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**LIFT and Tennessee Chamber to Launch Advanced  
Manufacturing Student Video Contest in West Tennessee**  
*Program to promote manufacturing careers to students, educators*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow (LIFT), the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and its industrial division, the Tennessee Manufacturers Association, today announced the launch of the Tennessee Student Video project to focus on manufacturing careers. The initiative, designed to shine a spotlight on high-tech manufacturing careers for tomorrow's workforce, aims to engage students, educators, parents, counselors and employers in exploring careers within advanced manufacturing industry sectors.

The Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry will serve as the project lead. Initial project partners in this first year pilot program include Dream It Do It Pennsylvania, Dream It Do It Tennessee, Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Tennessee Manufacturers Association, Shelby County School Districts University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services, Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce (GMACW).

Expected to launch in fall 2015, the project will challenge Tennessee students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade to create a short video on manufacturing work and career opportunities in companies using lightweight metals and new technologies. Student teams will be partnered with local manufacturing companies to both train and collaborate on the digital vignettes, which will be judged by parents, teachers, employers, and peers. Winning teams who best represent advanced manufacturing careers in their work will be honored at an awards ceremony in February 2016.

“As employer demand continues to rise for workers in lightweight manufacturing, it is more imperative than ever for educators, students and career guiders to be aware of the ever-growing opportunities in this industry,” said Larry Brown, executive director, LIFT. “More educational campaigns, such as the Tennessee Student Video project, need to be deployed to reach our youth and steer them

toward the high-tech manufacturing jobs and rewarding compensation in these career pathways.”

Of the more than 5,000 lightweighting-related jobs posted in January and February of 2015, nearly one third advertised an annual salary of more than \$50,000 and almost half were for skilled trades’ jobs. Despite high wage potential and strong employer demand, recruiting new workers has been a challenging task for employers. There is both a need for more young workers and a skills gap among an existing and a transitioning workforce.

“Nearly 20 percent of professionals in lightweighting-related occupations will be retiring in the next 20 years. In addition to this, women make up less than one quarter of the lightweighting workforce,” said Emily Stover DeRocco, education and workforce director, LIFT. “The time is now to raise awareness about the career opportunities and close the advanced manufacturing skills gap.”

“The Tennessee Student Video pilot project hopes to assist employers in need of skilled workers and students who had not previously considered career pathways in manufacturing,” said Catherine Glover, President, Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry. “We ultimately aspire to increase enrollment in advanced manufacturing Career and Technical Education (CTE) in both high school and college programs and, in time, grow tomorrow’s advanced manufacturing workforce.”

For more information on the Tennessee Student Video Competition project in Memphis, please contact GMACW at 901-614-1099 or [alliance@gmacw.com](mailto:alliance@gmacw.com).

For more information on other LIFT education and workforce development initiatives, please visit [www.lift.technology](http://www.lift.technology) or contact LIFT Workforce & Education Director Emily DeRocco at [ederocco@lift.technology](mailto:ederocco@lift.technology)

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## **ABOUT LIFT**

*Lightweight Innovations For Tomorrow (LIFT) is a public-private partnership that will develop and deploy advanced lightweight materials manufacturing technologies and programs to prepare the workforce. The LIFT region includes 5 states: Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee.*

*LIFT is operated by the American Lightweight Materials Manufacturing Innovation Institute (ALMMII) and was selected through a competitive process led by the U.S. Department of Defense under the Lightweight and Modern Metals Manufacturing Innovation (LM3I) solicitation issued by the U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Research. LIFT is one of the founding institutes in the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation, a federal initiative to create regional hubs to accelerate the development and adoption of cutting-edge manufacturing technologies.*



## **BUILDING 21st CENTURY MANUFACTURING TALENT**

### **Rebuilding the Talent Pipeline in Tennessee: Advanced Manufacturing Video Contest**

*An Education & Workforce Development Initiative  
for LIFT...Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow*



#### **THE PROBLEM**

Not enough young talent is going into manufacturing. A negative stigma surrounding manufacturing employment makes recruiting in target populations, like young workers and female workers, difficult for Tennessee lightweight materials manufacturers. Nearly 20% of workers in lightweighting-related occupations are 55 years old or older and will be retiring in the next 20 years.

Even with increased employer demand for workers in lightweight manufacturing, young workers, as well as the parents, counselors, and educators informing them, are not giving occupations in this industry a second thought. Of the 7,337 jobs related to lightweighting posted by Tennessee employers in March and April 2015, 33% advertised a salary over \$50,000 and almost half were for skilled trades jobs. Despite high wage potential and strong employer demand, recruiting new workers has been a challenging task. More creative campaigns need to be deployed in order to highlight lightweight jobs, compensation, and career pathways for young Tennessee workers.

#### **THE SOLUTION**

Social media, self-made videos, and internet marketing are the way of the future and the best way to reach out to youth. LIFT partners in Tennessee are leveraging these methods to help rebuild the talent pipeline for manufacturing, meeting future workers on their own turf. The LIFT partners will organize a program for students to self-advertise lightweight manufacturing work and career opportunities. The aim of the student video contest is to engage parents, students, counselors, educators, and employers in conversations promoting careers in advanced manufacturing to enhance the image of manufacturing careers for tomorrow's workforce. This project will increase enrollments in advanced manufacturing Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and post-secondary programs and, in time, grow the advanced manufacturing workforce of the future in Tennessee.

#### **ABOUT THE PROJECT**

The Tennessee Student Video project will be an adaptation of a similar program conceived by the Manufacturers Resource Center out of Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania. Student teams in Lehigh Valley partnered with local manufacturing companies to create a video answering, "what's so cool about manufacturing?" Videos were then posted online for public viewing and voting to determine which team best represented the career opportunities available in advanced manufacturing.

Lehigh Valley saw significant engagement with the videos – over 123,000 votes were cast in three days. More importantly, this conversation-starter on manufacturing careers helped increase enrollment in community college manufacturing programs by 30% the following semester. The Tennessee Student Video Contest has similar aims at closing advanced manufacturing talent gaps through sparking public conversation and promoting training programs.

#### **PROJECT LEAD**

Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry

#### **PARTNERS**

Dream It Do It Pennsylvania

Dream It Do It Tennessee

Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry

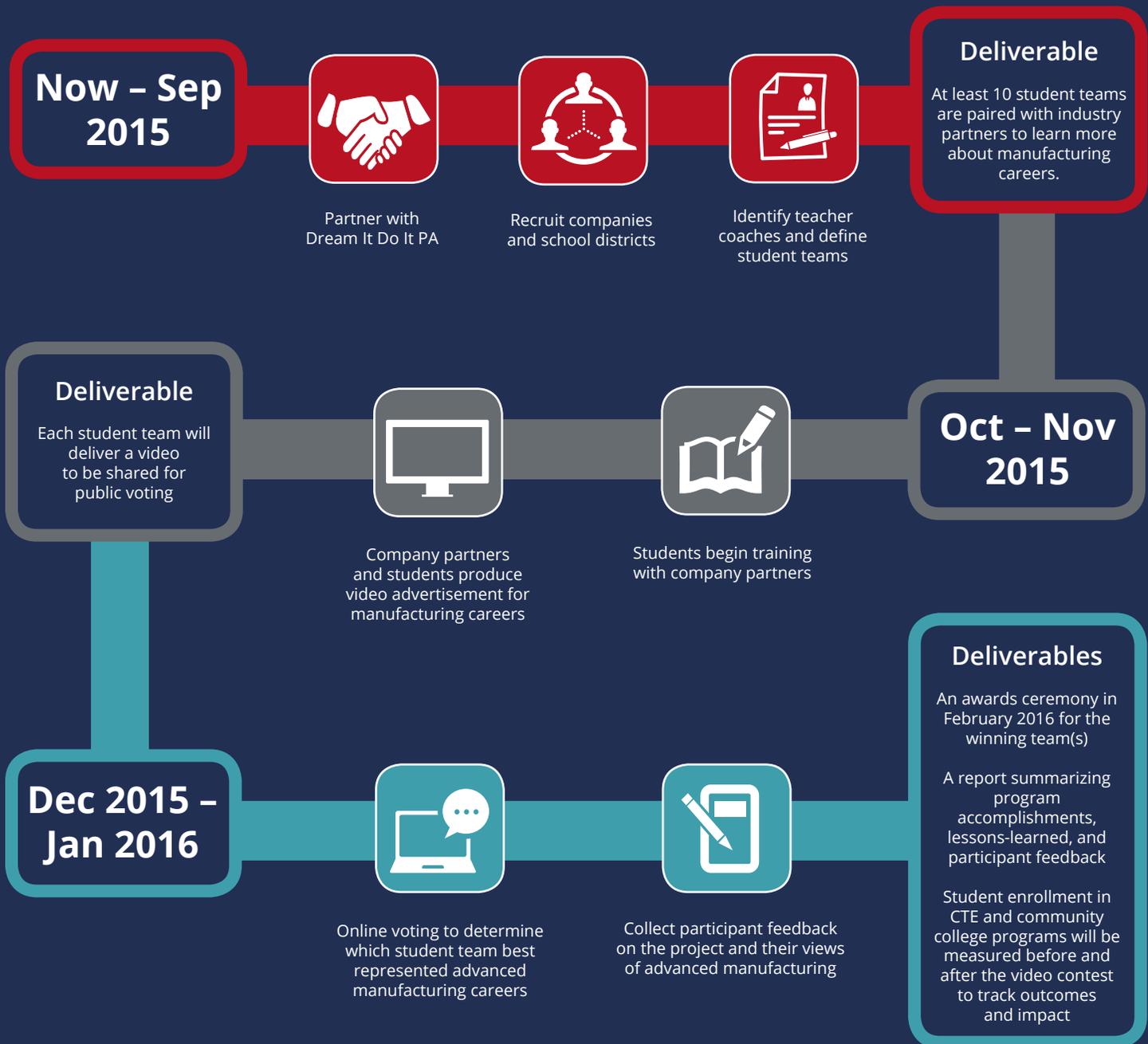
Tennessee Manufacturers Association

Shelby County School Districts

University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services

Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce (GMACW)

## PROJECT PHASES



## GEOGRAPHIC FOOTPRINT

The Tennessee Student Video Contest will begin in the Memphis, TN area, with hopes to expand contests into each of the state's nine economic and workforce development regions. The vision is that the winning team from each region would compete in a statewide contest.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Through a partnership with the Dream It Do It PA team, the Tennessee LIFT partners are hopeful that the Student Video Contest will inspire employers in need of skilled workers and students who had not previously considered career pathways in manufacturing. The Tennessee team expects to see similar outcomes as in Pennsylvania, measured by student and employer participation in video production, public engagement through voting, and increased enrollment in technical and manufacturing college programs.

For more information on the Tennessee Student Video Competition project in Memphis, please contact GMACW at 901-614-1099 or [alliance@gmacw.com](mailto:alliance@gmacw.com). For all other LIFT education and workforce development initiatives contact LIFT Workforce and Education Director, Emily DeRocco at [ederocco@lift.technology](mailto:ederocco@lift.technology).

For more information about the education & workforce development initiative visit [www.lift.technology](http://www.lift.technology)