

tmta talk

A publication of the Tooling, Manufacturing & Technologies Association



**FROM ROB'S
ROOST**
By ROB DUMONT
PRESIDENT & CEO

Are You Involved?

As at the end of business on October 31, 2008 the Coalition to Fix America's Economy, an ad hoc group of concerned and interested organizations, companies and individuals had signatories to its one page document that included 46 national, state

and local organizations as well as 117 producers and service providers and 33 individuals. Of the total of 196 signatories the TMTA and its members and associates number 36 or a little over 18%.

Certainly those of you who have signed on have my deep appreciation and gratitude for stepping up and supporting this very important and worthwhile endeavor. Together with a number of other concerned entities I will be on the Hill in DC in the near future meeting with the many new members of Congress and impressing upon them the urgency of the sad situation facing American manufacturers and urging them to work at getting U.S. trade policy corrected so that you and your company can again prosper. I will admit that I had hoped for a much greater showing of support among members as this is obviously a revenue



neutral way that you can help the cause. Each of you is, I know, very busy but the fact is the investment in time it takes to sign on is less than a visit to the restroom! See the TMTA website should you decide to add your support—it is not too late.

Current trade policy has resulted in the closing of well over 40 thousand manufacturing facilities and job loss in excess of 3.9 million in that sector of the economy in the U.S. If, like me, you think we need to do much better, get involved and become a signatory. Numbers count (I know, I'm being repetitious)!

Hold the morning of December 2, 2008 for a seminar on the very timely and

(Rob's Roost continues on Page 8)

Inside This Issue

- Page 2 Health News
 - 19-25 Year Olds
 - MC Certificate of Creditable Coverage
 - Advantage Pricing
 - Cancer Awareness
 - Page 4 You're #1
 - Pre-Employment Screening
 - Welcome New Members
 - Page 5 If Disaster Strikes
 - CPI-W/U—Inflation Talk
 - Page 6 FYI
 - TMTA Marketplace
 - 2009 Retirement Plan Limits
 - Page 7 Legislative Update
 - TMTA Endorsed Providers
 - Page 8 Members In the News
 - Rob's Roost
- (continued from page 1)

tmta Calendar of Events

November 2008

11	Veterans Day - Federal Holiday
19	TMTA Board of Directors meets at TMTA offices
20	MTMIC Board of Directors meets at TMTA offices
27-28	Thanksgiving Holiday - TMTA & MTMIC Offices Closed

Visit www.thetmta.com for detailed, up-to-date information on all events.



BCBSM Dependent Coverage for 19-25 Year Olds

The Blues is now handling dependent coverage for 19-25 year olds differently. In the past, when a qualified dependent turned 19, the subscriber was required to apply for a family continuation rider in order to maintain coverage for that dependent. Effective January 1, 2009, *a family continuation rider will automatically be added to a family contract for dependents that turned 19 in 2008.* A letter was sent directly to all affected subscribers as to this change.

To repeat: If your employee has a dependent that turned age 19 during the 2008 year, the dependent will no longer be automatically deleted, but will be automatically added onto the coverage as a family continuation at an increased rate amount unless you send in a dependent cancellation notice. You need to check your January BCBS billing carefully to insure that each employee's rate amount is correct. Remember, you only have 30 days from the date of the change to report it and that includes family continuation rider deletions.

If your group is a part of the TMTA/BCBS association sponsored group plan, you should have received a letter from TMTA along with a list of employees and dependents that turned 19 or 25 during 2008.

As always, dependents that are not eligible to remain on the employee's contract (those that turned age 25 during 2008 and those not being carried beyond age 19 as a family continuation rider) are eligible to sign up for individual coverage through BCBSM. If your company is required to offer COBRA coverage, dependents that are being removed must be given this option. Individual Blue coverage applications were included in our letter to you and are available by contacting our office.

The policy also remains the same that dependents turning 19 who are totally and permanently disabled by reason of physical or mental defect and are unmarried may remain on the contract without the addition of a family continuation rider as long as the total disability began before the dependent's 19th birthday and documentation of the disability is submitted within 31 days of the dependent's turning age 19.

If you have any questions about coverage for dependents or how COBRA applies to your group, please contact Elaine at TMTA at 248-488-0300 ext 1309.

Certification of Creditable (or Non-Creditable) Coverage Due November 14th

Reminder: One of the provisions of the federal Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 requires employers that provide prescription drug coverage to either active employees or retirees eligible for Medicare (part A or B) provide to those employees a Notice of Creditable (or Non-Creditable) Coverage no later than November 14th of each year.

BCBSM/BCN has determined whether each of their standard drug plans meets the creditable coverage standard. You can obtain this information from either BCBS directly or by contacting your insurance agent.

For more information or to obtain a Model Disclosure Notice that your company can give to your employees, visit www.cms.hhs.gov/creditablecoverage. If you still have any questions, contact TMTA's insurance agent, Dennis Campbell, at 248-488-0300.

BCBSM Announces Advantage Pricing

Effective January 1, 2009, when benefits are added to your BCBS medical coverage, premiums are reduced. Area-rated small group employers will receive up to a 4 percent reduction off their medical premiums if their BCBS health care coverage also includes BCBS prescription drug and/or dental plans.

Add prescription drugs to your BCBS medical plan and save 3%. Add dental to your BCBS medical plan and save 1%. Add both prescription drugs and dental to your BCBS medical plan and save 4%.

Consider this. Even if your company already has BCBS medical and prescription coverages, you can add the BCBS dental voluntary benefits plan, Blue Dental ChoiceSM, which has no group size or minimum participation requirements. This means your employees have the option of choosing premium dental coverage and paying discounted group rates using pretax dollars; and not only does it not cost you at all, but you'll receive an extra discount off your BCBS medical coverage premium rate at the same time.

You can give your employees an added benefit by also including Blue Vision ChoiceSM, BCBS's voluntary vision product. Again, there is no group size or minimum participation requirements and your employees can choose

to pay discounted rates with pretax dollars to add this important coverage at no cost to you.

For more information, contact TMTA's insurance agent, Dennis Campbell at 248-488-0300.

Lung Cancer Awareness

November is National Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer in both men and women in the U.S. causing more deaths than the next three most common cancers combined (colon, breast and prostate).

The expected 5-year survival rate for all patients in whom lung cancer is diagnosed is 16%, compared to 64.1% for colon, 88.5% for breast and 99.9% for prostate. The rate increases to 49% for cases detected while the disease is still localized; however, only 16% of lung cancer cases are diagnosed at an early stage. Approximately 6 out of 10 people with lung cancer will die within one year of being diagnosed.

Lung cancer typically does not cause symptoms in its earliest stages; they usually occur when the disease is advanced. Symptoms may include:

- A new cough that doesn't go away.
- Changes in a chronic cough or "smoker's cough".
- Coughing up blood, even a small amount.
- Shortness of breath.
- Chest pain—usually dull, aching and persistent.
- Wheezing.
- Hoarseness or voice quality changes.
- Repeated respiratory infections such as pneumonia.

Other indirect symptoms associated with lung cancer may include:

- Clubbing of fingers—the depositing of extra tissue under the fingernails.
- New bone formation—usually along the lower legs or arms.
- Inexplicable weakness, fatigue or fever.
- Weight loss and/or loss of appetite.
- Swallowing difficulties.
- Skin paleness or bluish coloration.
- Muscle contractions or atrophy.
- Facial or neck swelling or paralysis.
- Bone pain/tenderness.

Smoking accounts for 87% of lung cancer deaths and non-smokers have a 20-30% higher chance of developing lung cancer if they are exposed to secondhand smoke. Radon exposure is estimated to be the second leading

cause of lung cancer.

November 20th is the Great American Smokeout. The purpose of the event is to set aside a day to help smokers quit using tobacco products for at least one day, with the hope that they will quit completely.

There is a wide range of counseling services, self-help materials and medications available today to help smokers quit smoking for good. Tobacco addiction is both psychological and physical. For most people, the best way to quit will be some combination of medicine, a method to change personal habits, and emotional support.

It's never too late to quit smoking. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, here is a sample of health benefits over time with quitting:

- 20 minutes after quitting:** Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- 12 hours after quitting:** The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- 2 weeks to 3 months after quitting:** Your circulation improves and your lung function increases.
- 1 to 9 months after quitting:** Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (the tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) regain normal function in the lungs increasing the ability to handle mucus, cleaning the lungs and reducing the risk of infection.
- 1 year after quitting:** The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- 5 years after quitting:** Your stroke risk is reduced to that of a non-smoker 5-15 years after quitting.
- 10 years after quitting:** The lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix and pancreas is decreased.
- 15 years after quitting:** The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker's.

Smokers can get help quitting for good by contacting the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 and, if your group is a part of BlueHealthConnection, you can also enroll in BCBSM's 'Quit the Nic' program at 1-800-775-BLUE.



You're #1 to Us!

From time to time, we like to acknowledge and thank our long standing members for their support and participation in the TMTA and its programs.

- **Reska Spline**, Warren, member since 1941;
- **Schwartz Boring**, Warren, member since 1942;
- **Springfield Tool**, Greenville, SC, member since 1949;
- **Perch Machining**, Detroit, member since 1950;
- **Buckingham Tool**, Livonia, member since 1951;
- **Paramount Precision Products**, Oak Park, member since 1952;
- **Republic Die & Tool**, Belleville, member since 1959;
- **ThyssenKrupp Krause, Inc.**, Auburn Hills, member since 1959;
- **Composite Forgings**, Detroit, member since 1961;
- **Atlas Tool**, Roseville, member since 1962;
- **Rayco Welding**, Warren, member since 1963;
- **Hydro-Craft**, Rochester Hills, member since 1964;
- **Erie Engineering**, Troy, member since 1966;
- **Valiant Industries**, Sterling Hts., member since 1969;
- **Metro Machine Works**, Romulus, member since 1969;
- **Universal Cutting Tools, Inc.**, Warren, member since 1971;
- **Maro Precision Tool Co.**, Livonia, member since 1972;
- **JPT-Joint Production Technology**, Macomb, member since 1972;
- **Jolico/J.B. Tool Inc.**, Utica, member since 1972;
- **Hydra Lock Corp.**, Mt. Clemens, member since 1972;
- **Schwartz Precision Gear Co.**, Warren, member since 1972;
- **Conner Engineering Inc.**, Clinton Twp., member since 1972;
- **Schwartz Machine Co.**, Warren, member since 1973;
- **Easom Automated Systems**, Madison. Hts., member since 1973;
- **Dependable Gage & Tool**, Oak Park, member since 1973;
- **Hancock Enterprises**, Taylor, member since 1973;
- **Future Products Corp.**, Clawson, member since 1974; and
- **A.G. Davis/AA Gage & Engr.**, Sterling Hts., member since 1974.

TMTA's sincerest thanks and appreciation to these long-standing members for their continued loyalty through the years!

Avoid Legal Blunders in Pre-Employment Screening

When asking a job applicant and new employees for medical information, many companies run into trouble with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If a job requires a certain degree of physical labor, a pre-employment physical is needed to ensure that new hires can perform the job safely.

According to the HR LegalNews, here are six keys to staying out of court:

- Give the tests to all new hires for similarly situated positions;
- Only ask for a physical *after* a job offer has been made;
- In your written offers, mention they are contingent on successful completion of a medical exam;
- Make sure the results are confidential;
- Only test to make sure the employees can perform the *essential* functions of the job; and
- Put those requirements in your job description so applicants are aware of them beforehand.



We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following new member to the Tooling, Manufacturing & Technologies Association:

- ❖ **JBL Industries, Inc.** located in Shelby Twp., MI, they specialize in CNC machining.



Disasters of all types can threaten business and homes regardless of location. A community cannot survive a disaster unless businesses survive, and a business cannot survive unless its employees survive. Federated Insurance and IBHS offer you the peace of mind that these programs can improve the chances of avoiding costly repairs and increase the odds of staying in business should the worst happen.

To learn more, contact your Federated representative or visit www.federatedinsurance.com. Under Customer Links, select Open for Business® / Disaster Planning (businesses) or Disaster Safety (homes).

If Disaster Strikes, Will You Be Open for Business?

The ability of your business to deal with disasters is crucial not only to its future, but to the success of your community as well. How will your business react to the challenges that result from a tornado, fire, or flooding?

Federated Insurance is a member of the Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS), a national nonprofit group that works to reduce commercial and residential property losses associated with extreme weather events and natural disasters. As a result, many valuable resources relating to disaster and recovery planning are now available to TMTA members and their employees at no cost.

One exciting new program available through Federated is *Open for Business*®. This program—which IBHS values at \$2,000—contains a variety of tools designed to help small business owners not only reduce their potential for loss should disaster strike, but also reopen quickly should they be forced to close. *Open for Business*® walks you through a 13-piece continuity plan to help identify and resume essential business functions, protect people and property, minimize downtime, and retain clients and customers following a disaster. This program is available both online and in a print version.

Another great tool is available on a site called Disaster Safety. This site is designed to help protect the homes and personal assets of business owners, friends, family, and employees by creating awareness of the likely perils that can occur in a specific region. This site includes a ZIP Code tool designed to concentrate the efforts of homeowners in preparing for specific perils such as floods, freezing weather, hail, high winds, wildfires, and tornados. Resources like best practices, assessments, guides, and checklists are all available to help protect your homes during a disaster.

Inflation Talk

CPI-W Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers

Month	82–84	1967	57–59
Sept 2008	214.935	640.226	744.58*
August	215.247	641.155	745.66*
July	216.304	644.303	749.32*
June	215.223	641.082	745.57*
May	212.788	633.830	737.14*
Apr	210.698	627.606	729.90*
Mar	209.147	622.985	724.53*
Feb	207.254	617.345	717.97*

CPI-U All Urban Consumers

Month	82–84	1967	57–59
Sept 2008	218.783	655.376	762.19*
August	219.086	656.284	763.25*
July	219.964	658.915	766.31*
June	218.815	655.474	762.30*
May	216.632	648.933	754.70*
Apr	214.823	643.515	748.40*
Mar	213.528	639.636	743.88*
Feb	211.693	634.139	737.49*

Note: September 2008 CPI-W represents a 5.4% increase from one year ago; CPI-U a 4.9% increase.

* Base Year 1957–59 is no longer released. BLS has issued the following conversion factors from the 82–84 year:

CPI-W — .2886674 CPI-U — .2870447



2009 Annual Retirement Plan Limits Announced

Each year the IRS releases the cost-of living dollar limits as they relate to qualified retirement plans. It is important to stay up-to-date on these limits to ensure that your retirement plan is adhering to the IRS requirements.

Two surveys are enclosed with this issue of TMTA Talk. One is the **Annual Christmas/New Year's Holiday Schedule** and the second is the **First/Second Quarter 2009 Business Trends Survey**.

Please take a few moments to complete and fax these surveys back to TMTA at 248-488-0500 by Friday, November 28th. Results will be included in December's issue of TMTA Talk.

The **IRS has announced the Social Security Tax wage base** will increase from \$102,000 in 2008 to \$106,800 in 2009. The tax rate will remain the same with Social Security at 6.2% and Medicare at 1.45%. (The Medicare Tax wage base has no limit.)

Full retirement age for 2009 is 66 years. Persons currently receiving Social Security and Supplemental Security Income will receive a 5.8% cost-of-living increase beginning January 2009. The standard Medicare Part B monthly premium will remain at \$96.40 for 2009. The Part B deductible will remain at \$135 and the Part A deductible will increase to \$1,068 for 2009.

To access these tax limits and more at your fingertips, visit our website at www.thetmta.com. Mouse over the "Information/Networking" tab at the top and click on the "Company Forms & Information" button. Then go to "Tax Related Limits". Bookmark this page for future use. You can also highlight the areas you wish to print then click on "File"—"Print"—click the button to choose "Selection" under page range—"Print".



Personnel Available:

Program Administrator seeks position utilizing experience in leadership, problem solving, purchasing support and supplier management. A detail oriented, self starter with excellent communication skills and a track record of completing sensitive projects on time and within budget.

Ask for Resume #08-11.

Employee Pre-Tax Contribution Limit:

The maximum amount your employees can defer pre-tax in 401(k), 403(b) and 457 employee contributions (402(g) limit):

2008 - \$15,500 2009 - \$16,500

The maximum employee contribution to a Simple Plan (408(p)(2)(E) limit):

2008 - \$10,500 2009 - \$11,500

Catch-Up Contribution Limits:

The maximum additional contribution that employees age 50 and over may contribute after reaching the 401(k) annual contribution limit (414(v)(2)(B)(i) limit):

2008 - \$5,000 2009 - \$5,500

The maximum additional contribution that employees age 50 and over may contribute after reaching the Simple Plan limit (401(k)(11) or 408(p) limit):

2008 - \$2,500 2009 - \$2,500

Annual Compensation Limit:

The maximum compensation that can be counted for all compliance testing and contribution allocation purposes(401(a)(17), 404(l), 408(k)(3)(C), and 408(k)(6)(D)(ii) limit):

2008 - \$230,000 2009 - \$245,000

Defined Contribution 415 Limit:

The maximum dollar amount that an employee can have contributed to all qualified plans in both employee or employer contributions and forfeiture allocations(415(c)(1)(A) limit):

2008 - \$46,000 2009 - \$49,000

Highly Compensated Employee Limit:

The threshold limit for defining who is a Highly Compensated employee as defined by IRS regulations (414(q)(1)(B) limit):

2008 - \$105,000 2009 - \$110,000

Freedom One is the TMTA endorsed service provider for member 401(k) retirement plans. Contact Lesley Goodwin at (248) 620-8100 for more information.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By JUDY AUGENSTEIN,
LEGISLATIVE CONSULTANT, LANSING

If you could save six cents on every dollar you spend on gasoline, would you take it?

But would you still take it if the trade off included a one penny sales tax increase?

That is one of the ideas being floated as a special task force considers new funding alternatives for Michigan's road infrastructure. Senator Jud Gilbert (R-Algonac), Chair, Senate Transportation Committee, supports investigating the tax tradeoff proposal. "If this idea got beyond the talking stage, it would include holding a special election next year to get voter approval." For somebody paying \$60 for a fill up, the savings would be \$3.60. To that, the Algonac Senator said, "I think it's very attractive taking the sales tax off gasoline...it has great curbside appeal."

Replacing the gasoline tax with a special sales tax addition could mean a loss of state dollars for the schools and revenue sharing to local governments, money that conceivably would need to be made up. Gilbert has told the special interest groups the touchy part is selling it to the voting public. He conceded that it is "probably easier to get a yes vote" during a special election.

A one cent sales tax hike would generate just over \$1 billion, but road building interests claim the state needs at least \$3 billion, at a minimum, to keep up with repairs. So in addition to the sales tax, there could be a hike in driver's registration fees, as well. Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) has been briefed on the concept and wants to learn more. Bishop wants to see cost efficiencies squeezed out of the system before he will pitch any kind of a revenue raising scheme to the Republican caucus.

Another plan is to scrap the 19 cent gas tax and replace it with a percentage tax on fuel sales. Some road interests feel that the advantage of a percentage fee would be it would ebb and flow with the price of gas. It would build an automatic inflationary increase as the price of gas goes up. That is something that the road lobby has wanted for years, but has never been able to achieve.

The road special interests are working behind the scenes to stage a lame duck vote on the funding issue to take advantage of the 44 term limited House members who have nothing to lose by voting for a new revenue enhancement package after the election.

TMTA Endorsed Service Providers

Manufacturing Technology Mutual Insurance Company (MTMIC)

(workers' compensation program)

Provider contact:

Gary Wood 248-488-1172 ext. 1316

Reliance Standard/Ameritas

(life/dental insurance programs)

TMTA contacts:

Dennis Campbell 248-488-0300 ext. 1313

Stella Krupansky 248-488-0300 ext. 1310

Blue Cross Blue Shield/BCN

(health insurance program)

TMTA contacts:

Dennis Campbell 248-488-0300 ext. 1313

Elaine Burger-Laskosky 248-488-0300 ext. 1309

Federated Insurance

(property & casualty insurance program)

Provider contact:

John Medo 800-428-4143

Freedom One Financial Group

(401(k) retirement program)

Provider contact:

Lesley Goodwin 248-620-8100

John M. Packer & Associates

(unemployment cost control program)

Provider contact:

Nathan Wiest 800-482-2971

Custom Telecom

(phone/communications programs)

Provider contact:

Kathy Schaumburger 866-332-1200

Schena Roofing & Sheet Metal Co., Inc.

(commercial/industrial roofing contractor)

Provider contact:

586-949-4777

TMTA receives a benefit from its Endorsed Providers when you, as a member, patronize them. This is one way we are able to maintain the level of dues.

TMTA MEMBERS IN THE NEWS



Rich Seleno, president of **Husky Precision Machining**, announced the addition of a bridge type vertical machining center to its plant. The machine is a VIPER-PRO3210 with a 7 ft x 10 ft work envelope.

"We feel it is a good time to invest in the future and expand our capabilities even though the economy is soft" stated Seleno. Husky's General Manager Ron Bryce, a 25 year veteran of the machine tool trade said, "This machine will enable us to support our customers large format machining needs at a price that is competitive with aggressive schedules".

Husky Precision Machining is located in Roseville, Michigan and employs 20 people. Husky offers a variety of precision machining services including boring mill, CNC milling, CNC lathe, milling and grinding. Husky was the recipient of the Crain's 2006 Small Business Award.

Contact Jeff McCormack (Sales Manager) for information or visit their website at www.huskymachine.com.

*Best Wishes
for a
Happy Thanksgiving
From the Staff at TMTA!*

(Rob's Roost continued from Page 1)

important topic of our Bankruptcy law and the interaction it has with State Lien Act legislation. The location will be determined in large part upon the numbers responding that they will attend. We are, through the generosity of members of the Strobl Sharpe law firm, able to offer this seminar free of charge. It will be an opportunity to get up to date on changes and developments in the law and get you positioned to have the advantage of legal provisions available to assist and protect your interests in the event that a customer of yours acquires the legal status of a bankrupt. We will get details out on location in the near future and post that information on our website as well. Starting time will be 8:30 a.m.

As I write this I am looking forward to much less negative commentary on and in the media as the elections will within a few days be relegated to the pages of history. I must say that while the experts opine that negative advertising works, I find it at once unfortunate and somewhat offensive. Just a personal observation but it seems to me that a candidate would have greater credibility if she/he were to focus on their own strengths and views rather than digging up dirt on an opponent.

My votes have been submitted as I, by the passage of time, am entitled to vote by absentee ballot. Some have enquired as to how I voted and I responded, as I always do "by secret ballot"! I do hope you exercised your franchise and voted as you like.

Have a great Thanksgiving!

tmta talk

TMTA TALK is a publication of the
Tooling, Manufacturing & Technologies Association

P.O. Box 9151 Phone (248) 488-0300
Farmington Hills, MI 48333 Fax (248) 488-0500
www.thetmta.com

President and CEO — Robert J. Dumont
Copy Editor, Layout/Design — Elaine F. Burger-Laskosky

TMTA TALK is distributed free to all TMTA members.
Copyright © 2007 Tooling, Mfg. & Tech. Assoc. All Rights Reserved

Deadline for submission of news, articles, letters, cartoons
and Marketplace items is the 15th of each month.
Send/Fax to TMTA, Attention: TMTA Talk Editor.