



# GREAT PLAINS

## TECHNOLOGY & MANUFACTURING CLUSTER

### SEPTEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

#### Member Spotlight

#### Dragon-Line Ulysses, Kansas



Our member spotlight this month is Dragon-Line from Ulysses, Kansas. The company develops a patented, agricultural technology that combines drip and pivot irrigation, to create Mobile Drip Irrigation. This process applies water and nutrients directly to the soil and prevents evaporation, water runoff, wheel track issues, plant shock, potential plant diseases, and saves 20-50% of water being used.

Southwest Kansas entrepreneur and CEO, Monty Teeter, has many years of experience with center pivots and drip irrigation systems. His development of the Dragon-Line was to help conserve water and ensure that natural resources were being utilized as efficiently as possible. Water conservation has become especially important in the Southwest part of the state where the



Ogallala Aquifer continues to be depleted at an alarming rate. The reduced amount of fresh water reserves is becoming an increasing problem around the world which is driving the demand for more efficient irrigation systems. Through his passion and determination, Dragon-Line has become a recognized brand name around the world and was named one of the top Exporter of the Year finalists by the Kansas Department of Commerce in 2020.



In an effort to continue the company's innovative initiatives, the company was researching new ways to improve the functionality of the product by developing a series of quick connect brackets. In order to evaluate alternative designs and to test functionality, the company reached out to the K-State Technology Development Institute (TDI) for assistance in designing and prototyping several designs and different materials needed to meet the customers requirements. By testing several prototyped brackets of different designs and metal compositions, TDI was able to identify a material and design that provided the spring functionality the company desired.

Dragon-Line continues to be a leader in water conservation technologies for the irrigation industry and is always looking for local suppliers to provide them with component parts for their assemblies. For more information about the company, please visit [www.dragonline.net](http://www.dragonline.net).

#### Did you Know...

...that in 2020, 94% of Fortune 1000 companies experienced disruptions in their supply chain? Closed facilities and delayed communication between suppliers made it difficult for these companies to be flexible with their supply chain.



Did you also know that there are companies within Kansas and neighboring states that can do exactly what companies do overseas or across the country? Now is the time to be a part of a manufacturing network, such as the Great Plains TMC, to solve some of your supply chain issues and to become involved in networking opportunities. View our directory and upcoming events in our membership [here!](#)

[www.greatplainstmc.org](http://www.greatplainstmc.org)  
[info@greatplainstmc.org](mailto:info@greatplainstmc.org)



## Ag Equipment Mfg Event in October

Another networking event will be available for ag equipment manufacturers in October through a partnership with the Kansas Dept. of Ag, K-State TDI and Kansas Manufacturing Solutions.

The event will be **October 27th at 3:00pm via Zoom**. The topic for this event will be about how partnerships between ag equipment manufacturers can work to improve efficiencies and marketing for Kansas manufacturers. It will include a "trifecta" panel of manufacturers that have successfully built these types of partnerships. More details and a registration link will be sent to the GPTMC membership soon!



## PPI Awarded KDHE Grant

Congrats to K-State PPI on receiving a \$333,000 grant from KDHE to provide free, confidential environmental compliance assistance to KS businesses and manufacturers! Learn more [here](#).

## Upcoming Partner Events

- 10/12 - Kansas Manufacturing Summit
- 10/13 - Kansas SBDC Social Media Starter Kit

Register for these events and more at [www.greatplainstmc.org](http://www.greatplainstmc.org)

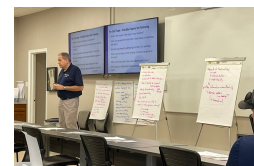
## SW Kansas Roundtable Outcomes

The Great Plains TMC partnered with REWA, K-State TDI and Dodge City Community College for Manufacturing and Business-Skills Roundtables for Dodge City regional companies. To view more details about the roundtables, please [login](#) or [sign up](#).

### Manufacturing Roundtable

The manufacturing roundtable consisted of manufacturers, educational institutions, and economic development partners. "Workforce" was the #1 topic of discussion through a quick vote of the attendees.

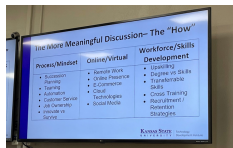
Common Workforce Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging workforce</li> <li>• Hard to find people with desired skills</li> <li>• Issues with commitment and productivity</li> <li>• Deciding who will take on management roles in the next 5-10 years</li> <li>• Competitive benefits packages/wages</li> </ul>
Action Items to Resolve Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using LinkedIn</li> <li>• Sign-on bonuses</li> <li>• Profit sharing</li> <li>• Daycare offerings</li> <li>• Social media highlights of employees</li> </ul>
Desired programs to be developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching life skills at a young age</li> <li>• Career counseling for manufacturing careers</li> <li>• Discovering different ways to communicate with mid-level managers</li> <li>• "Grow Your Own" - Finding ways to keep people in the area to work</li> </ul>



Resource partners REWA, DC3 and Dodge City High School have also engaged with the companies and students by doing Manufacturing Day visits, Work Ethic Programs, and Career Days.

### Business Skills Roundtable

The Business-Skills Roundtable had a slightly different approach to determine the topics, where they picked topics on how to overcome issues in the workplace. The topics were "Degrees vs Skills", and "Recruitment/Retention Strategies".



Do companies prefer individuals with degrees or skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Companies would prefer hires to have skills rather than degrees.</li> <li>• Top skills needed are computer skills in Microsoft and email</li> <li>• Employers should invest in internal/outsourced training to keep their employees skills up to date</li> <li>• Desirable traits include: Computer skills, responsibility, team-player, attention to detail, dedication, and desire to learn.</li> </ul>
How can companies recruit and retain their employees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Companies need to understand the pipeline development of a student in high school, to college, and then to adulthood as an employee.</li> <li>• Employers should be involved with this whole pipeline if they want to be able to recruit and retain these individuals at their facility.</li> </ul>

## Talent Search Program Coming Soon!

In an effort to solve workforce challenges, members will soon be able to engage with a talent search program that the Great Plains TMC has created through utilizing LinkedIn. This process provides efficient hiring techniques to fill open positions and leverages the deep insights of the LinkedIn network.

Members that are interested in using the program will work with Great Plains TMC staff in identifying the required experience, education, and qualifications that their candidates need to possess for the position. Based off of this information, the Great Plains TMC staff will provide a list of candidates to the company that have the qualifications to be viable candidate for the position. Benefits of using the tool include:



- Leveraging LinkedIn's Network of 740+ million professional users and using their recommendations of candidates based off of job requirements
- Avoiding several job applicants that don't meet the position requirements
- Saving time and money on hiring costs to find potential candidates
- Utilizing guides and templates on how to successfully connect with potential candidates, and/or decline candidates

The program will be available in October for GPTMC members to utilize. Please stay tuned for an official announcement of the launch. If you know companies that would be interested in using the program, please share this newsletter with them so that they can become [members](#) of the GPTMC. Please send any questions to [info@greatplainstmc.org](mailto:info@greatplainstmc.org).

## Searching for the Right Candidate - Blog

**We've wasted so much time and money on hiring candidates that don't have the right skills for this job!"**

**"I can't find anyone with the right skills for this job."**

**The younger generations aren't taught basic, life skills!"**

**"I have interviewed several people and still haven't found the right person to hire."**

Searching for the right candidate for an open position at your facility can be exhausting, expensive, and time consuming! This blog will go over how companies can overcome the challenges of hiring employees and how companies can help educate potential workers of all ages to understand the skills and requirements to work there. Here are a few statistics of the impacts businesses experience in hiring employees:

- The average cost of a bad hire is approximately 30% of the employees first year of earnings
- The average time to hire a new employee is about 36 days (if you're lucky!)
- Small business owners, without an HR manager, spend about 40% of working hours on hiring employees.

[Click here](#) to read the rest of the blog! If you haven't already, [sign up](#) for a GPTMC membership for free!

## Post Your Manufacturing Day Events on the GPTMC Site!

### What is Manufacturing Day?

Manufacturing Day is celebrated in October and provides manufacturers with the opportunity to raise awareness about advanced manufacturing careers for the current and next generation of workforce. Manufacturers throughout the country are hosting events to show youth, parents, teachers, community leaders and educational institutions about the opportunities and reality of modern manufacturing careers.

On the Great Plains TMC website, there is a section where manufacturers can post their upcoming [Manufacturing Day events](#). We encourage all of our members to share their planned events to the page! We would also love to see any pictures that you post on social media from Manufacturing Day! Use the hashtags [#MFGDay21](#) and [#GPTMCMfgDay](#)! If you have any questions, please email [info@greatplainstmc.org](mailto:info@greatplainstmc.org)

