

A SPOTLIGHT ON MANUFACTURING

RECOGNIZING MCKENZIE'S LEADERS IN MANUFACTURING

ALLEGION, HAVEN STEEL, MCKENZIE VALVE, POTTERY DIRECT,
PLASTIC PRODUCT FORMERS, PROFILE METAL, CMC, STANLEY BLACK
& DECKER AND J&J AUTO RACING

THE McKenzie, Tennessee
BANNER
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2024

Celebrating Innovation, Growth

The first Friday in October marked the start of Manufacturing Week in Tennessee, an annual event that highlights the importance of the manufacturing sector to the state's economy. From Friday, October 4 — Friday, October 11, McKenzians had the opportunity to celebrate the innovation, growth, and opportunities that manufacturing provides not only in McKenzie but across the state.

As one of the leading manufacturing hubs in the Southeast, Tennessee is home to a diverse range of industries, from automotive giants like Nissan and General Motors to advanced materials, food production, and aerospace companies. Manufacturing accounts for over 15% of Tennessee's total economic output, employing more than 350,000 workers statewide.

This year's theme, "Innovating for a Sustainable Future," resonates deeply in Tennessee, where manufacturers are increasingly adopting advanced technologies to improve efficiency and sustainability. Companies across the state are incorporating automation, robotics, and green technologies to reduce waste and lower carbon emissions.

At the Nissan plant in Smyrna, one of the largest automotive manufacturing facilities in North America, electric vehicle (EV) production is a major focus. The company has invested heavily in its EV lines, with plans to ramp up production to meet growing demand for electric cars. "We're proud to be part of the state's manufacturing ecosystem and contribute to a more sustainable future,"

said Robert Garcia, Plant Director.

In McKenzie, located in northwest Tennessee, manufacturing has become a cornerstone of the local economy. McKenzie, known for its community-focused, small-town charm, is also home to several key manufacturers that contribute significantly to the region's economic growth.

In recent years, McKenzie has also seen a surge in smaller manufacturing firms, including several startups that specialize in custom metalwork and plastic components for the automotive and healthcare industries. This diversification of the manufacturing base has helped the town attract new investment and create jobs for the next generation.

In McKenzie, manufacturing is a driving force in the prosperity of the community. Goods coming from these plants go all over the country and other parts of the world. Allegion produces security doors, Haven Steel produces various lawn mower parts, Pottery Direct uses ball clay from Gleason to produce ceramic pots, Plastic Product Formers-VP Racing make utility jugs shipped all over the United States, Profile Metal provides numerous parts for automobiles, McKenzie Valve provides rail tankers with valves, CMC is a leading producer of anchor bolt cages, Stanley Black & Decker is a household name with products coming through McKenzie, and J&J Auto Racing is globally recognized for their sprint cars.

Similarly, small and mid-sized manufacturers across Tennessee are finding inno-

vative ways to adapt to new technology. From advanced materials production in Knoxville to precision manufacturing in Chattanooga, the state's manufacturing landscape continues to evolve.

A critical component of Manufacturing Week in Tennessee is addressing the workforce challenge. With many skilled workers approaching retirement, there's an urgent need to cultivate the next generation of talent. Tennessee's network of community colleges and technical schools is playing a key role in preparing students for careers in advanced manufacturing.

Governor Bill Lee has made workforce development a top priority. "Manufacturing jobs are the backbone of Tennessee's economy, and we're committed to ensuring that our young people have access to the training and skills they need to succeed in this industry," said Governor Lee at the kickoff event in Nashville.

Throughout the week, schools across the state hosted events, including facility tours, career fairs, and hands-on workshops to introduce students to the wide range of career paths in manufacturing. Programs like the Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect have been instrumental in providing opportunities for students and adults to gain technical skills and enter the workforce.

In Jackson, the annual "Made in Tennessee" expo brings together local manufacturers to highlight the products made in the region. The event, which attracts businesses, local leaders, and



During Manufacturing Week, Allegion / Republic Doors provided a tour to officials from McKenzie and other businesses in the area. Photo by Joel Washburn/The Banner

the community, emphasizes the role that manufacturing plays in supporting local economies.

"Jackson has always been a manufacturing town, and this week allows us to celebrate the innovation and hard work of the people who keep our industry moving forward," said Jackson Mayor Scott Conger.

Looking to the Future As Tennessee's manufacturing sector continues to grow and innovate, Manufacturing Week serves as a time for reflection on the future. Policymakers and business leaders are coming together to discuss ways to support the industry, including investments in infrastructure, workforce training, and incentives for sustainable practices.

BlueOval City, the highly anticipated electric vehicle (EV) and battery manufacturing campus located in Stanton, just outside of Memphis. Developed by

Ford Motor Company and SK Innovation, BlueOval City represents one of the largest investments in Tennessee's manufacturing history, with over \$5.6 billion allocated to the project. Once fully operational, the facility is expected to create more than 6,000 jobs, positioning Tennessee as a leader in the future of automotive manufacturing.

"BlueOval City is not just a manufacturing plant—it's a blueprint for the future of clean energy and sustainable manufacturing," said Lisa Drake, Ford's Vice President of EV Industrialization. The sprawling 3,600-acre campus will produce next-generation electric trucks and advanced batteries, aligning with the state's push toward innovation and environmental responsibility. The project is also expected to generate a significant economic boost, attracting suppliers and related industries to the region.

The development of BlueOval City underscores Ten-

nessee's growing reputation as a hub for the automotive industry, particularly in the EV sector. As more global automakers turn their focus to sustainability, the state's strategic investments in infrastructure and workforce training will ensure it remains at the forefront of the evolving manufacturing landscape.

"Tennessee is leading the way in advanced manufacturing, and we're committed to making sure our state remains a competitive force in the global market," said Bob Rolfe, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development.

With events planned throughout the state, Manufacturing Week 2024 promises to bring attention to the vital role that the industry plays in Tennessee's economy and its communities.



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Top, Area leaders and industry officials were present for the McKenzie Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Board's breakfast. Center Left, Manufacturing leaders were provided a breakfast Friday morning as a thank you for their commitment to McKenzie. Bottom Left, Speakers during the manufacturers' breakfast were (L to R) Janna Hellums, Ginger Powell, Monica Heath, Roderick Woody, Dr. Jan Latimer and Susan Dyer. Photos by Joel Washburn/The Banner Below, Part of the breakfast spread provided to local manufacturers.



McKenzie Chamber, Industrial Board Host Manufacturers Day Breakfast

McKENZIE (October 4) — McKenzie Industrial Board and the McKenzie Chamber of Commerce, along with participating manufacturers in McKenzie, kicked off Manufacturing Week on Friday, October 4 with a breakfast for industrial leaders at Bethel University. Attending were company officials, representatives from the McKenzie Industrial Board and the McKenzie Chamber of Commerce, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD), City of McKenzie officials, the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, Carroll County Electric, West TN Public Utility District, State Representative Tandy Darby, Carroll County Mayor Joseph Butler and representatives for Senator Marsha Blackburn and Rep-

resentative David Kustoff. As part of the break event, a guest panel consisting of Janna Hellums (TNECD), Ginger Powell (Workforce Development), Roderick Woody (Apprenticeship Tennessee), Susan Dyer (McKenzie Special School District) and Dr. Jan Latimer (TCAT Henry/Carroll County). Each talked about their respective organization and how they are working to help growing industry in the region. During the week, tours were provided at Allegion and Plastic Products Formers - a division of VP Racing. The McKenzie Chamber and Industrial Board will provide lunches for the manufacturers as well. This includes Allegion, Haven Steel, Pottery Direct, VP Racing,



Friday's breakfast allowed for community leaders to meet. Pictured (L to R): Carroll County Mayor Joseph Butler, State Representative Tandy Darby, Pepsi MidAmerica Vice-President Ricky Price, Craig Hobsen (Haven Steel) and Ashish Shah (Polykem).

Profile Metal, McKenzie Valve, CMC, Stanley Black & Decker and J&J Auto Racing. Monica Heath, execu-

tive director of both the McKenzie Industrial Development Corporation and McKenzie Chamber of Commerce and Industry

said the event is designed to honor the McKenzie manufacturers for their commitment to McKenzie. The event was co-spon-

sored by Chamber premium sponsors: Haven Steel, Allegion and Centennial Bank.



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Left, Tessa Kyle and Janna Hellums of TN Economic and Community Development help pack lunches for the McKenzie manufacturing plants. Center, Employees of Plastic Product Formers-VP McKenzie receive their box lunches. Right, Allegion employees come through the pavilion to pick up their lunches.

McKenzie Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Board Provide Lunches to Manufacturing Plants' Laborers

As part of Manufacturing Week, the McKenzie Chamber of Commerce along with the McKenzie Industrial Board wanted to say thank you to all the staff at the various manufacturing facilities in McKenzie. Each facility was provided lunch by the two organizations along with support from Pepsi MidAmerica.

Approximately 300 employees from Allegion/Republic Doors, Profile Metal Forming, and Haven Steel were provided with lunch from Hometown Hangout, featuring hamburgers and hot dogs.

On the second day, Allegion/Republic Doors hosted an Open House. Their

substantial investment in the facility reflected a steadfast commitment to the community, employees, future growth and retention. Allegion/Republic Doors is a significant employer in McKenzie and provides opportunities to over 200 individuals and serves as McKenzie's largest manufacturing employer.

Also opening their doors was Plastic Product Formers, a division of VP Racing. The new facility offers utility cans with the VP Racing logo. In the coming months, the McKenzie facility will manufacture all the plastic cans offered through VP Racing.



Above, Members of the McKenzie community and government officials toured Allegion/Republic Doors.



Above Left, (L to R): Myra Carlock, Madison Endres, Matt Aird and Shawna Fowler help pack and transport the lunches. Above Right, Area leaders tour the Plastic Product Formers plant. Bottom Left, Monte Belew, plant manager of Allegion, talks about his facility. Below Right, Students from TCAT-Henry/Carroll were provided lunch following their tour of VP Racing.



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