

FOOTBALL & FUN:

High School Event Highlights Manufacturing Careers

Looking for a new approach to raising awareness of manufacturing careers among young people, Stebbins High School near Dayton hit pay dirt with a Manufacturing Night event at a mid-October football game.

The idea for the event started with the school's manufacturing advisory committee that includes local companies and the Dayton Region Manufacturing Association (DRMA), said Jesse Maxfield, the school's Career Tech Director. "We wanted to find a new way to challenge the idea that manufacturing is dirty, dark and dangerous."

The event is one facet of DRMA's 20-year partnership with Stebbins, said Angelia Erbaugh, DRMA president. DRMA serves as the sector partnership for the Dayton area.

To deliver a strong message about manufacturing careers, the event included:

- **Making Ohio shirts** for the event planning team that included students, sponsors and educators from Stebbins. The shirts included the logos of sponsoring companies. "We made the shirts pink to appeal to moms and celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month since our event was in October," Maxfield said.
- **Fast facts about manufacturing on the scoreboard** using information provided by DRMA.
- **On-field participation in the coin toss** at the beginning of the game in their Making Ohio shirts.
- **Information tables with grab bags** from the participating companies.
- **Announcement of an \$8,000 scholarship fund** from the Gene Haas Foundation that will support students in post-secondary education for manufacturing careers and certifications.

The event helped build on momentum created by Manufacturing Day a week earlier. "We created a lot of excitement," said Maxfield. "Even the visiting team was asking why our school gets to do such cool stuff." Stebbins includes an in-house career-technical center and about 70 percent of students are in an array of career-oriented programs, he noted.

The partnership with Stebbins is just one of DRMA's many workforce development programs, Erbaugh said. For instance, DRMA leads the area's annual Manufacturing Day initiative in October, a massive undertaking that this year involved 51 companies hosting over 3,300 students for open house events.

"Planning for Manufacturing Day is a year-round process," Erbaugh said. "We share best practices for organizing the events based on our years of experience. We also hold meetups throughout the year to share ideas."

DRMA also acts as a "matchmaker" bringing together schools and host companies. "If a school doesn't have a partner, we help make a connection," she said. "If a company has more students than it can accommodate, we help find another manufacturer who can include them."

Beyond Manufacturing Day, other DRMA initiatives include visits to middle schools and high schools, a speakers bureau and a summer camp that includes plant tours, welding simulators and more.

"Building awareness of manufacturing careers is a top priority of the organization," Erbaugh said. "We always need to get more people into the pipeline."



CONTACT:

Angelia Erbaugh, President
Dayton Region
Manufacturers Association
aerbaugh@daytonrma.org
(937) 949-4000