



GREAT PLAINS

TECHNOLOGY & MANUFACTURING CLUSTER

JUNE 2021 NEWSLETTER

Member Spotlight



Our member spotlight this month is Stoneworth Building Products in Shawnee, Kansas. The company manufactures concrete roof tiles for residential and commercial uses in the Midwest that are built to last, weather and fire resistant, low maintenance, and energy efficient.

Over the past 15 years, Stoneworth has manufactured custom concrete roof tiles in different styles and colors for their customers in their 24,000 sq. ft. facility. Every customer's experience is unique, as they get to select their own style and color of tiles that are handcrafted and customized by in-house artisans using materials such as sand, cement and water.

The current owners took over the company in 2019 with goals of expanding the business, which was quickly delayed due to COVID-19. Although the company was considered essential and continued to stay open, they experienced a trickle-down effect of many impacts that slowed the business in October 2020 including home building delays, supplier and transportation issues, high prices, and fewer customers in the showroom.



In an effort to overcome these challenges, the owners connected with resource partners such as SCORE, Kansas SBDC, and U.S. Small Business Administration for COVID-19 support and were also referred to the Great Plains TMC for additional manufacturing resources. They were able to receive PPP and EIDL funds which



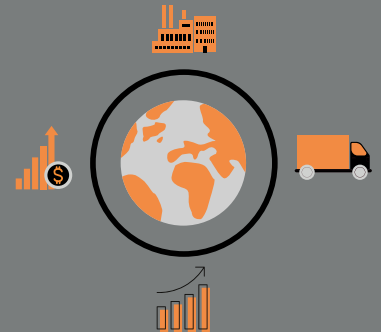
kept all employees on the payroll and viewed COVID-19 webinars to continue business operations. In addition, these impacts forced Stoneworth to look at their business differently. They shifted their focus, and modified their marketing plans, company perspective and revamped their brand. These modifications include a new interactive website that showcases the manufacturing process and blogs on roofing topics.

As the company continues to rebuild, they are always looking for opportunities to provide value and grow throughout the region. They are interested in developing a recycling process for a new product line as well as finding new ways to enhance regional workforce. For more information, please visit their new website at www.stoneworthrooftile.com or 913-422-0794.

Stoneworth Building Products Shawnee, Kansas

Did you Know...

...that companies in most industries can expect supply chain disruptions that last a month or longer to occur every 3.7 years? Many disruptions that lead to this include cyberattacks, financial crisis, weather disasters, workforce issues and of course, pandemics like COVID-19.



Through our resource partners, we are working with manufacturing industries throughout the region to determine what issues, like supply chain, are impacting companies the most and what challenges can be solved through networking events and opportunities.

Stay connected with the Great Plains TMC membership and social media to be the first to know about upcoming events within your industry.



HirePaths Employee Profiles



HirePaths is continuing to inform parents and guardians about well-paying careers that kids can pursue after high school through apprenticeships and technical community college education. In an effort to show parents the success that comes with these careers, HirePaths is seeking individuals to be featured in role model profiles on their website.

The purpose of the profile is to showcase:

- the success individuals have found through their career
- when they discovered the desire for their career
- the pathway they took to train for their career during or after high school
- what advice they have for others interested in this field

If you know an individual at your company that would be a good fit, please email Kristin Brighton at kristin@newbostoncreative.com or visit www.hirepaths.com

Upcoming Partner Events

- 6/30 - How to Hire Your First Employee
- 7/14 - How & Why to Make Marketing a Priority
- 7/23 - Cybersecurity for Exporters

New Employment Program Available for Kansans

Governor Kelly announced the launch of the My ReEmployment Plan (MRP), which was developed through a collaboration of the KS Dept. of Commerce (KDC), KS Dept. of Labor (KDOL), and KANSASWORKS.

The purpose of the program is to connect unemployed Kansans with workforce service professionals in their area to find job openings. Kansans who have received three weeks of unemployment payments will automatically be part of the MRP program. After being notified of MRP eligibility, participants will be required to provide KDC with the following information. Failure to provide this information may result in a suspension in unemployment benefits from KDOL.

- Resume
- Work History
- Skills List
- Job Search Plan Form



GPTMC Members - if you do not have a KANSASWORKS account to post your job openings, please do so at www.kansasworks.com or contact your local workforce center to get started. For more details about the program, please visit www.kansascommerce.gov/mrp.

Encountering Innovation Applications



The Encountering Innovation (EI) event that is hosted by the Kansas SBDC Tech Innovation Center will be accepting applications starting June 28th, 2021 for innovators interested in the opportunity to present and showcase their innovation to tech scouts and the public. Along with this opportunity, innovators will be able to participate in educational workshops throughout the EI event week and attend the Poster Board Parade of Technologies.

Tech Scouts from the DoD, Service Labs, Academia and other government agencies will be at the event listening to pitches, viewing poster board displays, discussing government needs and visiting with the innovators during the networking sessions. These scouts are looking to find innovative solutions to their immediate needs and also seek innovations that will resolve operational challenges and save costs.

For more details about the event, please visit the [Tech Portal](#) program in the GPTMC membership or www.encounteringinnovation.com. Instructions for the application process will be released soon. Mark your calendars for September 13th-17th, 2021 for the EI event - See you there!

Save the Date Ag Equipment Manufacturers!

Two networking events will be available for ag equipment manufacturers in the following months through the collaboration of the Kansas Dept. of Agriculture (KDA), K-State Technology Development Institute (TDI) and Kansas Manufacturing Solutions. These events will lead up to KDA's Ag Growth Summit on August 26th with presentations and panelists from Kansas manufacturing companies and industry leaders. Topics will include supply chain issues, industry networking opportunities, and collaboration strategies that will bring success to agricultural businesses.

Join us for the following events to network, collaborate and engage with agricultural manufacturers and businesses:



July 27th - 3:00pm
Virtual Ag Equipment
Manufacturing Sector Session
Via Zoom

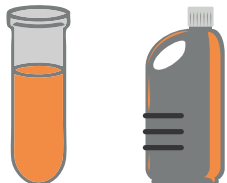
August 26th - Time TBD
Pre-Summit Breakfast and
Networking Panel
Manhattan, Kansas

To register for both of these events, please visit

<https://agriculture.ks.gov/AgGrowthStrategy/ag-summit-2021> If you have any questions, email us at info@greatplainstmc.org

Plastics Industry Sector

The Great Plains TMC will be focusing the next few months on recruiting manufacturers who are in any way involved with plastics to develop networking events. These include resin providers, compounders, blenders, and converters who do profile extrusion, injection molding, blow molding, cast film, blown film, thermoforming, or extrusion coating for packaging.



As an industry cluster focuses not only on businesses directly involved in an industry, but also those who support that industry, this focus will also include those who manufacture extruders, dies, testing equipment and other related products for the plastics industry.

If you, or companies in your network, are involved in this industry, please encourage them to join the Great Plains TMC's growing list of members. Stay tuned for more details coming soon.

The Great Plains TMC is interested in exploring other industry clusters to engage with and provide networking opportunities. If you have specific clusters that you would like to participate in, please reach out to us at info@greatplainstmc.org!

Building Your Brand in an Online Presence Blog

Whether you have a new or existing business, building a brand that promotes your presence and stands out to consumers is key to being successful. As 97% of website users go online to find and research businesses before making a purchase or service, it is important to not only have the brand be present in a physical location but also online.



When you think about building a brand, you might think about the color and how it will be designed. Although this is an important aspect to the visual features, a brand is what a business is promising to deliver to its consumers. As you begin to build your brand through an online presence, it is important to think about:

- **Who is the target market? What types of consumers will the business serve?**
- **What are the goals of the business?**
- **What do consumers achieve when using/buying from the business?**
- **What is the personality of the business?**

Login or **sign up** for the GPTMC membership to read the rest of the blog!