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IN-MaC Awarded Grant to Continue Developing Regional Talent Pipeline for Future Workforce Needs

Innovative programming challenges perceptions and prepares K-12 students for Next Generation Manufacturing

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – The Indiana Manufacturing Competitiveness Center (IN-MaC), was awarded \$367,770 to continue creating a regional talent pipeline focused on next generation manufacturing and immersing K-12 students in hands-on education programs and environments.

Awarded by the Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN), the grant empowers the second year of the project that started in 2019. IN-MaC is completing this initiative in partnership with the Region 4 Workforce Board, Purdue University, and Greater Lafayette Commerce.

“We are thankful for WHIN’s support as we continue to challenge perceptions of manufacturing and provide enriching curriculum and experiences for students across the state,” said Dr. Greg Strimel, assistant professor of Engineering Technology Teacher Education in the Department of Technology Leadership & Innovation at Purdue University. “Strong partnerships among academia, employers, and influencers are essential to successfully prepare Indiana’s youth for future workforce needs.”



IN-MaC Design and Innovation Studio™ located at Lewis Cass Elementary School in Cass County.

IN-MaC

Year one of this initiative set the foundation with developing curriculum and identifying key educational partners in the region. IN-MaC Design and Innovation Studios™ were implemented at Prairie Crossing Elementary, Lewis Cass Elementary, Dayton Elementary and are scheduled for Pulaski County and Carroll County. With five new studios for 2020-21. Purdue University, in partnership with IN-MaC designed curriculum and delivered training for these events as well as gathered data to complete presentations and publications.

“With WHIN’s goal of establishing this region as the global epicenter of IoT and next generation manufacturing, we will need a talent pipeline that will be willing and able to hold careers made available from advancement in IoT technology,” said Jessica Strasburger, WHIN regional engagement manager. “The activities happening because of this grant will be key in exposing and curating talent from the K-12 youth throughout the WHIN region that can work in coding, robotics, and smart manufacturing careers in the future.”



IN-MaC Design and Innovation Studio™ located at Dayton Elementary School in Tippecanoe County.

Year two includes implementing robotics in manufacturing youth summer camps, continuing Manufacturing Week activities focused on career exploration and awareness for K-12 students, expanding CoderDojo after school programs to introduce robotics and coding, and installing additional Design and Innovation Studios™ to provide IoT-enhanced active learning and additional data collection and research. These activities are structured with the intent to educate and inspire the emerging workforce, spark creative thinking and develop the essential skill sets critical for future careers in manufacturing. IN-MaC with Purdue’s Dr. Greg Strimel are using the opportunities to evaluate further impact, skill development, and perception changes throughout this process.

“Providing equitable access to students and educators is key for the future workforce and those influencing students’ career decisions,” said Sascha Harrell, IN-MaC director for education and workforce. “If students are to excel in a fast-changing, global society, we must harness the technology resources they need to function in a digital age and prepare them for a future in Industry 4.0.”



To learn more about IN-MaC's Design and Innovation Studios™, contact Sascha Harrell at smharrel@purdue.edu.

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About IN-MaC:

IN-MaC provides programs and services to enhance the talents and capabilities of Indiana's present and future workforce by facilitating connections between educators and industry to catalyze the formation of near-term and long-term skills in a highly accessible manner across Indiana. IN-MaC supports a variety of STEM-type, skilled trades, degree (associates and undergraduate) and certificate programs.

IN-MaC leverages its resources, networks and partnerships with industry, local communities, educators and interested stakeholders to provide a variety of formal courses and informal activities that embolden pathways to meet the talent needs of the present and future manufacturing workforce.