



Each month, we recognize one of the region's top manufacturing events or companies with the aid of NEPIRC, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center. Since 1988, NEPIRC has been working with manufacturers to improve their productivity, profitability, competitiveness and long-term viability through consultative services.



NEPIRC Brings "What's So Cool About Manufacturing?" To Northeastern Pennsylvania

The "What's So Cool About Manufacturing?" initiative gives 8th graders from schools within Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties the opportunity to connect directly with local manufacturers, document their experiences and present them in an educational and "cool" way through video and social media.

The program capitalizes on the latest trend in talent-based TV shows – online viewer voting – to get thousands of other youngsters in on the excitement.

The contest was created to modernize the image of manufacturing and encourage students to consider manufacturing career paths. In its first year, NEPIRC's contest fielded 13 middle school teams, each partnered with a host manufacturer. Outfitted with a GoPro camera, a faculty coach, curiosity and creativity, each team toured its host manufacturer's facility,



Students from Wyoming Valley West school district visit Pride Mobility Products in Duryea.

interviewed employees and explored the company's products and processes. Teams later edited their footage and translated what they found to be "cool" about that company into a



Students from Mid Valley school district visit Kingdom Products in Throop.

short video. Other students, faculty, parents and citizens throughout the region then place online "votes" for their favorite videos using methods akin to many of today's "idol" and "voice" television shows.

"We are very excited to launch our first What's So Cool About Manufacturing? competition in our region," said Eric Joseph Esoda, NEPIRC's President/CEO. "The program's success is spreading across the state and around the country because it promotes STEM education, updates the image of manufacturing and creates a new understanding of opportunities within Pennsylvania's largest industry. We are very

grateful to our schools, regional manufacturers and partners for helping make this program a success."

Student video submissions will be posted on the "What's So Cool About Manufacturing?" website – www.WhatsSoCool.org. Videos will become open to the public for Viewer's Choice Award voting in mid-March. Judges will determine winning videos in a variety of other categories as well. At the end of March, students, parents, educators, manufacturing leaders, community sponsors, local legislators and project partners will gather for an award ceremony to acknowledge winning teams at Lackawanna College, a major sponsor of the program.

Visit www.WhatsSoCool.org for more information and resources.

This feature is sponsored by...

