



GREAT PLAINS

TECHNOLOGY & MANUFACTURING CLUSTER

OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Member Spotlight

ShieldAg Equipment Hutchinson, Kansas



Our member spotlight this month is ShieldAg Equipment from Hutchinson, Kansas. The company designs, manufactures and distributes an innovative line of agricultural products throughout the US and world. These products include fertilizer application tools, conservation and primary tillage

tools, subsoilers, disc rippers, chisels, fertilizer knives, cultivators, planters, grain drill parts and more.

ShieldAg's history begins in Hutchinson, where it was originally founded as Welders Supply Co. Through the years, it became more involved with agricultural tools and equipment, and eventually became Shield Ag Equipment to reflect its focus on modern agriculture. The company is a well-known leader in their industry, as they partner with over 2000 distributors and dealers across the US and 6 foreign countries, and are involved with many community and regional organizations.



The company's president, Mike Bergmeier, is very passionate about his company and about developing new relationships within the whole agricultural industry. He is involved with the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Marketing Advisory Board and the annual Ag Growth Summit each year. Through this summit, his company has benefited from new relationships developed with Kansas agricultural



companies that resulted in new products and export market expansions into Europe. In July, he participated in KDA's Ag Equipment Manufacturing industry sector event in partnership with K-State TDI and Kansas Manufacturing Solutions that focused on supply chain. The company will also be represented in the October Ag Equipment Manufacturing event

that will also feature ShieldAg's partnering companies, Farmada and SureFire Ag. They will talk about their collaborative relationship to innovate and market the Farmada NH3 Toolbar.

ShieldAg is always seeking synergistic opportunities to form partnerships, launch new products, reach new markets, and grow the industry. For more information, please visit www.shieldag.com.

Did you Know...

...that by 2025, **50% of workers** will need reskilling because automation will displace 85 million jobs worldwide, while 97 million new roles will emerge? (*Forbes - Key Trends Shaping the Workforce of the Future*) Automation and digitalization are quickly transforming the way manufacturers and businesses operate on a daily basis.



Is your business prepared for these technology transitions? Our goal is to ensure that we have the resources you need to be successful. Stay connected with the resources in the membership, social media updates, and networking events to understand all of the latest technical news and trends.

www.greatplainstmc.org
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ScaleUP! Kansas City

Calling all Kansas City area manufacturers and businesses! KCSOURCELINK is accepting applications towards their ScaleUP! KC program in January 2022.

ScaleUP! KC is an impactful, transformative opportunity that helps people who drive the local economy to work on their business, and not just in their business. It is a curriculum designed to help business owners streamline their processes, strategize for growth and energize their business. In order to apply, candidates must:

- Be in business for at least 2 years and have at least 2 employees
- Generate annual sales in excess of \$250,000
- Have a strong market that can generate more than \$1 million in sales
- Strive to drive the business to greater heights

For more info and to apply, please visit

<https://www.kcsourcelink.com/scale-up>

KCSOURCELINK

Upcoming Partner Events

- 11/10 - Making Cents of Financial Statements - Zoom
- 11/11 - Kansas SBDC Succession Planning - Salina

K-State TDI New Equipment and Renovations

At the end of last year, the GPTMC host, K-State Technology Development Institute, was awarded a \$2.25 million grant to modernize and retool their facility to better assist manufacturers struggling from the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, many changes and updates have happened at the TDI facility!

TDI created an Additive Manufacturing Studio that will be home to many 3D printers and a Hexagon Scanning Arm. This arm will help the engineers increase their reverse engineering capabilities and capture complex geometric and surface measurements.



Stratasys F170 FDM 3D Printer
Additive Manufacturing Studio



OMAX Waterjet delivery
at TDI

In addition, the fabrication shop received upgrades of new paint, flooring, lighting and HVAC. New equipment has started to arrive as well! The newest machine in the facility is the OMAX 60120 Waterjet. This machine is larger than the previous waterjet at TDI and has even more capabilities including cutting angles from 0-60 degrees, automatic taper compensation, and an environmentally "green" operating system.

The GPTMC is glad to have TDI as a resource partner so that members can have access to engineering resources with updated machinery and equipment to advance their ideas and turn them into a reality. Follow GPTMC and TDI on social media to stay up to date on the renovations.

NCRPC Training Events

NCRPC has officially launched their business and technical trainings from their CARES Act Recovery Assistance grant. These trainings are free and available to businesses and non-profits located in their 12 county services area. There are currently 40 classes scheduled that focus on topics such as:

- Succession Planning
- QuickBooks
- Financial Statements
- Strategic Planning
- Conducting Assessments
- Marketing and Management
- Business Startup Plans
- Fundraising



These events are listed in the GPTMC [events page](#) on the website and are available in virtual and in-person formats. For more information about the events,, please visit <https://www.ncrpc.org/resources/trainings/>

Great Plains Microfactory Network Proposal



The GPTMC has partnered with the K-State Technology Development Institute to submit a Phase 1 planning proposal to the Economic Development Administration. The purpose of this proposal is to accelerate the economic recovery from the pandemic and to build economies that will be resilient to future economic shocks. The proposal submitted is an initiative to develop the Great Plains Microfactory Network (GPMN).

The GPMN will provide a cost-effective infrastructure and early stage support for scaling up and growing rural and underserved manufacturers. Key aspects include:

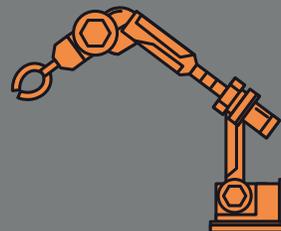
- Production Stage Focus: The GPMN will focus on small manufacturing businesses and entrepreneurs with products/technologies that are already developed and market validated.
- Subsidized Scale-up Space: Each Microfactory will provide separated tenant spaces with industrial grade utilities/support equipment to qualifying business/individuals at subsidized rent-rates: free for one year, progressive reduced rate for up to two additional years
- Embedded Support: Tenants will have access to GPMN support organizations, which provide services such as back office support, engineering design, prototyping, process development, data services, networking, marketing, website development, access to licensable technologies, and talent searches.
- Expanded Connections: The GPMN structure will help tenants minimize overhead and early investment burdens, allowing them to focus limited company resources on other aspects of launching production, building capital, and securing their own facilities for long-term operations.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The GPMN will make a focused effort with partner communities and support organizations to engage racial minorities, women and transitioning military personnel to participate in the GPMN programs.
- Long-Term Sustainability: The initial federal/community investment will both provide facilities free and clear, and several years of early operations support. Rent revenue will be used to maintain facilities, continue support services, and develop future programming.

We are excited about the economic opportunities the Microfactories can bring to the region. We also appreciate the verbal and letters of support from approximately 20 GPTMC members and 200+ local, state, and federal leaders that believe the GPMN can be beneficial to all start up and existing companies. The Phase 1 submission results will be announced mid-December to determine if we will prepare a Phase 2 application that would be due March 15, 2022. If you have any questions or would like to provide a verbal/letter of support, please email us at info@greatplainstmc.org.



The Future of Workforce

What does a typical work environment look like in the next year, 5 years, 10 years, or even 20 years? Do you already have an idea of what your facility will look like?



In all industries, technology is constantly changing. Robotics, automation, artificial intelligence and digitalization are transforming the way employees work. As these technologies change, the skill-sets of employees needs to change too.

Curious about what your business can do to stay ahead of these technology transformations? Click [here](#) to read the rest of the blog and our other blogs about workforce, clusters, website and more.

Happy Halloween!

