



GREAT PLAINS

TECHNOLOGY & MANUFACTURING CLUSTER

MAY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Member Spotlight

Tiger Jaw
Cross Roads, TX



Our Member Spotlight this month is Tiger Jaw, a company that manufactures and sells a variety of easy-to-use ratcheting hand shears, loppers and pruners world-wide. At a recent 3i Show in Dodge City, Kansas, the company connected with the GPTMC and was interested in being a part of its Great Plains regional network to access manufacturing resources to assist their company.

One of the resources that the company was interested in accessing was a new tool design for their Cedar Lopper, a successful product that helped move the company forward during the pandemic. The GPTMC was able to connect them with an engineer at the KSU Technology Development Institute (TDI) to begin developing options for a new design of the product.



In addition to design assistance, Tiger Jaw is looking to find potential manufacturers in the region that are capable of producing their products. The owners of the company see the impacts that their supply chain has on companies and would like to have more local and regional suppliers and manufacturers to work with. "Through strategic planning and ensuring our product inventory amounts stay high, we have been able to navigate through supply chain issues and will continue to plan and be flexible with future orders should we encounter delays. Our goal is to have our product completely manufactured locally to avoid these issues." - Kevin Stafford, Owner.



The owners of Tiger Jaw have been involved with the industry for 25 years, and are very passionate about their products and business. Through close relationships with their customers, they continue to discover and meet their needs through innovative features on their tools that provide more leverage and less fatigue, which is beneficial for users that suffer from arthritis or carpal tunnel. The company has big plans to enter into retail stores and would like to connect with manufacturers in the GPTMC community that can assist with producing their products and/or parts. If your company is interested in connecting with Tiger Jaw to help with their production, please visit and contact them through www.tigerjaw.com.

Did You Know...

...that only 6% of companies have complete visibility on their supply chains? - [Thomas Net](#). Keeping track of multiple supply chains from several channels can be a big challenge for companies. By implementing digitization strategies and data systems, companies can easily keep track of their supply chains, performance measurements, future disruptions, and more



As a manufacturing resource for the region, the GPTMC has tools and analysts available to assist with digitization improvements to help with supply chain visibility and gathering data. Visit www.greatplainstmc.org or email info@greatplainstmc.org for questions and guidance.



KEC State Competition

The K-State Center for the Advancement of Entrepreneurship and its sponsors, Kansas Masonic Foundation and NetWork Kansas, wrapped up the annual Kansas Entrepreneurship Challenge (KEC). This event provides junior/high school and community college students the opportunity to build business proposals and pitch their ideas to earn cash prizes.

Approximately 61 junior/high school student winners from the statewide E-Community Youth Entrepreneurship Challenges (YEC) and 9 community college teams participated this year.

The GPTMC is proud to be a supporter of the event, and will continue to support and serve at future YEC and KEC events as a technical resource to provide guidance and advice to students that have business ideas that could potentially require product development assistance

To view the event winners, please visit the [KEC website](#).



Upcoming Partner Events

- 6/6-9 Encountering Innovation
- 6/16 CKMN @ K-State TDI
- 6/22 Hiring 101

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

SBA T.H.R.I.V.E. Program



U.S. Small Business
Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is hosting a T.H.R.I.V.E Emerging Leaders program. The program stands for Train, Hope, Rise, Innovate, Venture, and Elevate, and is a training series designed for executive-level individuals interested in accelerating the growth of their existing business. Individuals will be engaged with in-person coaching, self-paced instruction with demonstrations, hybrid models of virtual and classroom learning, customized micro-sessions, and more.

The sessions will take place with the SBA Wichita District Office July 2022 to mid-December 2022. Although this training is not intended for startups or individuals in the process of starting a business, it is open for eligible business owners of any industry that have:

- Annual revenues of at least \$250,000
- Been in business for at least 3 years
- At least one employee other than the business owner

The SBA Wichita District Office strongly encourages business owners to apply online no later than May 31st, or as soon as possible. For more information about the program, please visit <https://sbathrive.com/> or contact Michael at the Wichita District Office at michael.aumack@sba.gov.

New Network Builder and Leader in KC

Michael Carmona has been hired as the new director and network builder of KCSourceLink. He will work with 230+ business-building organizations in the KCSourceLink network to grow and access resources for KC entrepreneurs and businesses. Prior to this position, he worked with the Community Capital Fund and the Hispanic Economic Development Corporation where he assisted with program building, technical assistance and funding for underserved businesses. Welcome to the GPTMC network!



What inspired you to work with entrepreneurs and small businesses? In April 2012, I began my professional career directly serving individuals seeking support to start their small business. At the same time, I was completing my MBA and realized there was a lot of space to share what I was learning with these aspiring entrepreneurs. We not only talked about where to go to register business licenses, but also spent a lot of time talking strategy and building for the future.

What do you enjoy most about the businesses in the KC region? I enjoy the commitment that business owners have for the individuals that their business impacts, the communities they serve, and the jobs they create. Through the pandemic, I worked closely with so many business owners seeking loans and grants to keep their business sustainable to retain jobs.

What are your goals/plans to further assist businesses in the KC region? My goals are to better support small businesses and entrepreneurs. We need to do a better job supporting the groups and organizations that provide direct support to them. I would like to see KCSourceLink facilitate more collective work with our entrepreneurship support organizations and other stakeholders committed to making the ecosystem more accessible and equitable.

From Membership to Community

The GPTMC has transitioned the focus of its membership to a manufacturing community. This effort will allow the GPTMC to continue building an environment that supports technical companies and small manufacturers in the Great Plains region.



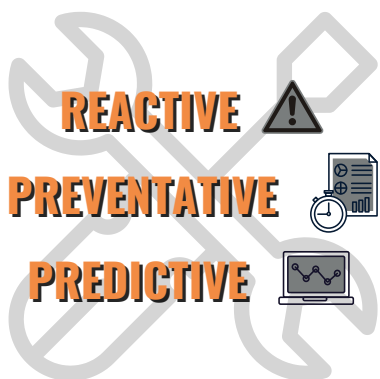
Why a community? A community is "a group of people who share the same interests, pursuits, or occupations" and "a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals" ([OED](#)). The purpose of the GPTMC is to have a community available for manufacturers to access to ask questions, find solutions, connect with needed resources and network with others with the same goals in the region. Through this community, the GPTMC has made it easier for manufacturers and members to access this information.

What is new with the community? With this transition, companies and partners involved with the GPTMC community will be able to have full access to what was in the private membership without having to log in. For businesses/organizations interested in joining the community, the sign up process is still the same! The GPTMC is also working on an engagement platform that will allow members to interact with each other to ask questions or share updates about their business and capabilities.

What do members and partners need to do? GPTMC community members and partners need to [check out](#) the community! Discover what resources are available for your company, view partners and manufacturers that you could potentially work with in the directory, read through the blogs and newsletters, check out upcoming partner events, learn more our programs and more. Please reach out the the GPTMC at info@greatplainstmc.org for questions.

Types of Machine Maintenance Strategies - Blog

Machine maintenance strategies can be broken down into three basic types - reactive maintenance, preventative maintenance, and predictive maintenance - each of which can be more or less advantageous in different situations. Cost analyses and risk assessments can help manufacturers make good decisions toward optimizing operations and business, and data analytics can inform those decisions.



Do you have a basic understanding of each of these maintenance strategies? Does your company use one or more of these strategies to maintain various machines and manufacturing processes? Are your choices informed by data analysis, including risk and cost assessments?

Click [here](#) to read the full blog about machine maintenance strategies, advantages and disadvantages of each, and how digitization could help you adopt predictive maintenance practices in order to optimize safety, quality and profits.

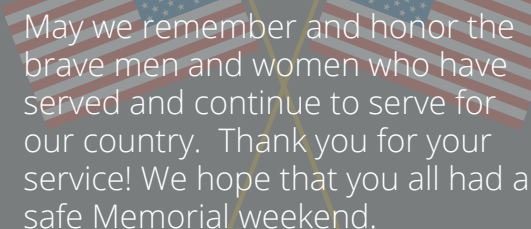
Microfactory Concept Takes Root in Hays, Kansas

As mentioned in a previous newsletter, the GPTMC and K-State TDI partnered in 2021 to submit a "Great Plains Microfactory Network" submission to the EDA's BBBRC program. The submission did not advance to Phase 2, but one of the coalition communities, Grow Hays, still wanted to turn this idea into a reality for Hays, KS.

The organization worked with GPTMC and TDI for guidance in continuing the microfactory process and what would be needed to make this project a success. Grow Hays applied for and successfully received a [Building a Stronger Economy \(BASE\) Grant](#) through the Kansas Dept. of Commerce to build a microfactory in Hays. Construction is set to begin in Fall 2022.

Congratulations Grow Hays for bringing this concept to life. The GPTMC looks forward to watching the microfactory grow manufacturing and entrepreneurs in Hays, Kansas!

Remember and Honor



May we remember and honor the brave men and women who have served and continue to serve for our country. Thank you for your service! We hope that you all had a safe Memorial weekend.