learning vital skills in industries like manufacturing, technology, and healthcare. Then and now, apprenticeships are the bridge between theory and practice, offering individuals the opportunity to develop expertise through direct involvement in critical, real-world projects.

The Erie Canal's construction, once seen as a bold and implausible undertaking, mirrors the modern-day growth of Registered Apprenticeship Programs, which are essential to meeting the skilled labor needs of our economy, fostering innovation, and ensuring the continued success of industries across the state.

Connect with Eileen  
at [edonovan@macny.org](mailto:edonovan@macny.org).

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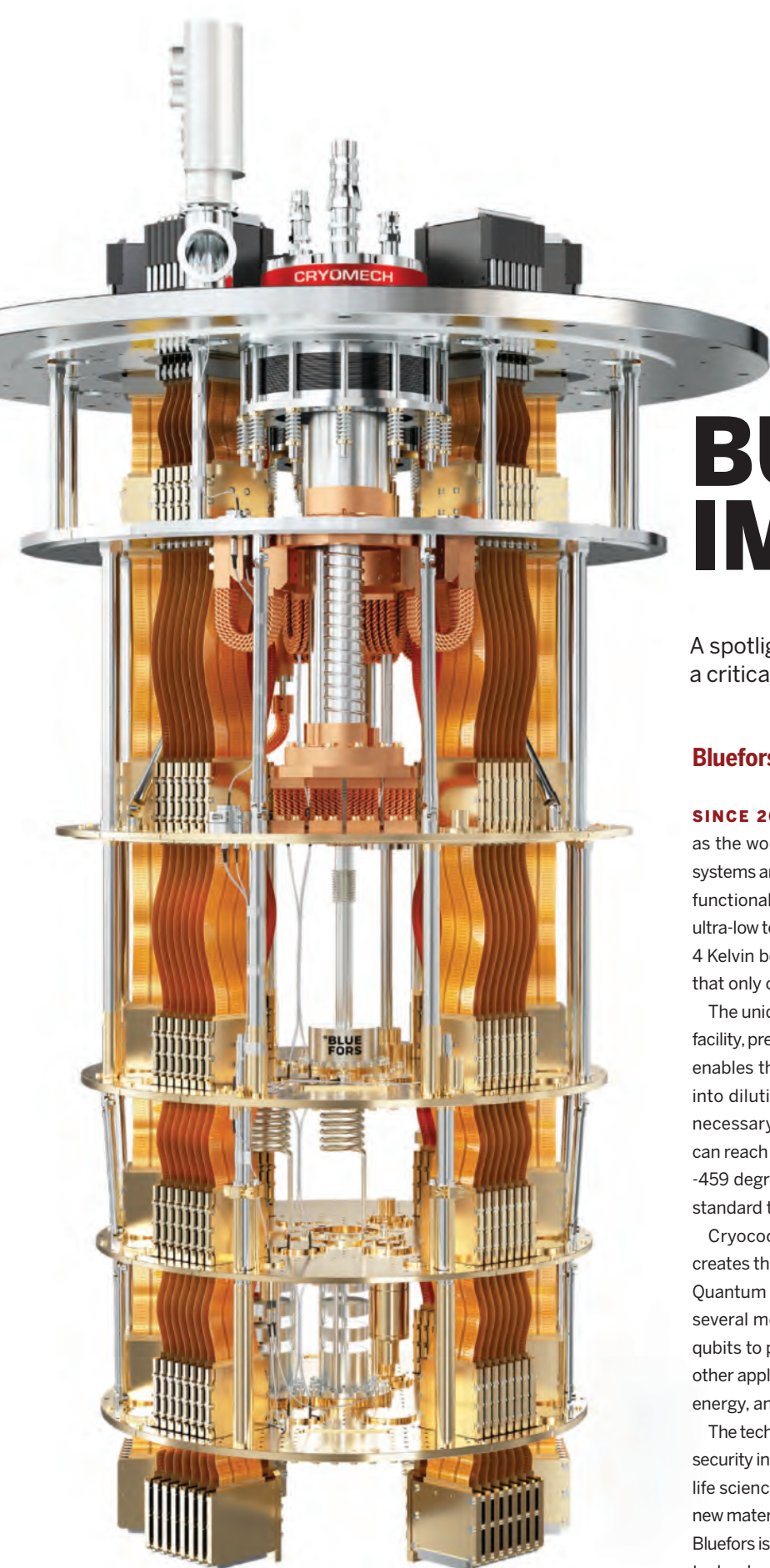


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# BUILT FOR IMPACT

A spotlight on components that play a critical role in groundbreaking applications

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Cryocoolers are one small piece of a much larger system that creates the perfect climate for operating quantum processor chips. Quantum computing is still an emerging technology but there are several modalities of quantum computers from superconducting qubits to photonics, and trapped ion to neutral atom. Cryocoolers' other applications include cooling in medical and life sciences, clean energy, and low temperature physics.

The technology of quantum computers is enhancing operations and security in the finance industry, solving key problems in medicine and life science, answering complex logistics problems, and identifying new materials that could lead to future improvements or innovations. Bluefors is pushing the boundaries of temperature to enable quantum technology to scale even further.





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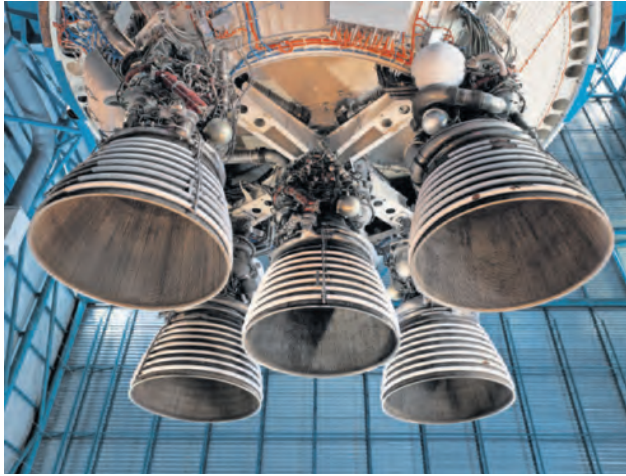
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These products include soft monthly and daily disposable contact lenses, scleral contact lenses, gas permeable corneal lenses and custom cosmetic lenses, as well as a line of contact lenses specially designed for vision correction of children with non-diseased eyes and aphakic adults (adults without an eye lens).

Beyond improving the vision of millions around the world, Bausch + Lomb is committed to a greener future. Its facility in Rochester is powered by renewable energy purchased from the grid using the cleanest fuel mix and lowest carbon dioxide emission rate in the U.S. By expanding its solar array in 2023, the company continues to generate and supply renewable energy to its Rochester location – keeping a vision for a cleaner world in focus.



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The Erie Canal in downtown Syracuse, circa 1900. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS ARCHIVE

## THE ERIE CANAL

# A Historical Blueprint for Modern Manufacturing Transformation

**OCTOBER 2025 MARKS** the bicentennial of the Erie Canal's opening — a transformative project that paved the way for entrepreneurship, industrialization, and the spirit of ingenuity that continues to drive New York's manufacturing revolution today.

In the early 19th century, many perceived the Erie Canal as an impossible dream. This daring project stretched 363 miles from Albany to Buffalo, and was widely considered too ambitious, too costly, and too complicated. Despite skepticism,

Governor DeWitt Clinton pushed forward, and in 1825, the canal was completed, revolutionizing trade, commerce, and transportation not only in New York State but across the Midwest. Construction spanned eight years and demanded bold innovations in engineering, logistics, and labor. The project became the lifeblood of a growing nation and paved the way for economic expansion and new opportunities. The canal didn't just revolutionize the economy, it changed how people connected.







A view of the Erie Canal at South Salina Street in Downtown Syracuse, circa 1900. *LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PHOTO ARCHIVE*





As communities grew along its path, so did the exchange of ideas, fueling new movements and ways of thinking. The speed and ease of communication became an unprecedented link between towns and cities. A passion for reform swept through the region and extended to social and political causes like prison and education reform, temperance, and, most notably, the abolition of slavery and the fight for women's rights. The canal became a powerful catalyst for change, accelerating and shaping new perspectives on justice and equality.

Today, nearly two centuries later, New York State finds itself at the crossroads of another transformative moment – advanced manufacturing. Just as the Erie Canal required groundbreaking advancements, the region's future hinges on embracing emerging technologies, updating infrastructure, and adapting education and transportation systems to meet evolving workforce needs. This new era mirrors the lessons learned from the construction of the Erie Canal.

### **A Changing Landscape: From Waterways to High-Tech Corridors**

The construction of the Erie Canal transformed New York's physical and economic landscape, spurring rapid growth of cities and towns along its course by opening new trade routes and fueling industrial expansion. After completion, it connected the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes, making New York City the premier port of trade. At the time, ports in cities like New Orleans and Philadelphia were outranking and outperforming New York. The canal opened the gate to the Midwest, allowing goods to flow freely into what is now considered the heart of the country.

This transformation also sparked the growth of cities along its path and accelerated the movement of people. Immigrants sought opportunities in rapidly expanding cities like Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo, turning them into industrial hubs. New York State records show that in 1825, the first year of operation, 217,000 tons of goods were transported along the canal. That number increased significantly over the next 50 years when freight traffic peaked in 1880 with 4,608,651 tons of goods.



In terms of city size, Rochester's census data reveals staggering growth along the canal. In the decade between 1820 and 1830, Rochester's population exploded by 513% followed by another 119% the next decade. By 1860, just before the Civil War, the population had skyrocketed to 48,204, up from 1,502 in 1820 — a testament to the canal's transformative power.

Similarly, today's manufacturing boom is creating a ripple effect across Central and Upstate New York's economy. With the rise of semiconductor manufacturing and high-tech industries, the region has become a hub in the technology sector. Much like how the canal transformed agriculture and commerce, the rise of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) will redefine industries, driving growth and creating far-reaching effects on the labor, technology, and energy needed to fuel this expansion. From food production to public education, housing, healthcare, childcare, and more, the region must adapt its infrastructure to meet the demands of a changing economy. Like the canal's transformation of waterways, modern infrastructure updates, including roadways, railways, and power grids will be essential for fostering economic expansion.

"The Erie Canal was a turning point that not only connected New York to new markets but also sparked the growth of cities and industries that reshaped the region's future," said Michael Frame, Executive Vice President of MACNY, The Manufacturers Association. "Today, we're on the cusp of another pivotal shift. The rise of semiconductor manufacturing and high-tech industries is placing Central and Upstate New York at the forefront of technological innovation. As automation and AI redefine the landscape of work and production, it's crucial that we think ahead and modernize our infrastructure to support the demands of these evolving industries. By making the right investments now, we can ensure the region remains competitive, resilient, and ready to seize the opportunities of the future."

## Workforce Evolution: Training for a Changing Economy

The Erie Canal and modern manufacturing represent massive adjustments in the local



**THE ERIE CANAL WAS A TURNING POINT THAT NOT ONLY CONNECTED NEW YORK TO NEW MARKETS BUT ALSO SPARKED THE GROWTH OF CITIES AND INDUSTRIES THAT RESHAPED THE REGION'S FUTURE. TODAY, WE'RE ON THE CUSP OF ANOTHER PIVOTAL SHIFT. THE RISE OF SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURING AND HIGH-TECH INDUSTRIES IS PLACING CENTRAL AND UPSTATE NEW YORK AT THE FOREFRONT OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION.**

*Michael Frame, Executive Vice President, MACNY, The Manufacturers Association*

economy, each requiring a shift to a more substantial, adaptable, and specialized workforce. While the specific skills required have changed, both periods emphasize the need for workforce training and development to ensure success in these transformative periods.

The Erie Canal required the creation of new trades through the diggers, lock builders, and bridge engineers that helped bring this massive project to life. Most canal labor jobs were considered "unskilled" because they focused on digging, but in reality, they required a unique set of abilities. Irish immigrants were heavily recruited because of their experience on Britain's canal system. Masonry was a highly valued trade, offering better pay and working conditions than digging. At the time, the U.S. didn't have trained civil engineers. Learning on the job, these self-taught engineers would go on to shape the country's infrastructure, earning the Erie Canal its reputation as "the birthplace of American civil engineering."

Today, similar attention is being paid to developing a workforce ready for the demands of modern, technology-driven manufacturing. As automation, robotics, and AI drive the economy forward, workers must adapt by learning new technologies and mastering advanced

manufacturing processes. Just as the canal's construction demanded a skilled workforce for innovative infrastructure projects, today's high-tech manufacturing industry requires a workforce equipped with new technical skills to thrive in a rapidly advancing sector. The demand for talent in these areas has prompted a significant investment in education, training initiatives, and workforce development programs.

Registered Apprenticeship Programs and pre-apprenticeship programs are now at the forefront of addressing such gaps. These programs offer hands-on training that aligns with industry needs, combining classroom learning with on-the-job experience. Registered Apprenticeships ensure that workers receive structured, industry-recognized training, preparing them for highly skilled roles in manufacturing. Pre-apprenticeship programs, on the other hand, provide foundational skills, helping individuals gain the necessary experience to enter an apprenticeship.

"Workforce development has long been essential in preparing workers for evolving industry needs," said Amy Stage, Director of Apprenticeship & Workforce Development at MACNY. "Just as the construction of the Erie Canal required specialized skills from masonry to engineering, today's high-tech manufacturing sector relies on expertise in automation, robotics, and AI. Registered Apprenticeship Programs and pre-apprenticeship programs play a vital role in equipping workers with the hands-on training and technical knowledge needed to thrive in these emerging fields. These programs are essential to building a strong foundation for New York's next generation of industry leaders."

As Registered Apprenticeship Programs and pre-apprenticeship programs grow, the region is positioning itself to lead the nation in the next chapter of manufacturing innovation. The historic need for specialized skills during the canal's construction is echoed by today's manufacturers seeking a workforce trained in cutting-edge fields.

When asked about the importance of training programs, such as Registered Apprenticeship, Eric Peckham, Director of Manufacturing Engineering Americas at Belden Inc., shared, "Much like the Erie Canal once connected communities across New York, we at Belden are committed to



**The sun sets over North Townawanda at the western end of the Erie Canal.**

bridging the gap and connecting people globally through our products and services. Manufacturing our cutting-edge solutions requires a highly skilled workforce, and we've found that Registered Apprenticeship Programs are a powerful way to cultivate and grow the talent needed to fill these vital roles."

By focusing on the development of a skilled workforce, New York is setting the stage for continued economic success. These programs ensure that workers have the training and technical knowledge needed to fill the advanced roles driving the industry forward. Just as the Erie Canal helped shape the future of infrastructure, these workforce development programs are laying the groundwork for the future of manufacturing throughout New York, ensuring that the region can thrive amid the uncertainty of rapid change.

## **Opposition and Uncertainty in the Wake of Change: Then and Now**

Both the concept and construction of the Erie Canal were initially met with widespread skepticism and opposition. Towns along the

proposed path faced uncertainty amid the fast-paced transformation. Critics doubted whether the ambitious undertaking could be completed, given the difficult terrain, scale of the project, and availability of skilled laborers. Governor Clinton's predecessor, Daniel D. Tompkins, argued that New York should instead strengthen its defenses against Canada. Critics picked apart the proposal's technical details, but despite political and technical hurdles, Clinton remained committed to making the canal a reality. Meanwhile, towns along the route weren't initially on board. In places like Rome and Schenectady, frustrations ran high where the canal bypassed business districts instead of running through them. Some communities even staged mock funerals to symbolize the loss of their traditional economies and transportation methods.

Furthermore, the canal threatened existing modes of transportation in these towns, such as railroads and stagecoaches, and local farmers viewed the canal as a threat to their businesses and way of life. Despite this fierce opposition, the Erie Canal ultimately proved its worth, revolutionizing transportation, boosting New York's economy, and

fundamentally changing the way goods moved across the state and beyond.

Much like the skepticism surrounding the canal, similar opposition emerges today in response to rapid changes in modern manufacturing. Amid reshoring efforts and new technologies reshaping the industry, concerns grow about workforce shortages, global competition, and displacement of traditional manufacturing roles. Reshoring efforts – bringing manufacturing back to the U.S. – have sparked debates about whether the workforce can keep up with the fast pace of technological change. Similar to the Erie Canal, today's technological advancements are causing anxiety across the nation, primarily centering around job loss and workforce availability. Critics question if emerging industries like AI and automation will replace traditional manufacturing roles or leave local workers behind. Shifting market conditions, evolving policies, and rapid technological advancements create uncertainty about long-term economic stability. While the Erie Canal opened doors to new economic opportunities, many are uncertain whether the same can be said for the high-tech manufacturing revolution underway.



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Lorenz Pallhuber, Co-Founder of Didero, an AI agent for procurement, shared how advancements in the industry are a positive step forward in addressing workforce shortages as well as a strategic necessity in allowing manufacturers to remain globally competitive. "Amongst the companies we've partnered with — several of them MACNY members — we've consistently found that AI doesn't eliminate jobs, it transforms them. AI can reduce repetitive tasks, allowing teams to pivot toward the strategic 'must-win battles' and projects that truly move the needle. This shift towards embracing AI tools is critical given existing talent shortages that will only become more severe as the baby boomer generation continues into retirement. The goal is to move employees from tactical tasks to more skilled work while raising both employee satisfaction and competitiveness," Pallhuber said.

The development of cutting-edge technologies and reshoring efforts are positioning Central and Upstate New York as a leader in manufacturing innovation, much like the canal made New York a dominant force in trade and commerce. Yet, to ensure this success, significant investments in workforce development are necessary. Just as specialized trades emerged during the construction of the canal, today's manufacturing sector requires highly-skilled workers with expertise in AI programming, machine learning, and robotics maintenance.

The Erie Canal, once seen as an impossible dream, now stands as a testament to the power of innovation and perseverance. Similarly, today's transformation in manufacturing presents challenges and immense growth opportunities. Central and Upstate New York is at the precipice of another economic revolution, where lessons learned from the Canal's success will guide the region toward a future of technological advancement, global competitiveness, and economic prosperity. Through continued investment in infrastructure and workforce readiness, the region is poised to lead the next chapter of manufacturing innovation, just as it once led the way in the birth of modern trade and commerce.

*Thank you to The Erie Canal Museum and Derrick Pratt, Museum Educator, for their contributions to this article. Their insights helped provide valuable context for our readers.*

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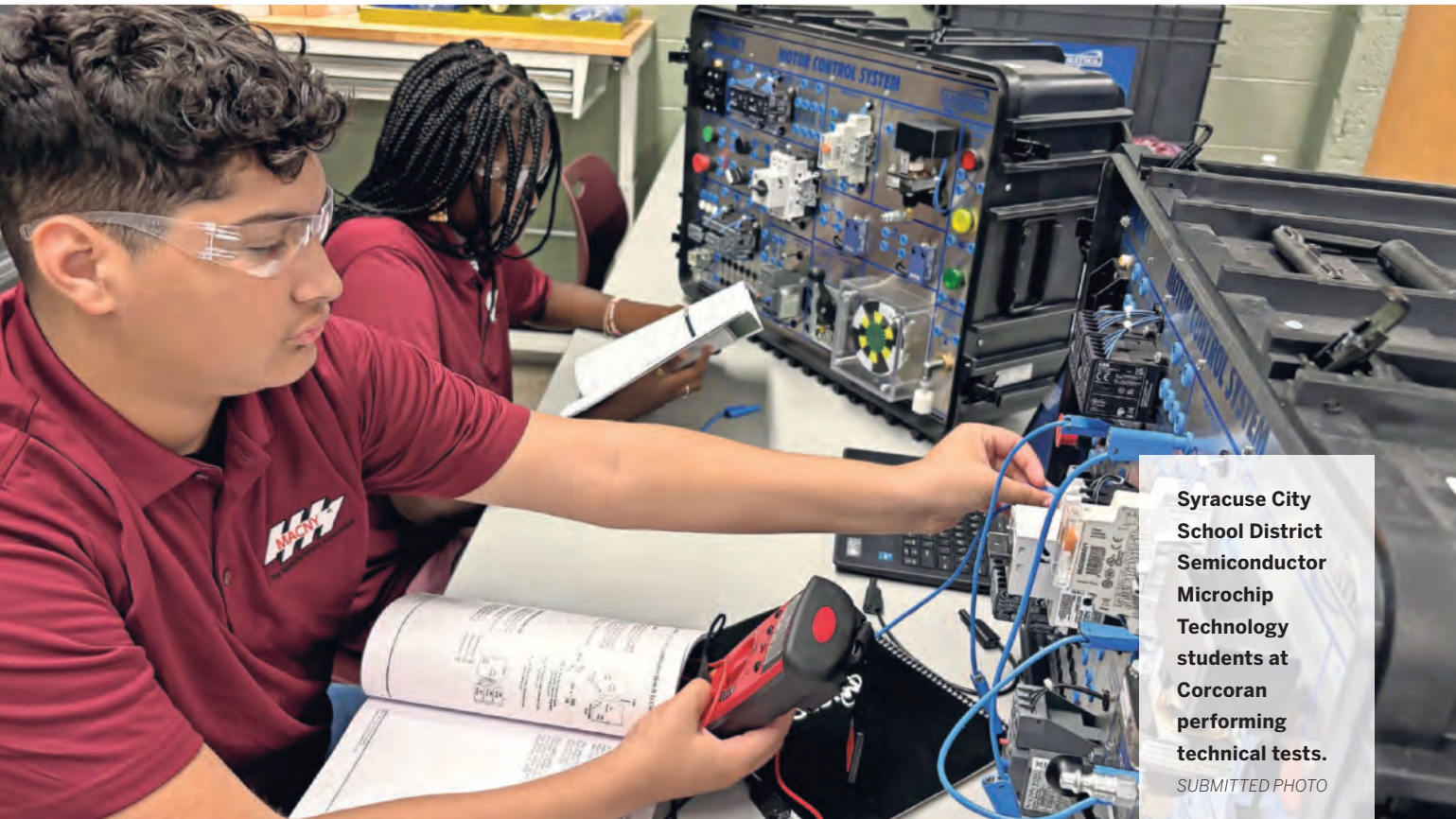
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Syracuse City School District Semiconductor Microchip Technology students at Corcoran performing technical tests.  
SUBMITTED PHOTO

# Future-Proofing the Workforce

Schools and Businesses Aligning for Manufacturing Success



BY TAYLOR HODGE,  
DIRECTOR, PARTNERS FOR EDUCATION & BUSINESS, INC.

**THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY** is undergoing a transformative renaissance driven by automation, robotics, and smart technology. Simultaneously, global supply chain challenges are pushing companies to reshore production, digitize supply networks, and adopt more resilient manufacturing models. As manufacturing continues to evolve as a high-tech, agile, and innovation-driven industry,

how do we future-proof the workforce to ensure long-term success? I believe the answer lies in forging strong partnerships between schools and businesses and creating a talent pipeline that meets industry needs.

We often hear about the gap between education and industry when it comes to the preparedness of students entering the workforce – whether

it's lacking basic technical skills for entry-level roles or everyday soft skills coveted by employers. With the rapid pace of technological advancements, particularly in sectors like manufacturing, the need for schools to adapt quickly and better equip students with industry skills is paramount. This growing necessity is driving a shift in state and community initiatives, with educational institutions and policymakers increasing their focus on aligning curricula with modern industry needs. There are efforts to update standards and invest in workforce development programs that prioritize technical skills, while communities are fostering partnerships with local businesses to create apprenticeship and training programs. These changes aim to close the skills gap and ensure a prepared workforce.

The New York State Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures, launched in 2022, redefines high school success by focusing on readiness for college, career, and civic life, particularly for diverse populations. One of their recommendations was to ensure all students across the state have access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, including internships and work-based learning opportunities.

With guidance from businesses, local school districts are investing in developing CTE pathways by purchasing training equipment and software, and creating work-based learning experiences for students, such as facility tours, job shadowing, internships, professionalism workshops, and guest speaker sessions. The Partners for Education & Business, Inc. (PEB) team, an affiliate of MACNY, has the privilege of witnessing first-hand the collaboration and investment happening across the region due to their work with high schools and serving on advisory committees. PEB plays a pivotal role in aligning education with industry needs by engaging in CTE programs and collaborating with local employers across various sectors.

I spoke with three area school districts that are pioneers in the CTE landscape. The experiences of these leaders who play key roles in student investments, particularly in manufacturing career preparedness, illustrate how education and industry are coming together to bridge the skills gap and future-proof the workforce.



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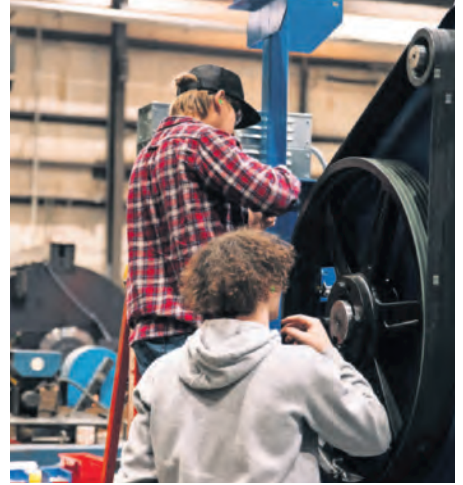
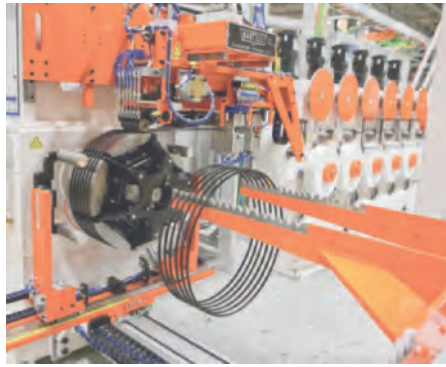
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**CiTi BOCES Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) students completing an internship experience at G.A. Braun.** *SUBMITTED PHOTO*

In Oneida County, the Utica City School District is committed to expanding educational and career opportunities for students. An Advanced Manufacturing: Robotics Automation & Mechatronics pathway has been developed with an advisory council of industry professionals to help address local needs. Here, students learn foundational manufacturing and robotics skills, interact with industrial maintenance systems, and incorporate industrial robotics. They can also earn industry-recognized credentials, such as OSHA-10, FANUC Robotics Level 1 & 2, Rockwell Automation PLCS Level 1, and SMC Automation Training & Certification. Work-based learning isn't just a key component of the district's CTE approach, it's a foundation for real-world success. MACNY pre-apprenticeship programs, like Real Life Rosies® and Advance 2 Apprenticeship™, have been established to provide students with technical skills, connections to local employers, and industry-aligned certifications.

The Syracuse City School District (SCSD) offers 32 CTE programs and plans to expand to nearly 40 with the opening of the regional STEAM School in 2025. Students receive hands-on training in high-demand fields such as welding, robotics, and HVAC-R. Each program includes an employability profile, aligned with New York State Department of Education requirements and the Blue Ribbon Commissions Portrait of a Graduate, detailing essential skills students must master. These profiles, updated annually with business and industry input, ensure programs remain relevant. Advisory committees guide curriculum updates, most recently leading to investments in cutting-edge equipment from Amatrol, Allen-Bradley Rockwell, and FANUC. Students engage with



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**Syracuse City School District (SCSD)**  
**Semiconductor Microchip Technology**  
**student utilizes equipment in a lab at**  
**Corcoran High School.** *SUBMITTED PHOTO*

local industry starting in ninth grade, with career pathway exposure beginning as early as sixth grade.

In neighboring Oswego County, CiTi BOCES promotes manufacturing careers through hands-on experiences and industry engagement designed to spark student interest. Partnering with local manufacturers like Novelis, Huhtamaki, G.A. Braun, E.J, and others, CiTi BOCES ensures its programs, including Machining, Welding, Automation, Mechatronics, and Robotics, align with industry standards and offer real-world insights. These partnerships also provide students with opportunities for internships, mentorships, and career pathways, enhancing their practical experience. As enrollment has increased and partnerships and curriculum have evolved, CiTi BOCES remains committed to delivering educational experiences that prepare students for successful manufacturing careers through strong collaboration between education and industry.

When schools and businesses align, the benefits go beyond workforce readiness. Students gain career opportunities, soft skills, and exposure to advanced technologies, while businesses secure a steady pipeline of skilled workers, reduce training costs, and boost productivity. Communities experience growth, lower unemployment, and foster stronger education-industry ties.

Districts are making great strides with funding from grants and donations, but continued business involvement is crucial. Whether through expertise, time, financial support, or equipment donations, businesses can work alongside PEB and schools to shape the future workforce.

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*PHOTO SUBMITTED  
BY BYRNE DAIRY*

# BUSTED!

The real deal on common **manufacturing myths**.

## **1** “Food Processing is Fully Automated and Requires No Human Touch”

**MYTH BUSTED:** Even in automated food processing, human workers are essential for quality control, sorting, and ensuring safety standards. While automation handles bulk tasks, humans ensure products meet regulations and quality expectations. In meat processing, robots handle cutting and packing, but humans check for contaminants, sort by quality, and maintain safety protocols.

### MANUFACTURING SPOTLIGHT

**Byrne Dairy (Syracuse, New York):** Founded in 1933, Byrne Dairy has expanded from delivering milk to manufacturing a range of dairy products delivered nationwide. Despite advancements in dairy processing, the company relies on human oversight to maintain product quality and address operational challenges, demonstrating that human involvement remains crucial in dairy production.

**Giovanni Foods (Baldwinsville, New York):** Giovanni Foods emphasizes the critical role of human involvement in its food processing operations. While they utilize advanced technologies, the company relies heavily on employees such as Production Assistants, Process Technicians, and Food Processing Operators to inspect finished products, operate and maintain equipment, and monitor production lines to ensure quality and efficiency.



**In 1983, Byrne Dairy sent their cold and creamy ice cream sandwiched in-between two freshly baked cookies to market. It was an instant success!** *PHOTO SUBMITTED BY BYRNE DAIRY*



Quality control engineers examining products on the production line at a food processing facility.



Some local companies use Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines for plastic mold making and parts production.

## 2 “Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machines Are Only for Large-Scale Production”

**MYTH BUSTED:** While CNC machines are often associated with high-volume production, they're also used in low-volume, high-precision applications, such as custom-made parts for medical devices or bespoke jewelry.

### MANUFACTURING SPOTLIGHT

**N.E.T. Tool & Die (Fulton, New York):** As a third-generation family-owned CNC machine shop, they provide custom, prototype, low to mid volume production and repair machined products and services.

**Oneida Molded Plastics (Oneida, New York):** While primarily known for their plastic molding services, Oneida Molded Plastics also uses CNC machines for custom mold making and parts production. They cater to small-batch production runs for clients in various industries such as consumer goods, medical devices, and electronics.





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## 3 “Hand-Drilled Fasteners Are a Thing of the Past”

**MYTH BUSTED:** Even with robotic drilling, some critical fasteners (e.g. those in highly stressed areas of aircrafts) still require skilled human hands for final adjustments and inspection.

### MANUFACTURING SPOTLIGHT

**Moog, Inc. (East Aurora, New York):** Moog, Inc., a leader in aerospace, defense, and industrial systems, combines automation with skilled human technicians to ensure the precision of fasteners in highly stressed aircraft areas. While robotics enhance speed and consistency, human expertise is essential for final adjustments and inspections to meet strict safety and quality standards. For example, when assembling flight control systems for aircrafts, Moog blends automated drilling and assembly systems with human oversight to guarantee the reliability and safety of critical components. This balance of technology and human skill ensures the highest level of precision in aerospace applications.

**SRC, Inc. (Syracuse, New York):** SRC, Inc., a leader in advanced technology and engineering services, uses robotics and automation in its production processes. They exemplify how certain critical fasteners, especially those in highly-stressed areas of military and aerospace systems, still require human technicians for final adjustments and inspections. These fasteners must meet the highest standards of quality and precision, which often require the expertise of skilled workers to ensure safety and reliability. SRC, Inc. combines cutting-edge technology with human oversight to ensure every component meets stringent industry requirements.

## 4 “Water Purification Is Only for Drinking Water”

**MYTH BUSTED:** Water purification processes in New York aren't limited to drinking water; they also apply to water used for industrial purposes, irrigation, and wastewater treatment. Industrial manufacturers use water in various stages of production, requiring careful purification to prevent contamination and ensure product quality. Sectors like food production and pharmaceuticals rely on purified water for the manufacturing process, including cleaning and cooling purposes.

### MANUFACTURING SPOTLIGHT

**F.X. Matt Brewing Co. Inc. (Saranac Brewery) (Utica, New York):** Known for its commitment to sustainability, they exemplify how water purification is crucial beyond just drinking water. In their operations, water is used in multiple stages of production, including cleaning and cooling, and necessitating careful purification processes to ensure product quality and avoid contamination. As part of their sustainability efforts, Saranac Brewery focuses on responsible water management, recognizing that purified water plays a vital role in their brewing process, aligning with broader environmental goals in industries like food production, where high-quality water is essential for manufacturing and wastewater treatment. This demonstrates how water purification in New York isn't limited to drinking water but is integral to industrial processes.

**The Raymond Corporation (Greene, New York):** A manufacturer of forklifts and material handling equipment, The Raymond Corporation uses water in cooling systems, cleaning parts, and in some manufacturing processes. They rely on treated water to ensure proper functioning and to avoid any contamination in the materials they produce.

**Novelis (Oswego, New York):** Novelis, a global leader in aluminum rolling and recycling, operates a plant in Oswego that relies heavily on treated water for cooling and cleaning during the aluminum production process. This purified water is crucial for maintaining efficient operations and preventing contamination in the final product.

**Lockheed Martin (Owego, New York):** Lockheed Martin's Owego facility is involved in aerospace manufacturing, where water purification plays a key role in the production of advanced technologies, including cooling and cleaning systems for various aerospace components. Clean water is essential for maintaining precision in manufacturing.



**Industrial manufacturers use water in various stages of production, requiring careful purification to prevent contamination and ensure quality.**

## 5 “Industrial Manufacturing Isn't Adaptable to Small or Niche Markets”

**MYTH BUSTED:** Many modern industrial manufacturers offer highly customizable production processes, allowing for small-batch runs or made to order products, especially in industries like electronics, aerospace, and fashion.

### MANUFACTURING SPOTLIGHT

**Universal Instruments Corporation (Conklin, New York):** Specializing in automated machinery for electronic manufacturing, their products enable electronics manufacturers to construct circuits tailored to specific requirements, supporting both small and large production runs.

**Syracuse Glass Company (Syracuse, New York):** Fabricates custom architectural glass and aluminum products, serving various sectors including glazing, home improvement, and furniture manufacturing.

**CNY Fabrications, LLC (North Syracuse, New York):** Offers custom tooling, fixture, and process design services, emphasizing flexible manufacturing processes to meet diverse and specialized client needs.





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**Progress Report**

Flip this book to the back cover for MACNY's 2024 Progress Report.



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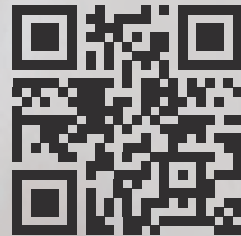


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together

2024 Calendar Year

# Progress Report



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# + A Message from the COO

Marisa Norcross,  
Chief Operations Officer

As we reflect on 2024, we're proud to celebrate the remarkable achievements that have shaped the year. These milestones represent more than progress — they reflect our deep-rooted commitment to ensuring that every effort we make delivers measurable impact for our members and the broader manufacturing ecosystem.

In the pages that follow, you'll find highlights from a year defined by meaningful partnerships and a shared sense of purpose. We've expanded our reach, deepened our programs, and worked alongside businesses of all sizes to build stronger operations, better prepare the workforce, and strengthen competitiveness.

This year's accomplishments underscore the power of collaboration. None of this would have been possible without the support of our members, partners, and staff. United by the vision of Building Tomorrow, Together, we are helping to shape a more innovative, resilient, and sustainable manufacturing industry across New York State.

Looking toward the future, we're excited to keep raising the bar grounded in the belief that manufacturing remains a cornerstone of thriving communities.



building  
tomorrow,  
together





# Leading ++ the Way.

MACNY, The Manufacturers Association is the largest manufacturing trade association in New York. As a member-based not-for-profit, we act as the voice and business solution leader for manufacturing excellence across the state. Without the dedication and involvement of our members, our success over the last 112 years would not have been possible. We salute the New York State manufacturing sector, for their hard work, resilience, and dedication to our region and state.

## Top Reasons Members Chose MACNY in 2024

● Training/Personal Development

● Industry/Community Involvement

● Networking

new  
members

30

new  
individuals

2k+

total  
members

333

in  
twenty-six  
counties

26

## Amplifying Impact

3,016

Over 3k attendees received the chance to amplify their impact through MACNY trainings, council programs, networking opportunities, celebratory events, info sessions ... the list goes on!

## Milestone Service



Dedicated staff members who hit milestone years of service at MACNY in 2024:  
Eileen Donovan - 5 years  
Marisa Norcross - 10 years  
Mary Rowland - 10 years

## Staff Growth



In an impressive year of growth and continued service to the membership, MACNY's full time staff grew by nine new hires in 2024, expanding to nearly 30 individuals.

## Emerging Opportunities



MACNY was awarded multi-year contracts by the U.S. Department of Labor to expand Registered Apprenticeships — a historic federal investment!

# MACNY Highlights

## 2024 Momentum Report

### Legislative Priorities



#### Manufacturing Tax Policy

We continued to support Tax Parity to extend the zero percent manufacturers tax rate to pass-through entities, which many manufacturers are.



#### Workforce Development

Our lobbying efforts influenced state and federal level decision making and helped bring in over a million dollars in workforce funding to serve members.



#### Energy

We continue to support legislation and responsible regulation that ensures energy affordability, availability, quality, and reliability.



MACNY held multiple webinars, tours, and meetings with nearly 100 legislators to advocate for key state and federal issues impacting MACNY member companies.

Throughout 2024, MACNY continued to advocate for policies that support manufacturers, focusing on workforce development, energy, labor, and economic growth. Through legislative engagement and strategic partnerships, we ensure our members' voices are heard at local, state, and federal levels.

Our business solutions provide tailored support, including HR services for members. Additionally, our energy solutions help members reduce costs and improve efficiency through purchasing partnerships and sustainability initiatives.

These efforts empower manufacturers to navigate challenges and drive growth, as we continue *Building Tomorrow, Together*.

### HR Services

**\$2.8M** | Sixteen MACNY member companies participated in the Healthcare Consortium, saving an impressive \$2.8M on premiums.

**68**  
Participants | Sixty-eight companies participated in the 2024 MACNY & CNY SHRM Wage & Benefit Survey.

**194**  
Attendees | Nearly 200 individuals engaged with our wide variety of monthly learning opportunities for HR professionals covering topics that impact compliance, finance, and workplace issues.

### Energy Solutions

MACNY continues to expand energy options for members, reviewing new benefits and advocating for supportive programs and legislation as New York shapes its energy future.

This year, members saved on electricity, natural gas, and solar through our energy purchasing partnerships. Additionally, energy efficiency programs offered companies opportunities to optimize energy use, while also reducing implementation costs.



# building tomorrow,

How you work is constantly evolving! MACNY is committed to helping you keep your talent pipeline full and your workforce prepared to meet present and future demands of the manufacturing industry. We start closing the skills gap early by engaging with students through programs specifically designed for youth facilitated by Partners for Education & Business, Inc. (PEB). These initiatives are designed to provide meaningful experiences that spark interest in manufacturing careers. Moving beyond youth programs, MACNY facilitates pre-apprenticeship programs that teach essential skills, preparing individuals for entry into Registered Apprenticeship Programs and careers in manufacturing.

## Partners for Education & Business, Inc. (PEB) 2024-25 Engagements



For the 2024-25 school year, five companies offered a total of eight scholarships valued at \$98K, to be disbursed over four years.



Over 380 employees from across 160 unique businesses engaged in work-based learning opportunities with local students.

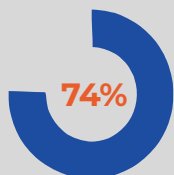


Through contracts, PEB served approximately 870 students from 15 high schools across six counties.

## Diversifying Advanced Manufacturing

MACNY successfully expanded its Real Life Rosies® pre-apprenticeship program in the Mohawk Valley, and to Onondaga and Oswego Counties.

2024 Real Life  
Rosies Overall  
Program  
Completion



2024 Real Life  
Rosies Overall  
Placement/  
Registered  
Apprenticeship  
Program



3x

The **Future Women in STEM** program attendance tripled its growth in only its third year. With attendance consistently exceeding 45+ at each session, we experienced record interest from MACNY members to act as teaching partners.

## Pre-Apprenticeship



MACNY launched an exclusive high school cohort in the Real Life Rosies® program.



CNY Association for Talent Development recognized MACNY's Real Life Rosies Program with a CNY Best Award in the Non-Profit Workforce Development Program category.



The Exemplary Marketing Award, from the Continuing Education Association of NY, was awarded to the Real Life Rosies program.

# MACNY Highlights

## 2024 Talent Development

# together

MACNY's Talent Development team is also here to assist you in empowering employees to learn and grow, a powerful asset to propel your business forward. Our experienced team is prepared to help you establish your own Registered Apprenticeship Program to spring-board employees into skilled and fulfilling career paths. Finally, to keep you and your teams thriving, we offer ongoing training and development opportunities through a vast portfolio of courses and workshops in areas such as leadership and personal growth, software and digital tools, safety, quality and compliance, human resources, supply chain management, lean manufacturing, and more!

### Training Curriculum

Nearly 600 registrants from over 100 companies participated in MACNY's 2024 training programs. With 67% attending in person and 33% joining virtually, we were able to expand our reach into additional regions and states.

# 595



participants in over 97 trainings offered throughout 2024.

# MFG MONTH

October is  
Manufacturing Month!

2024: A record-breaking year! This month-long event featured 12 MACNY member host companies across five counties, reaching 14 school districts, and nearly 400 students and educators.

### Registered Apprenticeship

# \$848k

Awarded

\$848,000 in incentive funds were awarded by MACNY to signatory companies in support of workforce development.

# 79

Apprentices

MACNY registered 79 apprentices to increase their technical skill level, offering individuals the opportunity to earn while they learn.

# 26

Journeyworkers

26 Registered Apprentices achieved their Journeyworker Certification.

# 11

Returning apprentices

11 Journeyworkers have started a second Registered Apprenticeship Program.

### Popular MACNY Training Areas

A vast portfolio providing members with training and development to help you and your employees thrive. Top categories in 2024 included:

- Leadership & Personal Growth
- Software & Digital Tools
- Safety
- Quality & Compliance



# In memory of

**Jason Poole**

April 22, 1976 - March 17, 2025



In remembrance of our colleague and friend, Jason Poole, we take a moment to honor his kindness and friendship, which have left a lasting impact on all who had the privilege of working with him.

At the time of his passing, Jason served as a Workforce Development Specialist at MACNY. In this role, he found joy in supporting and empowering individuals along their career paths. Throughout his own career, his steadfast dedication to his work was deeply appreciated by all who knew him.

Our thoughts are with his family, friends, and colleagues.