
MANUFACTURING MINUTES \ September 28, 2021

THE TIMES, THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' by Tom Bugnitz, CEO

Bob Dylan used to sing, “the times, they are a-changin’.” And I can’t help but think that is exactly what is happening for the manufacturing industry, and it’s very exciting.

Over the course of my tenure at Manufacturer’s Edge, we have worked alongside some of the nation’s greatest manufacturers, innovators, and start-ups. We have assisted manufacturers in their pursuits to grow their bottom line, improve efficiencies, and more. We have been a partner to Colorado manufacturers and others across the nation, and that will never change. What will change is our approach and commitment to evaluating and meeting the needs of our manufacturers more holistically and our ability to tap into national support and new monies that will bolster our efforts.

For the first time in decades, our nation is seeing a sea change in how we view the important role of the American manufacturer. We are seeing elected officials at the highest levels of government calling for a renewal to our commitment to manufacturing products here in the United States. In fact, programs and organizations like the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Network, through the National Institute for Technology, are being called out as a resource and seeing funding commitments unlike anything we have ever seen before. This is partly due to the Executive Order President Biden issued on January 25, 2021, **Ensuring the Future is Made in All of America by All of America’s Workers**. President Biden **stated**, “I don’t buy for one second. . . that the vitality of the American manufacturing is a thing of the past. American manufacturing was the arsenal of democracy in World War Two, and it must be part of the engine of American prosperity now. That means we are going to use taxpayers’ money to rebuild America. We’ll buy American products and support American jobs...” The Administration’s order goes on to name the MEP Network as one of the tools to achieve this goal and is accompanied by a **budget request** that will double MEP Network funds.

So, what does this mean to the manufacturers in Colorado? It means that Manufacturer’s Edge, Colorado’s MEP Center, will have the distinct privilege of working alongside many of our economic development partners to bolster innovative programs that support and connect our manufacturing industry to the resources that they need to succeed. It means that Colorado manufacturers will have access to a network of experts that will help propel their businesses into the future. It means that whether manufacturers need assistance with technology acceleration, supplier scouting, project management, workforce engagement, or anything else, Manufacturer’s Edge has the resources and expertise to help them thrive.

Sounds exciting, right? We agree and want to do everything possible to ensure that we are good stewards of these new funds and put them to their highest and best use while leveraging greater opportunities for the future. This will require strategic planning and collaboration. At Manufacturer’s Edge, we know that we cannot succeed on our own and welcome the chance to get to work alongside many of our colleagues across the state. Over the course of the next few months, the team at Manufacturer’s Edge will be meeting with our economic development partners and other state entities to identify opportunities to work together and utilize the funding that we will receive. Rather than recreate the wheel, our goal will be to accelerate and amplify those programs that are working and introduce them to other areas of the state. We have no preconceived ideas

about what this can and should look like but know that we have some of the greatest minds and programs in the nation and this will be a great start.

We are truly energized at the opportunity that has been afforded to us and we embrace this exciting change that is coming down the pike. We invite you to join us as we leverage the American ingenuity and grit that is alive and well in our state and nation and use it to the benefit of our manufacturing industry. We at Manufacturer's Edge are committed to doing our part to ensure that Colorado manufacturers not only succeed but excel. And we look forward to the prominent role that Colorado will play in the future of products Made in America and across the globe.

Contact Manufacturer's Edge directly for more information

Figure out which track is right for you—Hardware or Software

Sign up on the associated track's HeroX page

Utilize the American-Made Network Matching Tool to find resources and support

Compile your submission

- Create a cover page and answer questions explaining your technology
- Record a 90-second video explaining your innovation
- Fill out a technical assistance request
- Develop one summary PowerPoint slide

HOW TO APPLY

TO THE SOLAR PRIZE ROUND 5

americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/round5

SUBMIT BY OCT 5

American Made Challenge: Solar Prize

We're excited to announce that **Round 5 of the multi-million-dollar American-Made Solar Prize** has commenced! This competition encourages innovators to come up with ideas to energize solar energy in new and exciting ways. Round 5 features a two-track structure, which invites both hardware and software technologies to compete separately and allows for more solar innovation than ever before. The **Hardware Track** offers \$3 million in cash prizes to competitors over three progressive contests. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy and administered by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, competitors have access to a diverse and powerful support network that leverages the expertise of national laboratories, energy incubators, and other resources across the United States. The American-Made Network helps competitors solve pressing technology challenges, forge connections, and advance potentially game-changing ideas, helping you get your innovation to market faster.

Are you interested in having an impact on the solar energy future? Do you have a groundbreaking idea that solves some of solar's toughest challenges? We want to support you! Please contact the Prize team at Solar.prize@nrel.gov with questions and they'll be happy to help. Watch the **Solar Prize Round 5 Informational Webinar** and **apply by Oct. 5**, to be considered for this next round of competition.

We hope you'll consider competing!



The CAMA Conversation with Mark Cordova

Post-pandemic, manufacturers are facing unprecedented issues finding and retaining skilled workers. The pandemic drove many older workers to early retirement. Others, attracted to work-from-home options, left the sector and are not returning because manufacturing cannot be performed remotely. With consumer demand for manufactured products at an all-time high, this has created a perfect storm for manufacturers.

According to the August 2021 Small Business Economic Trends report by the National Federation of Independent Business, 50% (seasonally adjusted) of all owners reported job openings they could not fill in the current period, up 1 point from July and a record high reading for the second consecutive month.

As the only statewide, member-based trade association exclusively dedicated to advancing manufacturing in Colorado, the Colorado Advanced Manufacturing Association (CAMA) is Jumpstarting a Revolution. Do you want to be a part of it?

Jumpstart a Revolution is a three-step program designed to address the worker shortage by inspiring and training a new, diverse community into lifelong manufacturing careers. The three steps are: Recruit, Train, and Hire.

Help us ignite this campaign designed to tap into a new, diverse talent pool and transition them into lifelong manufacturing careers. The benefits are many and promise great results for your company. I would welcome the opportunity to tell you more about the program. Please reach out to me at markcordova@co-cama.org, and I will be happy to get back to you.

Together, we are stronger. Let's get together!

