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MakerMinded Student Competition Goes Live in Kentucky

Online Platform and Competition are Changing the Course of STEM Education and Advanced Manufacturing Learning

Tuesday, August 22, 2017, Frankfort, KY—Today, LIFT—Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow, a national ManufacturingUSA institute, in partnership with Kentucky Association of Manufacturers, the Foundation for Kentucky Industry, and Tennessee Tech University's iCube, launched the second year educational competition using MakerMinded, an online STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) learning and activity platform. The MakerMinded campaign helps impassion students about advanced manufacturing and provides them with transformational STEM learning experiences that set them on track towards advanced manufacturing careers.

MakerMinded's online platform, www.Ky.makerminde.com, connects Kentucky's middle and high school students to over 150 leading-edge STEM and advanced manufacturing education experiences, while galvanizing participating students and schools around a student-driven, pro-manufacturing campaign and competition. The platform's goal is to provide students access to the right programs that will encourage and prepare them for further education and careers in advanced manufacturing.

"Manufacturers across the country fear a widening skills gap, which could result in 2 million jobs going unfilled unless we take action now to prepare today's students for tomorrow's jobs," said Emily DeRocco, director, education and workforce, LIFT. "MakerMinded shows the magic that happens when we empower young people with the opportunities, inspiration, and tools they need to gain in-demand skills and pursue meaningful careers."

During the 2016-2017 school year, over 300 students from across Kentucky participated in over 280 STEM and advanced manufacturing learning programs as part of the MakerMinded competition. On June 1, 2017, [Turkey Foot Middle School](#) and [Trigg County High School](#) were recognized at the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers "Manufacturing Our Future" Conference as the winning schools for the 2016-2017 MakerMinded competition and were awarded with Virtual Reality Learning Systems to be used in their classrooms. This year's goal is to increase the number of schools and students across the Commonwealth engaged in MakerMinded advanced manufacturing programs by May 2018.

"MakerMinded KY launched in February of this year, and since that time, 78 schools in 24 Kentucky counties have signed up to introduce middle and high school students to manufacturing as a career choice," stated Greg Higdon, President & CEO of the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers. "We are proud to partner with MakerMinded as they create the next generation of manufacturing leaders!"

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“MakerMinded provides opportunities for students to participate in manufacturing in ways that new generations of students are craving - with projects and activities that truly connect them with the real world,” said Laura Arnold, Associate Commissioner, Office of Career and Technical Education. “In the process, we are also changing the perception of manufacturing as a career choice.”

How it Works

The platform includes a searchable database of both national and local student programs, including on-line and in-person experiences, from manufacturing facility tours to engineering design challenges to technical skills competitions. Examples of programs include SkillsUSA, Hour of Code, tours of local manufacturing facilities (such as Toyotetsu, Safran Landing Systems, and GE Appliances), and MATHCOUNTS. As students complete activities and programs, schools receive points and compete against other schools in Kentucky. The competition culminates in a recognition event and prizes for the schools and students accumulating the most points for completing the most activities.

New Features

MakerMinded is launching this school year with new features to enhance students’ experiences and learning. These features include a new activity point structure, updated activity submission guidelines, and a newly organized and searchable activity portfolio making it easier for students to find local activities and programs that match their skills and interests.

What Teachers are Saying

"MakerMinded helped connect our school with a wide range of opportunities to help students explore high tech careers," said Dwayne Humphrey, a Project Lead the Way/STEM Teacher at Turkey Foot Middle School. “My students loved creating apps, visiting manufacturers, building robots, using engineering to solve problems, holding STEM nights and much more.”

"My students loved getting ‘extra credit’ through points on MakerMinded, and really enjoyed trying some programs we wouldn't have otherwise known about," said Michelle Strickland, a teacher at Trigg County High School. "MakerMinded has provided my students with activities and programs that will help them understand the importance of manufacturing in their future lives. It's a program that engages all types of students and helps endorse what we try to do as educators."

Students and schools interested in joining the MakerMinded campaign can sign up at <http://www.ky.makerminded.com>.

MakerMinded will host five launch events across the Commonwealth to kick-off the 2017-2018 campaign:

ARMOR, USA will host students from the Northern Kentucky region for a tour at their Hebron, KY location. Students will learn firsthand about the manufacturing process of thermal transfer ribbons for industrial printers. The facility provides slitting and packing of ARMOR thermal transfer ribbons, and employs 72 people.

Safran Landing Systems will invite students from Northern Kentucky schools to their facility in Walton, KY. Safran participates in the KY FAME AMT program, so visiting students will interact with current AMT students to learn more about that program, as well. The company manufactures aircraft landing and brake systems for commercial, military, business, and regional aircraft manufacturers. The Walton facility produces wheels and carbon brakes for North American customers.

Students from the MakerMinded Schools of Distinction - Turkey Foot Middle School (Edgewood, KY) and Trigg County High School (Cadiz, KY) - will have the chance to experience manufacturing in Virtual Reality. The VR prize package includes a gaming laptop, pre-loaded with manufacturing learning experiences, an Oculus Rift, and a cart to hold all of the materials. Once delivered, students and teachers at these schools will be able to integrate VR into their lessons for an enhanced learning opportunity.

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GE Appliances, a Haier Company will host students from schools in the greater Louisville area to their facility for a job shadow learning experience. Students will take a tour of Appliance Park, participate in hands-on manufacturing activities, and engage with GE Appliances personnel to learn what it would be like as an employee of the company. Products manufactured at GE Appliance Park include washing machines, dryers, dishwashers, and refrigerators.

Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky will engage students from area schools to their Georgetown facility to learn about careers in the manufacturing industry. Students will see how math and science are used outside of the classroom in state-of-the-art technology and engineering, and will have their eyes opened to a future in automotive manufacturing. The Georgetown facility manufactures the Camry, Avalon, and Lexus sedans.

About LIFT – Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow

LIFT is a Detroit-based, public-private partnership committed to the development and deployment of advanced lightweight metal manufacturing technologies, and implementing education and training initiatives to better prepare the workforce today and in the future. LIFT is one of the founding institutes of [Manufacturing USA](#), and is funded in part by the Department of Defense with management through the Office of Naval Research.

About the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers

Established in 1911, the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers is Kentucky's most effective advocate for manufacturers. KAM's mission is to protect and create a manufacturing-friendly environment in Kentucky. In addition to advocating, KAM connects, educates and provides cost-saving programs and products to members. For more information, go to: www.KAM.us.com.

About the Foundation for Kentucky Industry

The Foundation is a statewide, not-for-profit, on a mission to strengthen Kentucky's most valuable economic indicator – manufacturing, and the qualified personnel manufacturing needs to drive it. With support from private and public partners, the Foundation advances innovation and technology through education within the changing culture of manufacturing. For more information contact maryb@foundationforkyindustry.org

About iCube

Tennessee Tech University's iCube is a place where students and faculty Imagine, Inspire, and Innovate. We are a leader in advancing collaborative solutions with extensive experience in public policy marketing campaigns and virtual reality development. To learn more about our center, please visit www.ttucube.com.