

# For

THE STATE CHAMBER 

Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

# MANUFACTURERS Only



Fall 2017

## EXMARK MANUFACTURING, GARNER INDUSTRIES NAMED NEBRASKA MANUFACTURERS OF 2017



*At the Nebraska Chamber's recent Manufacturing Summit held at the CenturyLink Center in Omaha, Governor Ricketts presented the Manufacturer of the Year award to Garner Industries owner Philip S. Mullin (left), as well as Exmark Manufacturing's Vice President & General Manager Judy Altmaier (below).*



Manufacturing is a vital component of the Nebraska economy. It also represents an essential segment of the membership within the Nebraska Chamber. The State Chamber Manufacturers Council evaluates and recommends policy positions to the State Chamber Board of Directors and serves as a forum for the exchange of views and information that the State Chamber manufacturing members wish to share.

<http://www.nechamber.com>  
[nechamber@nechamber.com](mailto:nechamber@nechamber.com)  
Editor: Jamie Karl

**E**xmark Manufacturing of Beatrice and Garner Industries of Lincoln have been named Nebraska's manufacturers of the year by the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The companies were recently honored, at the State Chamber's Manufacturing and Distribution Executive Summit held at the CenturyLink Center in Omaha. Garner Industries received the award for mid-sized manufacturers, while Exmark Manufacturing received the award for larger manufacturers.

The Nebraska Manufacturer of the Year award is sponsored by the State Chamber and RSM, a leading provider of assurance, tax and consulting services to the manufacturing and wholesale distribution industries. The award has been presented annually since 2008 to Nebraska manufacturers that successfully implement innovative ways of conducting business through the use of new products, processes, technologies and strategies.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Nebraska Manufacturers of the Year

(Continued from page 1)

Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts presented the awards to representatives of both companies. Here are brief summaries of Nebraska's manufacturers of the year:

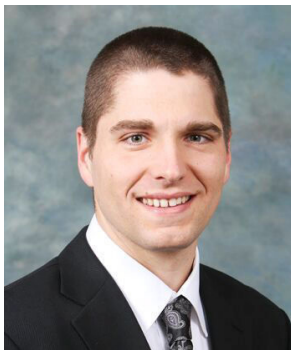
- **Garner Industries, Lincoln:** Garner Industries is a diverse manufacturing company with a 64-year history. The company was established in 1953 as a small tool and die company in the Havelock area. In the mid-1960s, the company embarked on development of an automated grain bin level monitoring system, which gave birth to the BinMaster line of level control technologies. In 1992, the company entered the plastic injection molding and mold-building business, providing parts to the communications, defense, aerospace and automotive industries. Today Garner Industries employs more than 130 individuals in its plastic injection molding, mold manufacturing, CNC machining, and BinMaster level sensor manufacturing operations, as the company now sells products in diverse industries, including agriculture, construction, cement, mining, biofuels and food processing. In September of 2017, Garner Industries completed the expansion of its campus at 98th street and Cornhusker highway, as it now occupies a 115,000-square foot facility located on 32 acres.
- **Exmark Manufacturing, Beatrice:** Exmark Manufacturing was incorporated in May 1982 as an independent manufacturer of professional turf care equipment. Today, the Beatrice-based business is the leading manufacturer of commercial mowers for the landscape professional. The company's product line has expanded rapidly in recent years to include spreader-sprayers, slicer seeders and aerators. In addition to designing, building and marketing quality turf care equipment, Exmark's goal is total customer satisfaction. All Exmark mowers – from walk-behinds to zero-turn riders and out-fronts – are designed to increase productivity while delivering unmatched cut quality, which keeps Exmark in the spotlight and helps the company stand apart from the competition. Exmark employs more than 500 employees at its Beatrice facility.

"We take great pride in honoring Exmark Manufacturing and Garner Industries with this award," said Barry Kennedy, president of the Nebraska Chamber. "Manufacturing is our state's second largest industry and a key to Nebraska's economic growth. Both of these companies are innovation leaders in Nebraska's manufacturing sector."

### Previous winners of the Nebraska Manufacturer of the Year award are:

2016: Endicott Clay and Novozymes  
2015: Lozier and Sargent Pipe  
2014: Hornady and Lincoln Industries  
2013: Smeal Fire Apparatus and NUCOR Steel  
2012: Chief Industries and Orthman Manufacturing  
2011: Kawasaki Motors  
2010: Snyder Industries  
2009: Majors Plastics and Behlen Manufacturing  
2008: Reinke Manufacturing ■

## Rippe Named Nebraska Economic Development Director



In mid-November, David Rippe, executive director of the Hastings Economic Development Corporation, was named by Governor Pete Ricketts to be director of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

Rippe will take over the position on December 18. He will succeed Courtney Dentlinger, who is leaving the post to become government affairs manager for the Nebraska Public Power District.

During his time in Hastings, Rippe has helped secure new investments, including expansions at Ag Processing Inc., Thermo King, Eaton and Dutton-Lainson Company, according to the governor. ■

# GOVERNOR, STATE CHAMBER RECOGNIZE NEBRASKA'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR



*During the Manufacturing Month fly-around in early October, one of the stops was Perrin Manufacturing in Alliance. Pictured are Department of Economic Development (DED) Director Courtney Dentlinger, Governor Pete Ricketts, Perrin President and Nebraska Chamber board member Dan Koch, State Senator Tom Brewer, Box Butte Development Corporation's Chelsie Herian, and State Chamber President Barry Kennedy.*

October was Manufacturing Month in Nebraska. To highlight contributions made by Nebraska's second largest industry, Nebraska Chamber President Barry Kennedy joined Governor Pete Ricketts on October 5-6 to visit manufacturing facilities in western Nebraska. Visits in central and eastern Nebraska were cancelled due to inclement weather and fog.

"Manufacturing is Nebraska's second largest industry and the Nebraska Chamber's largest sector based on membership," Kennedy said following Governor Ricketts' proclamation naming October as Manufacturing Month. "The average manufacturing job in our state pays nearly \$14,000 more a year than what the average Nebraska worker earns. Nebraska's future earnings growth and economic expansion depend heavily on our manufacturing sector."

During the manufacturing site tour, the governor highlighted career and educational opportunities currently available in the manufacturing sector. Stops on the tour included:

- **Perrin Manufacturing, Alliance:** Perrin Manufacturing designs, tests and builds HVAC systems for off-road, heavy duty vehicles providing the heating and cooling needed for operators to work in comfort.
- **Lukjan Great Plains, LLC, Sidney:** Lukjan Metal Products manufactures sheet metal pipe, duct and fittings for the heating, ventilation and air conditioning wholesale market. Its flagship plant is in Conneaut, Ohio.
- **B & C Steel, Gering:** B&C Steel is a steel building manufacturer and a third-generation, family-owned company. B&C Steel has been a premier steel provider since 1946.

Earlier that week, at a ceremony at the State Capitol, the governor proclaimed October as Manufacturing Month in Nebraska. Representing the Nebraska Chamber at the ceremony was the State Chamber's Joseph Young, who oversees the Chamber's Vision Nebraska initiative and helps lobby to see the Chamber's goals are recognized by state lawmakers.

In his remarks at the ceremony, Governor Ricketts noted that the Cornhusker State is home to more than 1,600 manufacturers who employ nearly 100,000 workers. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, manufacturing contributes nearly \$14 billion annually to Nebraska's total economic output. □



## NEBRASKA CHAMBER ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR FEBRUARY 1

**T**he State Chamber's Annual Meeting and Legislative Caucus will be held Thursday, February 1, 2018, at The Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln. This is one of Nebraska's most recognized and widely attended State Chamber events of the year.

Those attending will have an opportunity to hear from key state lawmakers and policy experts, as well as attend briefings on issues of concern to the business community. Afternoon discussion panels will include the traditional Legislative Leaders panel.

The evening banquet will feature the traditional passing of the gavel to the new

State Chamber chairman and an extra special tribute to the newest members of the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame.

For more information about the State Chamber Annual Meeting, call (402) 474-4422 or e-mail Charlie Volnek at [cvolnek@nechamber.com](mailto:cvolnek@nechamber.com).

This special event also presents sponsorship opportunities to get your business recognized before a large target audience. Those interested in sponsoring should contact James Berringer at (402) 474-4422 or [jberringer@nechamber.com](mailto:jberringer@nechamber.com). 

## Five Keys To Boost Workplace Culture In Manufacturing

**R**ecently, in an article at Gallup.com, the Gallup Business Journal reports that despite recent gains, the U.S. manufacturing sector has struggled at times with workplace cultures on the factory floor. According to Gallup, the organization found that 25% of manufacturing workers are engaged at work – eight percentage points lower than the national average of 33% employee engagement.


The article says manufacturing companies and factories have not kept pace with the rest of the ever-changing work environment, and Gallup consultants note, this may be an impediment to employee engagement.

Gallup consultants say there are several high-performing companies that are implementing techniques to keep manufacturing employees motivated in a positive way. To create stronger relationships and boost employee involvement, the article details five specific things leaders and managers can do in the factory culture:

- 1.) Communicate.
- 2.) Allow for more control of work.
- 3.) Create accountability.
- 4.) Make sure people feel like they matter.
- 5.) Be available, and be engaged.




The article points out that to meet organizational needs, leaders have an obligation to coach and develop people, as well as "giving them feedback on how to move forward."

To see the Gallup Business Journal article, visit: [http://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/218549/keys-boosting-workplace-culture-manufacturing.aspx?g\\_source=ALL\\_GBJ\\_HEADLINES&g\\_medium=topic&g\\_campaign=files](http://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/218549/keys-boosting-workplace-culture-manufacturing.aspx?g_source=ALL_GBJ_HEADLINES&g_medium=topic&g_campaign=files). 

## Nebraska Jobless Rate Hits Lowest Since 1999

**N**ebbraska's jobless rate is at its lowest level since 1999, according to a State Labor Department report.

The Cornhusker State's unemployment rate in October was 2.7%, with only Hawaii (2.2%) and North Dakota (2.5%) having lower rates. Omaha's jobless rate was 2.4%, its lowest rate since 1997, while Lincoln's was 2.1%, its lowest since 2000.

Meanwhile, the national unemployment rate was 4.1% in October. 

## TV STORY SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON NEBRASKA'S MANUFACTURING CAREERS

Omaha's ABC network affiliate, KETV, recently profiled Nebraska manufacturing by spotlighting Scott Volk, the vice president of MetalQuest of Hebron. MetalQuest has more than 70 employees, most of whom are younger than the average manufacturing worker. Still, Volk said there is a need for "fresh minds in order for the company and entire industry to grow."



"We're actually targeting down to sixth-grade students now" to make them aware there are career options outside of pursuing a four-year degree, Volk said.

Volk said Nebraska manufacturing suffers from a mindset that discourages teenagers from pursuing trades.

"A lot of kids to this day, I mean, just won't go into it because they're told that's the wrong way to go," he said.

But KETV notes that the numbers suggest otherwise, as manufacturing jobs in Nebraska pay an average annual salary of \$58,000, considerably higher than the average job in other sectors. Still, manufacturing jobs "often go unfilled because no one is applying," according to the story.

The story also highlights the role Metropolitan Community College is playing in training the future manufacturing workforce for the Omaha area, as well as apprenticeship programs being offered by manufacturers such as Quad Packaging in Omaha.

See the KETV story at: <http://www.ketv.com/article/manufacturing-industry-offers-strong-careers-to-young-nebraskans/13455595>. □

## Economic Development Summit Is November 29 In La Vista

On November 29, the State Chamber will host an economic development summit at the La Vista Embassy Suites Conference Center (12520 Westport Parkway, La Vista) to spotlight key issues facing Nebraska's business community. The summit will begin at 11:45 a.m. and conclude by 3 p.m.

In addition to remarks from Governor Pete Ricketts, the afternoon will feature experts to thoroughly cover the following:

- Rural Nebraska success stories;
- The importance of business incentives;
- An update on Nebraska's economic outlook; and
- How to enhance Nebraska's workforce housing.

Cost to attend is \$95 for State Chamber members or \$125 for non-Chamber members. Lunch will be provided.

Register by calling (402) 474-4422 or e-mailing Charlie Volnek at [cvolnek@nechamber.com](mailto:cvolnek@nechamber.com). □

# GRAND ISLAND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM AIMS TO LAUNCH MANUFACTURING CAREERS



In a story at Nebraska.tv, NTV recently reported on Grand Island's Career Pathways Institute and its new apprenticeship agreement with Dramco Tool.

The company's owners "say high tech, high wage jobs go unfilled, which limits their growth." According to the story, the company is the first in the state to create a Registered Apprenticeship Program, allowing 16- and 17-year olds to work in the plant.

See NTV's story by visiting: <http://nebraska.tv/news/local/nebrasgas-first-high-school-apprenticeship-program-could-lead-to-good-jobs>. □

## State Chamber Survey: Workforce Again Tops Business Concerns In Nebraska

**W**orkforce is again the top concern of Nebraska's business community and community leaders. That's the finding of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry's 2017 statewide business survey.

The survey was conducted this autumn as part of State Chamber's 28 legislative forum presentations held in 25 communities. More than 1,500 Nebraskans attended the forums, including 35 of 49 state lawmakers. For more than 30 years, the Nebraska Chamber's legislative forums have been a joint effort with local chambers of commerce across the state.

According to the Chamber's survey results, nearly 36% of respondents said workforce was the top concern facing their business or organization. This marks the fifth consecutive year that the shortage of skilled or qualified labor has been the primary worry cited in the Nebraska Chamber's survey.

Taxes and government regulations also scored high as primary challenges facing the business community, with nearly half of respondents indicating that either taxes or regulations were their top issue.

Other findings from this year's Nebraska Chamber survey include:

- When asked if their business were hiring today, nearly 60% of respondents said they would hire someone with a two-year degree or a certified skill. Another 31% said they would hire an individual with a four-year degree, while just 10% said someone with only a high school diploma.
- Nearly 38% of respondents said that population loss or a shrinking workforce was the most pressing issue for their community. Another 28% said the loss of businesses or well-paying jobs was their biggest community concern.
- Respondents were divided on how best to address workforce shortages and population loss. Just over 29% of respondents said that more housing was the best answer, while roughly 28% preferred more technical education/skills-based training for high schoolers and younger students. Another 26% said more well-paying jobs would be the best remedy, while 12% said more local internships for students.
- When asked what issues Nebraska lawmakers should prioritize in 2018, almost 41% of respondents said policymakers should lower Nebraska's state taxes. Another 24% said the Legislature's primary focus should be reducing state spending. Fewer than 15% of respondents said they wanted to see state lawmakers attempt additional "tax shifting" by sending more state money to local governments in the hopes of lowering local taxes – a practice that has been tried and has failed multiple times in the past 50 years. □