

BEDFORD COUNTY

DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

P E N N S Y L V A N I A

ONE Corporate Drive ✱ Suite 101 ✱ Bedford, Pennsylvania 15522

March 24, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

What's So Cool About Manufacturing® Video Contest Highlights Collaboration Among County's Education, Economic Development & Industry Leadership to Encourage Careers in Manufacturing

BEDFORD, PA – Since early January, students in the After 3 program at six Bedford County middle schools have been hard at work on video projects showcasing local manufacturers. The What's So Cool About Manufacturing® video contest is designed to help students gain an up-close experience with manufacturing careers in their home county while also allowing them to learn how to tell a good story and gain video producing skills.

While the contest operates in other counties across the Commonwealth, Bedford County's inaugural participation is driven by close cooperation among leaders in local education, economic development and industry. The Bedford County contest was developed through a partnership between the [Bedford County Development Association](#), the [Bedford County Technical Center \(BCTC\)](#), and the [Bedford County 21st Century Community Learning Center Consortium](#).

The consortium is the only one of its type in Pennsylvania to provide afterschool programming countywide among independent school districts. It oversees 12 sites: the K-5 After School program and the After 3 program for students grades 6-12 under grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and cooperative agreements with the county's five school districts: Bedford Area, Chestnut Ridge, Everett Area, Northern Bedford, Tussey Mountain and the HOPE for Hyndman Charter School.

“Developing these 2-minute videos provides our kids with an opportunity to learn about manufacturing while developing project management, technology and literacy skills,” said Lyn Skillington, co-project director of the 21st CCLC Consortium programs. “It's a great example of authentic learning at its best. The projects are a lot of work, but the students and staff are also having fun in the process. Plus the project will have a myriad of other benefits, including building a library of videos to help other students and the community learn more about the county's great and varied manufacturers.”

While Bedford County's manufacturing sector is growing—10 of the top 25 employers in the county are manufacturers and 15.4 percent of county workers are employed in manufacturing, nearly double the state average—county manufacturers consistently report that they are not able to fill many open positions in a wide variety of jobs. This data corresponds with national trends: Nationally, 77 percent of manufacturers surveyed in July by the National Association of Manufacturers say they have ongoing difficulties filling positions, and the Association estimates that by 2030, more than 2.1 million jobs will

go unfilled in the sector. **In surveys of all Bedford County graduating seniors over the past three years (2020- 2022), less than 3.5 percent said they planned to pursue a career in manufacturing.**

“The disconnect is real and troubling for our companies,” said Bette Slayton, president of the Bedford County Development Association (BCDA). “Many of our companies just can’t find the skilled workforce they need to expand.”

This video contest, which is supported in part through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, is part of an effort to bridge the gap between the demand to grow the manufacturing workforce and the number of youth and other members of the community who see manufacturing as an attractive career path.

“A lot of people think manufacturing is an assembly line, but it’s so much more than that. It’s a cutting-edge field, and the technology keeps getting better and better. Working in manufacturing in Bedford County is an opportunity to stay and create change,” said Mark Thaler, CEO of The Organic Snack Company.

“Many of our kids just don’t realize the variety of great fields they can pursue within the manufacturing community,” said Dr. Allen Sell, superintendent of the Bedford Area School District. “We need to find ways to bring it home to our kids and their parents that training for and pursuing a job in manufacturing can provide them with a fulfilling, family-sustaining career path.” He noted that this is especially true in Bedford County, which historically has among the highest unemployment in the state and among the lowest average per-capita income, typically less than 65 percent of the state average.

Bedford County Technical Center Director Mike O’Dellick echoed these sentiments and explained how the video contest can work to change student perceptions by illustrating the bigger picture. “The manufacturing processes that go into creating the final product often go unseen, but they create opportunities that offer on-the-job training and career advancement. Plus, students will learn how the products and jobs created by the manufacturing industry in the county contribute to our robust and healthy local economy which improves the overall quality of life for our community.”

Bedford County’s participating teams are:

After 3 program at Bedford Area Middle School	Rockland Manufacturing
After 3 program at Chestnut Ridge High School	Bedford Reinforced Plastics
After 3 program at Everett Area Middle School	Lampire Biological Laboratories
After 3 program at Hope for Hyndman Charter School	Mission Critical Solutions
After 3 program at Northern Bedford County Middle School	Bedford Candies
After 3 program at Tussey Mountain Middle School	The Organic Snack Company

The contest features an online vote from April 12 at 12:01 AM until April 14 at 11:59 PM. The community is encouraged to visit BedfordCountyCool.com during the voting period to enjoy the teams’ video entries and vote for the Viewers Choice winner. Viewers can vote for the same video multiple times by refreshing the page. The video with the most votes will earn team bragging rights as well as the

Viewers Choice trophy to be announced along with trophies for the Best Overall Program and Educational Value at an awards luncheon April 27.

For more information contact:

Jennifer Marsh, Vice President
Bedford County Development Association
Email: jmarsh@bcda.org
Phone: 814-623-4816, 301-331-1348 (cell)

Mike O'Dellick, Administrative Director
Bedford County Technical Center
Email: modellick@bedfordctc.org
Phone: 814-623-2760

Lyn Skillington, Project Director
Bedford County 21st CCLC Consortium
E-mail: lynskillington@mac.com
Phone: 814-624-4810, (814) 977-0265 (cell)

About Bedford County Technical Center

The mission of the Bedford County Technical Center (Bedford CTC) is to enrich the quality of life in our community through specialized learning opportunities. Bedford CTC offers a variety of vocational programs that provide students with the knowledge and skills to be college and career ready. Students have the opportunity to obtain a variety of industry certifications and college credits upon completion of their program of study.

About Bedford County Development Association

Bedford County Development Association's (BCDA) mission is to improve the quality of life in Bedford County through economic development while preserving our heritage and natural resources. BCDA promotes and encourages industry and commercial development of trade in the county; aids, assists, encourages, and promotes the location of industrial and commercial employers in the county; promotes and encourages the growth of industry and existing employers located in the county; coordinates and organizes the efforts of other organizations in aiding and assisting in carrying out the purpose of this corporation.

About the Bedford County 21st Century Community Learning Consortium

The Bedford County 21st Century Community Learning Consortium supports the creation of opportunities for academic enrichment during non-school hours for children. The program helps students meet state and local standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and mathematics; offers students enrichment activities that complement regular academic programs, and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.

E-mail: info@bcda.org ✱ Website: www.bcda.org
Phone: (814) 623-4816 ✱ Fax: (814) 623-6455
