

Bangor Area Middle School Honored for Video Showing What's So Cool About Manufacturing

By George Lewis

BETHLEHEM - Students and teachers from 10 regional middle schools received awards for videos they produced as part of the Manufacturers Resource Center's (MRC) "What's So Cool About Manufacturing" program. The awards ceremony, which more than 1,000 people attended, was held at ArtsQuest Center at SteelStacks in Bethlehem on March 14.

What's So Cool About Manufacturing introduces students to career opportunities in the manufacturing sector by pairing schools with Lehigh Valley manufacturers to produce creative videos that spotlight the companies and the products they make.

The program was developed by MRC in the Lehigh Valley 10 years ago and has expanded across Pennsylvania. This year, 33 middle schools from Lehigh, Northampton, Carbon, and Monroe counties entered videos in the Lehigh Valley competition.

The awards ceremony was buzzing with excitement as middle school students, their teachers, and proud family members, and business leaders from the Lehigh Valley's manufacturing sector celebrated all 33 videos represented.

Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp. (LVEDC) was a Silver Sponsor of the 2023 Lehigh Valley What's So Cool About Manufacturing program. MRC is a regional partner of LVEDC, and the video program aligns with LVEDC's talent strategies by engaging students in career pathways exploration and influencing perceptions that students, teachers, and parents have about jobs in manufacturing.

Manufacturing is the largest contributor to the Lehigh Valley economy. The region's more than 700 manufacturers make a wide range of products, generate \$8.4 billion in economic output, and employ more than 36,000 people. Manufacturing employment in the Lehigh Valley is growing at a rate much faster than the nation overall, and manufacturing represents 18% of the Lehigh Valley's economic output, compared with just 12% of U.S. economic output.

The award for Overall Outstanding Video was presented to Lower Macungie Middle School in the East Penn School District and featured B. Braun Medical Inc., which is one of the largest employers in the Lehigh Valley and last year completed a 310,000-square-foot expansion of its manufacturing facility.

Local schools, and their manufacturing partners, selected to receive awards by the panel of judges were:



Wind Gap Middle School, Follett Products, LLC



Bangor Area Middle School, Bangor Area School District (Victaulic Company), Outstanding Creativity



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J.T. Lambert Intermediate School, East Stroudsburg Area School District (Ultra-Poly Corporation), Outstanding Career and Technical Education Story

In addition to the awards selected by the judges, a Viewers Choice Award was presented to the school that received the most votes in a three-day online poll. That award went to J.T. Lambert Intermediate School.

Northeast Middle School, Bethlehem Area School District (Stanley Black & Decker), Outstanding Videography

Springhouse Middle School, Parkland School District (BlueTriton Brands), Outstanding Editing

East Hills Middle School, Bethlehem Area School District (ProtoCAM), Outstanding Cool

Orefield Middle School, Parkland School District (Precision Roll Grinders), Outstanding Team Spirit

Nitschmann Middle School, Bethlehem Area School District (ABEC), Outstanding Educational Value

Saucon Valley Middle School, Saucon Valley School District (Kitchen Magic), Outstanding Outreach Plan

Trexler Middle School, Allentown School District (Lutron Electronics Co., Inc.), Outstanding Career Pathway

Regional nominees from the Lehigh Valley will advance to the statewide What's So Cool About Manufacturing competition on May 15 at the Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts in Harrisburg. In 2022, Lehigh Valley schools won first, second, and third place in the statewide competition, and the statewide Viewers Choice award.

Other Lehigh Valley manufacturers featured in student videos include Crayola, Mack Trucks, OraSure Technologies, Lehigh Valley Plastics, Follett, Ocean Spray, ATAS International, and Tyber Medical.

To view the winning videos, and all the entries in this year's contest, visit the What's So Cool About Manufacturing website <https://www.whatssocool.org/contests/lehigh-valley/>.