

# Keeping Jobs In North America

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Whenever I've been asked to go to a trade show or conference, I have always kept one thought in mind: "What will I learn that will help keep manufacturing jobs thriving here in North America?" My attendance at the PMPA's National Technical Conference helped me understand that despite the many challenges our industry faces, we have a lot to be optimistic about in the precision machining industry.

It's about the people. If we are concerned about keeping the manufacturing jobs filled in North America, the question of "Who are the people in those jobs?" comes instantly to mind. At this year's conference, 95 first-time attendees—mostly experienced machinists—were attending their first professional conference.

These craftsmen were identified by their companies as having the capability to benefit from the lessons available and also having the potential to help implement

those lessons learned back at the shop. The people I met attending this conference make me optimistic about our industry's future.

What about the technology? The attendees and the exhibitors come to a technical conference to learn about and exhibit the best available and newest technologies. The goal for attendees is to find that "killer application" and bring it back to the shop to make their operation more productive, more capable and, in the end, more profitable. That's how we will keep manufacturing jobs in North America—by improving our competitiveness one shop at a time.

New developments in gaging technology that debuted at this year's conference included a novel straightness gaging system that makes possible multiple direct readings over a long aspect ratio part. Another new optical gage also enabled instantaneous computerized capture of multiple measurements and relationship of features on complex parts. That these gages were made by precision machine shops for precision machine shops here in North America also inspires optimism for our industry's future.

At the after-hours open house at Index Machine in Noblesville, Indiana, attendees were able to see world-class machinery in operation and various stages of proof run. We were fascinated by the vision of two CNC multi-spindle machines integrated by a gantry robot shuttling work between them.

What will they be doing? The National Technical Conference sessions delivered a lot of material on the subject of "Dealing With Change" as people, as companies, as employees and as managers. The material covering the topic of change and change management featured prominently in the program, from the keynote session through the many individual sessions.

The fact that the sessions covering the topic of management of change were well-attended bodes well for the companies that sent employees and managers. And, it bodes well for the competitiveness of our industry.

Sustainability has made it to the top of everybody's short list. The "Going Green, Saving Green" session gave many attendees their first "I can do this" peek at this critical area. Presented as a key to profitability rather than politics, this session received high marks. Its lesson: Attendees are "surrounded by opportunities to save money through becoming more environmentally responsible."

New ways to look at our machining processes. Getting better uptime



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## Recent PMPA Listserve Topics

PMPA members use e-mail Listserves to share ideas, solve problems, sell excess material and equipment, and learn about new business opportunities. Here is a list of topics that were recently discussed:

- Customer confidentiality
- OSHA inspections
- Government red tape
- UPS shipments and minimum insurance
- R & D tax credit
- PMPA training classes
- FMEA training
- Open machine time
- Business disaster
- Moving costs
- Vacation pay
- Lock-down policy
- Medical insurance
- Pre-employment tests
- ISO-9001: 2008
- Millipore testing
- PPAPs
- Mfg.com
- Excel Import to Outlook
- AntiVirus software
- Remote desktop printing
- Full hard brass
- Acme back finish attachments
- Grinding burns test
- Oil refining for universal use
- Deep hole drilling
- Looking for solvent
- Constant chipping of taps
- Davenport roll thread link
- 4130 material
- 410 SS 1/2" hex stock
- Material spec
- Recess tool
- TIR on a Swiss machine
- Copper C110 machinability
- Looking for 47/64" Ledloy

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## Keeping Jobs continued

on our machines through the better understanding of tools and predicting their failure modes taught all attendees how to be more competitive. Getting better productivity by applying radical new drill technologies is another lesson they learned.

A session on understanding our processes through statistically based capability studies gave one more way for attendees to have more confidence in their processes and their products.

Precision machining shops face a host of global challenges. Currency issues, trade, materials availability, energy and sustainability are only a few of the barriers we all face in trying to keep manufacturing jobs thriving in North America.

But the prospects for manufacturing in North America are looking bright based on the people, technologies and techniques that were presented at the conference this year. "Pole Position For Peak Performance" was the theme of the conference, and that theme might well be the forecast for our North American precision machining industry in the years ahead.

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## PMPA Calendar

Below is the calendar of upcoming conferences and events scheduled for the 2008-2009 program year. For the latest district/chapter meeting information, please view the Calendar of Events at [www.pmpa.org/calendar/](http://www.pmpa.org/calendar/). If you have questions about PMPA conferences or regional meetings, please contact Rob Kiener, director of marketing and communications, at (440) 526-0300 or [rkiener@pmpa.org](mailto:rkiener@pmpa.org).

PMPA Annual Meeting  
75th Anniversary Celebration  
October 17-21, 2008  
Waikoloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa  
Waikoloa "The Big Island," Hawaii

PMPA Management Update  
Conference  
February 26-28, 2009  
The Westin Tampa Harbour Island  
Tampa, Florida