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News

Year in Review: 2025 Highlights

LMMC wrapped up 2025 with steady momentum, clearer direction and a growing network of manufacturers and partners working together on shared workforce goals.

Membership development stayed front and center this year. LMMC welcomed a full slate of new organizations across all membership types, strengthening the coalition's reach and reinforcing the value of partnership.

New manufacturer members include Jamestown Coating Technologies, Integrated Fabrication & Machine, Medart, Solar Atmospheres and T. Bruce Sales.

Education members joining this year were Penn College of Technology (PCT), Butler County Community College (BC3) and Youngstown State University Workforce Education and Innovation.

New community and economic development members included Steel Valley Authority/SEWN Program, Youngstown Area Goodwill Industries, Inc., Penn-Northwest Development Corporation and Forward Lawrence.

LMMC also added several new associate members, including Gilbert's Risk Solutions, First National Bank, Advanced Technology Partners, Hill Barth and King and Lee Michael Industries.

Partnerships also played a major role in LMMC's progress. A key example is the expanded collaboration with Lawrence County School-to-Work on the What's So Cool About Manufacturing West Central (PA) program. What started as seven schools has now grown to 13 across both counties.

Students have now completed their manufacturer visits for this year's competition and will prepare their video entries for the March voting period.

The Advanced Manufacturing Pre-Apprenticeship (AMP), developed by Penn College of Technology and supported by Forward Lawrence, drew 28 students in 2025.

Twenty-two high school students finished the program and several secured roles with local manufacturers, including apprenticeships and positions with LMMC member manufacturers. With the support of Penn-Northwest Development Corporation, AMP will expand into Mercer County in 2026.

LMMC also hosted its fall membership and community meeting, drawing nearly 60 attendees for focused discussions on manufacturing readiness and manufacturing career awareness.

Those conversations shaped several next steps, including the launch of the Manufacturing Readiness Pre-Apprenticeship at BC3@Lawrence's new Shenango Commons location in early 2026, and the formation of Manufacturing Career Awareness working committees focused on career pathways, student engagement and youth-informed outreach.

As 2025 closes, LMMC enters the new year with a stronger base of members, deeper partnerships and a shared commitment to improving the visibility of manufacturing careers across Lawrence and Mercer counties.

To learn more about joining LMMC or getting involved, contact Julie Michael Smith at julie@lawrencemercermfg.com.

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Membership

New Member Profile: Integrated Fabrication & Machine

Just outside Greenville, Integrated Fabrication & Machine operates a 74,000-square-foot facility supporting both regional career pathways and the nation's electrical infrastructure.

The company has grown steadily since President and Owner Brent Ward and Chief Financial Officer Diane Ward purchased the assets of JEB Fabricating and began shaping the operation into what it is today.

Integrated is a full-service fabrication and machining shop, handling steel cutting, burning, forming, welding, machining and finishing under one roof.

This structure allows the company to produce precision-fabricated components and machined parts for customers in the electrical distribution and transformer industries.

With about 60 employees, the company has built a culture where advancement is encouraged and attainable.

"We've been growing, so we've been willing to take people with little experience and help them learn," said Ashley Smith, Manager of Human Resources. "One of our best welders started out as a grinder. If someone shows up, learns and puts in the effort, there are so many places they can go here."

Smith described the workplace as supportive and people focused.

"I'd say it's definitely a family culture," she said. "Brent and Diane care about people in a way you don't find everywhere."

Daily operations reinforce that commitment.

“Every morning, we have a group leader meeting and we preach safety, communication and teamwork,” said Jason Minnich, Vice President of Operations. “A lot of people here have a great attitude toward what they do, and they know the work matters.”

The company takes the same open approach with local educators.

“We have an open-door policy for any college or high school that wants to come in here,” Ward said. “We collaborate with Thiel College for several classes each year, and we do the same thing with Grove City College.”

Integrated joined the Coalition to take an active role in addressing hiring challenges and to help reinforce that manufacturing in Lawrence and Mercer counties is a strong, local career path.

Its dedication to developing and retaining talent while producing the parts that keep the nation’s electrical infrastructure running reflects the type of member LMMC seeks to elevate, strengthening both career pathways and the regional economy.

Membership

New Member Profile: YSU Workforce Education and Innovation

Behind every successful manufacturer is a workforce trained to keep operations moving.

YSU's Workforce Education and Innovation (WEI) has joined LMMC to expand regional access to, and awareness of, the training capabilities offered through its workforce development programs.

The Excellence Training Center, part of WEI, delivers hands on training in key areas such as industrial maintenance, programmable logic controllers, robotics, additive manufacturing, machining, CDL, IT and broadband related technologies including 5G and fiber optics.

These programs support both entry level skill development and targeted upskilling for incumbent workers. WEI, a unit in the STEM college at YSU, also offers a CDL program that helps meet transportation and logistics needs across the region.

"By staying attuned to the evolving needs of industry, we ensure our training programs align with real world demands," said Jackie Ruller, executive director of WEI. "When our

partners identify new skill gaps or emerging technologies, we work collaboratively to develop customized courses that meet those specific needs."

For more details or information, email talent@elwd.com.

The ETC's impact is already familiar to a few LMMC manufacturing members.

Hall Industries partnered with the ETC on customized, remote training that included courses in blueprint reading and basic mathematics for both new hires and incumbent workers preparing for new roles.

"All in all, YSU was very easy to work with, very knowledgeable and the training was beneficial," said Dave Douglass, operations manager at Hall Industries, noting the interactive format and practical focus of the courses.

ELLWOOD has also utilized the ETC, with ELLWOOD Engineered Castings and ELLWOOD Aluminum previously participating in Lean and Six Sigma training.

The new Education member is eager to build new relationships in the Lawrence Mercer region and are actively seeking partnerships with companies interested in strengthening their workforce through customized, industry driven training solutions.

Their membership supports LMMC's mission to raise awareness of manufacturing career pathways and improve access to relevant technical training across the two counties.

LMMC in the News

- ELLWOOD Scholarship Supports Future Industrial Maintenance Talent - The Business Journal