

MANUFACTURING MATTERS NEWSLETTER



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF MACNY, THE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION | FEBRUARY 2026

MACNY'S DIRECT-ENTRY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS ARE CHANGING THE FACES OF MANUFACTURING

As the U.S. approaches its bicentennial, it's an opportunity to reflect on how technologies and industries have evolved over the last 250 years. As more jobs become available in manufacturing it's become clear that the workforce that fueled the past isn't enough to sustain the future. Programs like Advance 2 Apprenticeship® and Real Life Rosies® are opening doors for a new workforce to power the manufacturing industry through the next 250 years.

According to a 2023 National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) report, women account for only 29% of the manufacturing workforce despite making up around 47% of the total U.S. workforce.

To support a more diverse and inclusive workforce, particularly by expanding manufacturing opportunities for women, MACNY launched the Real Life Rosies pre-apprenticeship program — inspired by the iconic Rosie the Riveter, the cultural icon who symbolized the strength and capability of women stepping into industrial roles during World War II. The program carries that legacy forward by opening doors for women in modern manufacturing.

Real Life Rosies and Advance 2 Apprenticeship are complementary, no-cost pre-apprenticeship programs designed to expand access to careers in advanced manufacturing. As New York State's first direct-entry training program created specifically for women, Real Life Rosies delivers hands-on learning that builds real-world skills and confidence. Both

programs remove barriers to participation by offering comprehensive supportive services, such as childcare, transportation, work attire, and personalized academic support from dedicated tutors. Together, these programs equip participants with in-demand, foundational skills and the confidence to successfully pursue manufacturing careers.



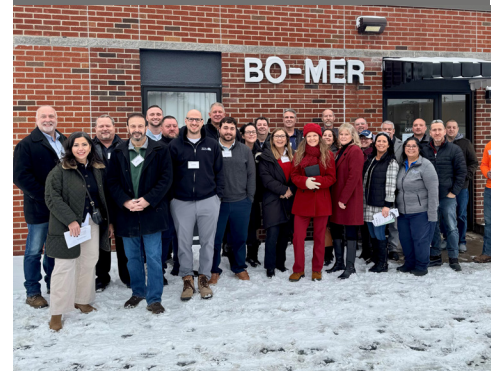
Claudine Ciza graduated from the Real Life Rosies program at Onondaga Community College last winter. As a New American and mother of five, Claudine was hesitant to return to school after 17 years, especially when English isn't her primary language. Committed to setting herself up for a successful career in manufacturing, she attended the Rosies classes in the evening after work. Claudine reflects on the program with gratitude for pushing her out of her comfort zone and opening the doors to new career opportunities. After graduation, Claudine joined Berry Global as a Human Resources Associate Registered Apprentice to continue her education and training under MACNY sponsorship.

Since launching, both programs have expanded their reach beyond Central New York to regions across the state, with partner programs launching in Rochester, Albany and Binghamton. As these programs continue to grow, we hope to inspire the next generation of manufacturers to continue breaking the mold and changing the face of manufacturing in America.



INSIDE

- 3 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**
Build Human Capability for Advanced Manufacturing's Next Chapter
- 6 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
Just Go For It: A Journey to Apprenticeship
- 7 PARTNERS FOR EDUCATION & BUSINESS, INC.**
Taking It to Heart: Students Complete CPR Certification at Upstate Medical University



- 9 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**
Are You Willing to Have Great Expectations?
- 10 STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS**
MACNY Hires Six New Employees
- 12 UPCOMING EVENTS**
Opportunities For You and Your Workforce





Building Tomorrow, Together



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Randy Wolken, President & CEO

BUILD HUMAN CAPABILITY FOR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING'S NEXT CHAPTER



Advanced manufacturing is no longer defined only by machines, automation, or technology. It's determined by people who can work alongside intelligent systems, adapt continuously, and grow as production environments evolve. The factories of today and tomorrow are more intelligent, faster, and more connected — but their success ultimately depends on how well organizations develop, support, and retain human talent. This reality places talent development, HR, and training leaders at the very center of manufacturing competitiveness.

The most significant shift in the evolving workforce isn't job loss, but job transformation. Tasks that were once manual, repetitive, or physically demanding are increasingly handled by automation, robotics, and AI. In their place, human roles are becoming more cognitive, judgment-based, and system-oriented. Workers are expected to supervise automated processes, interpret digital information, make decisions when systems flag exceptions, and collaborate with both machines and other people in new ways.

This change creates opportunity — but only if organizations invest intentionally in skills and learning. The old model of “hire for experience and train once” no longer works. Now skills have a shorter half-life, and roles evolve faster than traditional job descriptions. Workforce development leaders are therefore moving from static training programs to continuous learning ecosystems that grow with the technology and the business.

One of the most critical responsibilities for leaders is reskilling at scale. Frontline operators aren't being

replaced; they're being elevated. With the help of digital work instructions, augmented reality, and collaborative robots, workers can perform higher-value tasks with less physical strain and less time spent memorizing complex procedures. Training is becoming more visual, contextual, and hands-on — embedded directly into daily work rather than confined to classrooms.

At the same time, technical roles are changing rapidly. Maintenance technicians will now diagnose issues using predictive analytics. Engineers will collaborate with AI-driven design tools. Supervisors are being asked to manage systems and workflows rather than individual tasks. Workforce leaders must now ensure that training reflects real operational tools, not abstract concepts. Now, and in the future, the most effective programs are closely aligned with the actual technologies deployed on the factory floor.

Another defining feature of the future workforce is career mobility inside the organization. Workers increasingly expect opportunities to grow, not just stable employment. Future-focused workforce leaders are responding by designing clear skill pathways that allow employees to move from entry-level roles into advanced technical, supervisory, or specialist positions over time. These pathways improve retention, reduce hiring pressure, and build irreplaceable institutional knowledge.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are a leading example of how to prepare individuals for the new needs of advanced manufacturing...

(cont'd on page 4)

Advanced manufacturing desperately needs a more inclusive workforce. As physical demands decrease and digital tools become more accessible, advanced manufacturing roles open up to a broader range of workers. Workforce development programs must now emphasize potential and adaptability, not just prior experience. Apprenticeships, earn-and-learn models, and partnerships with community colleges and training providers are increasingly essential tools for building talent pipelines.

Additionally, culture matters as much as capability. As AI and automation become more visible, workers need reassurance that technology is there to support them, not sideline them. All leaders play a critical role in building trust – communicating how systems are used, where human judgment remains essential, and how employees can grow alongside new tools.

Organizations that succeed in 2026 and beyond treat learning as a shared value and change as a regular part of work life, not as a disruption to be feared.

Retention is driven by more than wages alone. Employees stay where they feel invested in, respected, and prepared for the future. Training leaders who provide clear learning opportunities, coaching, and skill recognition create workplaces where people see a long-term future for themselves. This becomes especially important

as competition for skilled talent remain strong across regions and industries.

Finally, talent development and HR leaders are becoming strategic partners to executive leadership. Talent strategy is no longer separate from operations or growth plans. Decisions about automation, expansion, and reshoring now require parallel decisions about training capacity, leadership development, and workforce readiness. In many organizations, HR and talent development leaders are helping shape where and how growth happens by ensuring the people are ready to support it.

In 2026, advanced manufacturing is creating roles that are safer, more engaging, and more intellectually rewarding – but only when organizations invest deliberately in people. HR and training leaders are no longer support functions; they're builders of capability, confidence, and continuity. Their work ensures that as technology advances, the workforce advances with it – and that manufacturing's next chapter is powered not just by intelligent systems, but by skilled, adaptable, and motivated people.



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Manufacturers
Wall of Fame



Innovator of
the Year

2

VIDEO SUBMISSION



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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Eileen Donovan, Manager of Apprenticeship & Workforce Development

JUST GO FOR IT: A JOURNEY TO APPRENTICESHIP



Alongside her peers at Paul V. Moore High School, Alexis Tuff, spent time weighing her post-secondary options: community college, trade school, four-year university, or straight to work? After a conversation at a CiTi BOCES career fair with a Registered Apprentice at Thompson & Johnson Equipment, Alexis chose a path that aligned with her dreams and goals, enrolling at CiTi BOCES in Mexico, NY, to gain hands-on experience working with heavy equipment.

Alexis was intrigued by the possibilities of gaining more knowledge, one-on-one training, and obtaining certifications without committing to a college degree program. While she understood she'd need additional training and education to reach her career goals, enrolling in CiTi BOCES felt like a solid pathway. It allowed her to earn college credits debt-free and learn while she earned.

Thompson & Johnson Equipment, offered Alexis a full-time position along with the opportunity to pursue further education through a MACNY-sponsored Registered Apprenticeship. She began working with T&J in early December 2025 and immediately enrolled in the Industrial Truck Mechanic Registered Apprenticeship Program. At MACNY, we applaud Alexis' targeted focus on pursuing her dreams. Her advice to young women in high school that are considering entering male-dominated fields would be: "Just go for it. If this something that you love, never stop pursuing it and asking questions."

We're thrilled that Alexis' choice to enter the program contributes to the growing number of women pursuing Registered Apprenticeship.. Nationally, women represented only about 14% of Registered Apprenticeships in 2024 – and just 7% of apprentices under age 24 – even though women make up roughly half of the overall workforce. With support from MACNY's New York Registered Apprenticeship Manufacturing Partnerships (NY-RAMP) grant, this number

is poised to grow. As Alexis progresses through her Apprenticeship, we look forward to her becoming a true ambassador for Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

We commend Thompson & Johnson Equipment and other companies for their dedication an commitment to advancing the future workforce and showing a vested interest in students like Alexis that demonstrate the potential for success in a Registered Apprenticeship.

For any companies interested in recruiting and hiring, widening the pool of candidates to include youth and other underrepresented groups is a great strategy and Registered Apprenticeship programs can serve as an excellent recruitment tool for finding and training the next generation of talent.



PARTNERS FOR EDUCATION & BUSINESS, INC.

Amy Stewart, Workforce Development Specialist,
Partners for Education & Business, Inc.

TAKING IT TO HEART: STUDENTS COMPLETE CPR CERTIFICATION AT UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY



In recognition of February's designation as American Heart Month, Henninger High School is celebrating a major achievement in its healthcare programs. 50 juniors recently earned their American Heart Association CPR certification through hands-on training led by Upstate Medical University's Emergency Medicine Simulation Technology and Training (EM-STAT) Center.

Henninger offers two Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) programs — Health Professions and Clinical Laboratory Technology — as well as a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program in Medical Assisting. Upstate delivered the training to four of these classes over the course of two days.

Lauren Pasternak, Health Professions teacher at Henninger High School remarked, "I was so excited that my class was given this opportunity. I feel like everyone who's able should have this



training. What a blessing that my students could have it as part of their program."

Training sessions took place at the Upstate Simulation Center, where students practiced essential life-saving skills for both adults and infants. They also learned how to respond to choking emergencies using proper abdominal thrust techniques. CPR instructor Ann Marie Howell shared, "The students were excited to learn how to save a life, and they did great. It's great to know that there are more people who can save a life should CPR be needed."



In addition to earning their CPR certification, students toured the Simulation Center to see how Upstate trains future medical professionals using high-tech mannequins, realistic clinical scenarios, and cutting-edge technology. A highlight for many was viewing the operating room simulation suite.

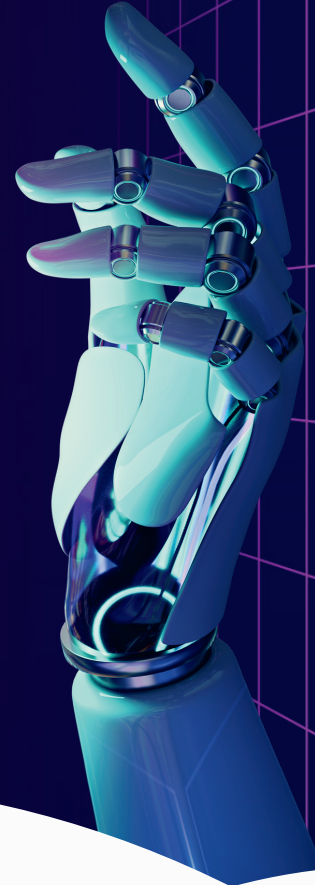
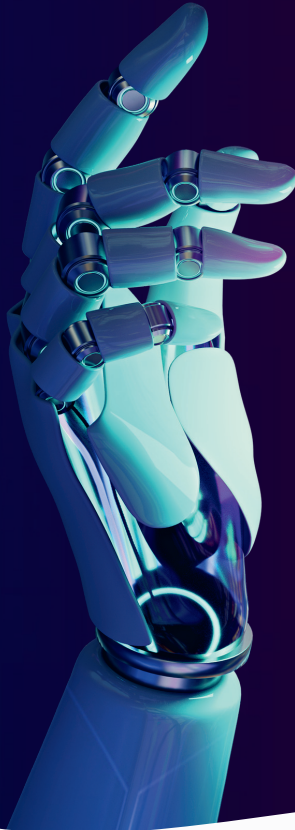
The timing of the certification couldn't be better: students will proudly list this new credential on their resumes at the Syracuse City School District Career Fair in March. This experience not only enhanced their readiness for future healthcare careers but also equipped them with the confidence to act in real emergencies — both in school and in their community.

"It was an amazing experience. Now when an emergency happens, I'll know exactly what to do," said Henninger high school junior, Claire.

As American Heart Month reminds us of the importance of cardiac emergency preparedness, Henninger High School's healthcare students are already stepping up to make a life-saving difference.

Partners for Education & Business, Inc. (PEB) is an affiliate of MACNY. We collaborate with schools, industry partners, and community members to create career pathways by coordinating career exploration and preparation programming in the Central New York area.

CNY STEM SCHOLARSHIP



CNY STEM SCHOLARSHIPS



The CNY STEM Scholarship Program supports Central New York high school seniors pursuing college degrees in STEM fields. Administered by Partners for Education & Business, Inc. (PEB), the program aims to build an inclusive STEM workforce, highlight local career opportunities, and retain local talent. Scholarships are awarded based on a number of criteria. Participating companies are encouraged to offer a paid internship opportunity following the student's sophomore year of college.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications open in November and close in mid-March. Top candidates are selected by sponsoring companies using a standard rubric and scheduled for virtual interviews coordinated by PEB. Company representatives conduct the interviews and choose scholarship recipients based on both applications and interviews. Final decisions are announced via email in early May.

ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

- Current High School Senior
- Planned College Major:
 - Architecture
 - Computer Science
 - Engineering
 - Math
 - Physics
- Required Cumulative Average: 85+



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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

David Freund, Chief Leadership Officer

ARE YOU WILLING TO HAVE GREAT EXPECTATIONS?



At first glance of the title, you might think I'm referring to Charles Dickens' 1861 novel. While I enjoy Dickens, I'm far more partial to *A Christmas Carol*. The title here isn't literary, but philosophical. It refers to the idea of **having great expectations**.

Quite frankly, I believe we've lost that idea. We've lowered the bar for ourselves, for others, and for the institutions that shape our lives. Allow me to explain.

As parents, we say we want our children to excel, yet the moment they struggle, we rush to their rescue. Children receive trophies simply for participating, regardless of effort or performance. For example, I once heard of a mother who wrote her son's college English papers so he would "have an easier time."

The pattern doesn't stop there. We tolerate politicians on both sides of the aisle who fall far short of statesmanship. We accept journalists who prioritize opinion over facts. And somehow, we've come to believe this is normal. Acceptable, even.

Why? Now that I've likely offended just about everyone reading this, let me get to the point.

If we do not hold **great expectations** for ourselves, our direct reports, and our organizations, we are choosing mediocrity. Plain and simple. We've traded excellence for comfort, effort for ease, and accountability for excuses. In doing so, we haven't empowered people, we've diminished them. We've sent the message that we don't believe they're capable of more, which may be the greatest tragedy of all.

The good news? This can change.

When we set high expectations for ourselves, we commit to growth. When we set high expectations for our children, they learn, by example, to pursue mastery rather than shortcuts.

When we set high expectations for our employees, they see that we value them enough to invest in them, challenge them, and believe in their potential. And when that happens, people don't shrink, they rise. They innovate. They lead. They exceed what we thought was possible.

Some will say this is asking too much, but in 1944, we asked 18-year-olds to storm the beaches of Normandy. They did so with courage and sacrifice, and history rightly remembers them as the Greatest Generation.

So, without apology, I choose to have **great expectations** — for myself, my family, my coworkers, my community, and my country. Because expecting more isn't cruel — it's an act of belief — and belief, when paired with responsibility, changes everything.

So, here's the challenge:

This week, **raise the bar** — starting with yourself.

Start valuing people. Stop rescuing. Start coaching.

Stop lowering expectations and expect more.

Have the honest conversation you've been avoiding. Speak the truth in love.

Give feedback that stretches instead of soothes.

Hold someone accountable because you believe they are capable of more, not because you're disappointed in them.

Excellence doesn't happen by accident. It happens when ordinary people decide that average is no longer acceptable. Choose to expect more. Choose to demand better. Choose to believe in the people around you enough to challenge them.

Great expectations don't hold people back.

They call them forward.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS



MACNY, The Manufacturers Association, is expanding its team with **six new staff members** who will broaden the organization's expertise across human resources, workforce development, government relations, and public policy. These valued additions will help further MACNY's mission to support manufacturers, expand career pathways, foster strategic partnerships, and engage elected officials and community stakeholders throughout New York State and beyond.

Bill Brower brings decades of leadership experience in higher education, philanthropy, and community development to MACNY as Director of Public Policy and Community Impact. In this role, he will work closely with manufacturers, elected officials, educators, and community partners to shape public policy, build high-impact collaborations, and strengthen workforce pathways. He has helped raise hundreds of millions of dollars for Hamilton College, SUNY Geneseo, and Le Moyne College, and has designed and scaled initiatives that connect historically underserved populations to career pathways, technology training, and education. His work has included engagement with employers, legislators, and public agencies to prepare local talent for emerging industries and major investments, including the region's growing advanced manufacturing and semiconductor ecosystem. With a strategic, relationship-driven approach, Brower will help expand MACNY's influence, support manufacturers' talent needs, and advance inclusive, long-term economic growth across New York State.

Courtney Kless joins MACNY as a Government Relations Specialist, acting as a key conduit between the

organization, its members, and government officials at the local, state, and federal levels. She helps convey MACNY's policy priorities, advance advocacy initiatives, and engage stakeholders on issues affecting manufacturers. With a background in editorial leadership and higher education, Courtney brings skills in strategic communications, content development, and relationship-building. She leverages this experience to support legislative initiatives, cultivate meaningful connections with elected officials and community partners, and ensure the voice of New York manufacturers is effectively represented across all levels of government.

As a Workforce Development Specialist, Adrianna Patzer supports the growth of MACNY's Registered Apprenticeship programs in the Central New York region. She works with businesses, educators, and community partners to promote apprenticeship opportunities, provide technical guidance, and address workforce challenges in emerging and high-demand industries. Adrianna supports employer outreach, engages with stakeholders, and contributes to grant-funded initiatives, while also helping to implement programs and guide strategic planning. She brings hands-on experience in employment services and job coaching, paired with a passionate focus on helping individuals pursue long-term, sustainable career paths.

Meriel Stokoe supports MACNY's Direct Entry pre-apprenticeship programs as a Workforce Development Specialist, with a focus on building connections between... education and industry. She works closely with employers, educators, and community organizations to expand apprenticeship-aligned career pathways and strengthen employer participation. Meriel assists in efforts related to

participant recruitment, program coordination, employer engagement, and program design. Her work centers on creating inclusive, hands-on learning experiences that prepare individuals for in-demand careers while helping manufacturers develop a skilled talent pipeline.

Sarah Snyder also joins MACNY as a Workforce Development Specialist, bringing a background in public



health, safety, and government operations to support MACNY's Direct Entry pre-apprenticeship programming. She applies her experience in project management,

stakeholder coordination, and reporting to support program implementation and participant enrollment. Sarah works with external partners to address workforce challenges and connect individuals to manufacturing career opportunities, helping ensure programs run effectively and meet both participant and employer needs.

Bringing more than 15 years of human resources leadership experience across the manufacturing, healthcare, and insurance sectors, **Colette Emmons** joins the team as HR Manager. In this role, she oversees both strategic and operational human resources functions, including recruiting and onboarding, employee development, performance management, compensation, benefits, and compliance. She is recognized for cultivating positive workplace cultures, enhancing employee engagement, and supporting organizational growth and long-term success.

"We're thrilled to welcome this group of talented professionals to MACNY," said Randy Wolken, President & CEO. "Each of them brings unique expertise that will strengthen our ability to support manufacturers, expand career pathways, and build meaningful partnerships across New York State. Their contributions will help us continue to advocate effectively for our members, grow our workforce initiatives, and make a lasting impact on both the manufacturing community and the broader region."



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FEBRUARY

TRAINING AND EVENTS



ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS & CORRECTIVE ACTION

February 3rd | 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

PROJECT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION PREP COURSE

Starting February 3rd | 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

MICROSOFT EXCEL FOR OFFICE 365 - PART 1

February 4th | 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

TAP INTO SU'S DATA TALENT PIPELINE

February 4th | 2:30 - 7:00 PM

SUPERVISORY LEADERSHIP

Starting February 5th | 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

COACHING FOR EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

February 6th | 8:30 - 10:00 AM

MAXIMIZE YOUR MEMBERSHIP

February 10th | 9:15 - 10:00 AM

MICROSOFT EXCEL FOR OFFICE 365 - PART 2

February 11th | 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

SMART IT COMPLIANCE: NETWORKING & KNOW-HOW

February 11th | 3:30 - 5:30 PM

FORKLIFT OPERATOR SAFETY TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

February 12th | 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

MAXIMIZE YOUR MEMBERSHIP WEBINAR

February 12th | 9:15 - 10:00 AM

THE 15 INVALUABLE LAWS OF GROWTH

February 13th | 9:00 - 10:30 AM

LEAN SIX SIGMA BLACK BELT

February 17th & 24th | 7:30 AM - 1:00 PM

2026 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS TOPICS

February 17th | 8:30 - 10:00 AM

MICROSOFT EXCEL FOR OFFICE 365 - PART 3

February 18th | 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

MANUFACTURING ADVOCACY DAY

February 24th | 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

February 24th | 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

TDO'S BUILDING EXCELLENCE THROUGH STANDARDS

February 26th | 2:00 - 4:00 PM



REGISTER FOR AN EVENT OR TRAINING