



GREAT PLAINS

TECHNOLOGY & MANUFACTURING CLUSTER

JULY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Member Spotlight

Bergkamp, Inc.
Salina, Kansas



Our member spotlight this month is Bergkamp Inc. of Salina, Kansas. The family-owned company is a domestic leader in manufacturing micro-surfacing pavers, spreader boxes, pothole patchers, mastic asphalt applicators and a variety of supporting equipment throughout the world. All of their equipment is hand-built in Salina, Kansas, USA.

For over 40 years, Bergkamp has continued to be a great company to work for through a positive culture that benefits its employees. By embracing their core values, communicating its company purpose, and providing employee leadership training at all levels, they have created a place that attracts potential employees and continues to motivate existing employees as well. This has resulted in 4 years of no lost time accidents. They also share this positive culture with its customers by navigating the unknowns of COVID-19. One of the challenges they are resolving is proactively ordering chassis to avoid the delay of a customer supplied chassis and maintain normal delivery expectations. In order to get in front of this issue, Bergkamp now offers the option to purchase the chassis themselves to help their customers maintain normal delivery expectations. *"We are a build to order company so every product and machine we produce has a customer's name on it. We understand our customers' needs and do what is necessary to get them the equipment needed to operate and Make Roads Better."* - Randy Galle, COO.

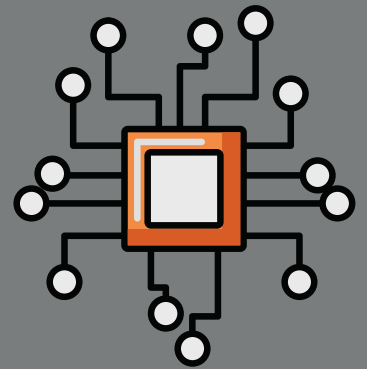


Bergkamp has provided value to customers across the world by standing true to their company purpose, "Making Peoples' Lives Better by Making Roads Better." They pride themselves in producing a quality product with state-of-the-art technology in every machine they produce. To improve this, the company reached out to the KSU Technology Development Institute (TDI) for engineering assistance in developing a semi-automated machine to produce the belt conveyors on their equipment. This new process improved the ergonomics and safety of their employees, and allowed them to focus on other value-added tasks. The machine is used every day and produces the belts for their paver machines in a safe and time-efficient manner.

The company is always interested in connecting with other manufacturers and partners throughout the region. As the company is a low volume, high variability manufacturer, Bergkamp would like to work with fabrication shops that can handle low volumes and provide quick turnaround times. If you are interested in connecting or want to learn more, please visit <https://www.bergkampinc.com>.

Did You Know...

...that 97 million new roles may emerge that are more adapted to the new division of labor between humans, machines and algorithms by 2025? (Source: Mitech News). It is believed that automation and industry 4.0 technologies are being created to decrease job opportunities... which is not at all true. Automation can improve workforce and operational conditions if companies are willing to adapt.



Is your company ready to integrate industry 4.0 technologies, or want to learn more about how it can benefit your operations? The GPTMC team is ready to help! Contact us at info@greatplainstmc.org to get started.

HirePaths Ambassador Opportunity

Does your manufacturing business want to be more involved with educating adults and youth about trade occupations? Become an ambassador sponsor for HirePaths! This organization informs and excites parents and guardians about options their child can pursue after high school to quickly and affordably launch a successful, well-paying career.

HirePaths is looking for manufacturers and/or businesses that can sponsor a teacher for the upcoming school year. These funds will help the teachers further incorporate HirePaths and career exploration into their classrooms for students. All sponsors will have naming rights, and will be recognized statewide all year long for their contributions.

If your company is interested in being an sponsor, please visit <https://hirepaths.com/sponsor-a-hirepaths-ambassador>



Upcoming Partner Events

- 8/4 - Kansas Sales & Use Tax for the Agricultural Industry
- 8/9 - Loan Denials: Common Reasons Why and Strategies

View and sign up for more events at <https://greatplainstmc.org/events>

KDC To the Stars Nominations are Open



The Kansas Department of Commerce (KDC) is now accepting nominations of successful businesses for the 2022 *To The Stars: Celebrating Kansas Businesses Awards*. This program recognizes businesses throughout the state that make valuable contributions to the economy and well-being of their community.

Individuals that are interested in nominating a business or individual can choose between the following 10 categories:

- Agribusiness
- Apprenticeship Champions and Partners
- Business Innovation
- Cool Things Made in Kansas
- HealthCare/Non-Profit
- Manufacturing/Distribution
- Non-Traditional Talent Pools
- Retail/Service
- Under 30 Entrepreneurs
- Welcome Back

KDC will take nominations on their website portal through August 5th, 2022. Regional award luncheons will take place in September with a following Statewide Awards Banquet in October for the regional winners. To learn more, nominate, or view past winners, please visit <https://www.kansascommerce.gov/celebrate/>.



Insurance Opportunity for Kansas Businesses



The Chamber of Commerce Executives of Kansas (CCEKS) and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) have partnered develop a new program called Chamber Blue of Kansas. This program allows chambers throughout the state of Kansas to offer their community businesses/members access to health insurance.

Chamber Blue of Kansas is an association health plan that allows for employers to join together to purchase insurance, resulting in more plan options and lower costs. In order to participate, employers must:

- be a member of their local chamber and in good standing
- have at least two W2 employees
- participate in the interest survey from local chamber in August to be eligible for enrollment. Survey will be coming soon - check emails frequently or contact your chamber
- pay at least 25% of the lowest cost option offered
- have 70% of eligible employees enroll in group health plan

For more information and to see if your local chamber is participating in Chamber Blue of Kansas, please visit <https://cceks.org/chamber-blue-of-ks/#>

Latest Discussion Forum Topics

In the last newsletter, the GPTMC officially launched a discussion forum for manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and resource partners to share ideas, ask questions and make new connections. The GPTMC team will be periodically sharing the latest topics and/or questions that are shared in the forum so that members have an opportunity to engage in the discussion. The latest topics/questions include:



- **Any advice on inventory management systems?** Many manufacturers have grown to the point that they need to upgrade their inventory management system (from Excel sheets or old software to a more sophisticated software). Do you have any advice on brands, features, or pitfalls to avoid?
- **Is the labor market cooling down at all?** A few industrial labor reports show that unemployment claims have increased lately, suggesting some cooling in the labor market. Is this true for you? Is hiring employees getting any easier? Do you have any advice or techniques to share?
- **Is your company doing anything to reduce reliance on foreign supply?** As supply chain challenges continue to impact many manufacturers, is your company taking any actions to reshore? Or are you still connecting with foreign suppliers and companies to continue your operations? Have you considered reshoring?

Click on each of the topics to go directly to the discussion to share your insights or ask questions. For more information or to view other topics, please visit <https://greatplainstmc.org/join-discussion-forum>, or email us at info@greatplainstmc.org to share your ideas.

Data Historian: A Program, Not a Person - Blog

The first step towards digitization for many manufacturers is to start collecting data from their equipment and storing it in a database. Some software programs that focus on this step are called **Data Historians**. Data Historian functionality can also be a part of more comprehensive software systems, such as Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems, which include data acquisition, industrial process controllers, and human-machine interface (HMI) components.

Data that a manufacturer might gather for monitoring or analysis include temperatures, pressures, rpm speeds, flow rates, valve positions, limit switch settings, and signals that indicate whether motors are on or off, and alerts. Data historian packages allow the user to specify how often various data is collected, and many packages allow the user to include data processing steps, such as checking if a valve is in a certain range or conducting calculations or statistical analysis before sending data to a database.



What should a manufacturer do before embarking on a data collection journey? **Read the rest of the blog** to learn more, or **contact** the Great Plains TMC for assistance on how a data historian might improve your manufacturing process.

Don't Forget to Register for the Ag Growth Summit

The Kansas Department of Agriculture's (KDA) Growth Summit is less than a month away! This event brings farmers, ranchers, equipment builders, and agribusinesses together in a collaborative setting to discuss challenges and new ideas for the industry.

Join us with our partners Kansas Manufacturing Solutions, KSU Technology Development Institute (TDI) and KDA for the Ag Equipment Manufacturing sector breakout session at the summit. The topic will be how manufacturers can work with agricultural entities to develop an innovative partnership for research, farming and other opportunities. It will also feature guest speaker Pete Nelson with AgLaunch!

Register at <https://agriculture.ks.gov/aggrowthstrategy/ag-summit-2022>

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