CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM

WHY?

The 2025 South Dakota Manufacturers Register lists **1,469 manufacturers** in the state. These companies collectively employ tens of thousands of workers and contribute significantly to the state's economy. But the manufacturer's biggest struggle is to **find technical talent**, which will continue to have broad economic implications. Many students are unaware of the variety of high-paying careers available in the manufacturing sector.

WHAT?

The **What's So Cool About Manufacturing® (WSCM) career exploration program** is a project-based, real-world learning experience for middle school student teams. The program is executed as a video competition where 7th and 8th grade student teams are paired with a local or regional manufacturer. Through collaboration and media training, **each student team creates a video that highlights careers and technology at their partnered manufacturer**. The program culminates with online voting by the public and an "Emmy-like" Awards event to increase awareness about exciting career opportunities at manufacturers in the community.

WHO?

We're **looking for manufacturing companies** that would like to embrace the opportunity and invest in the future of manufacturing. We are also **looking for schools** to invest in the future of their students by helping them to explore the world of manufacturing through a fun, activity-based program.

South Dakota Manufacturing & Technology Solutions
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To learn more, contact **Angela Allen** | 605-770-3049
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Manufacturers Resource Center created the What's So Cool About Manufacturing® (WSCM) career awareness program to help **build a strong pipeline of technical talent** and give students a new perspective on **exciting STEM career opportunities** that exist at area manufacturing companies.

The WSCM Program is implemented as a student video contest. Student Teams compete by creating short media stories featuring accurate images of today's manufacturing and promoting their video to peers, parents, educators, and the community. The contest culminates with public online voting and an Awards Event.

WHAT'S SO COOL ABOUT MANUFACTURING?™

"What's So Cool allowed us to explore cool manufacturing careers and learn to use many types of technology to help film our video."

- WSCM Student

BENEFITS & OPPORTUNITIES

- **Project-based, real-world experience for students**
- **Provides media equipment for school ownership**
- **Offers teacher professional development and externships with manufacturers, fostering collaboration between the two**
- **Allows students to share career opportunities with peers through video messages, developing storytelling and communication skills**
- **Exposes and immerses students in media & marketing**
- **Provides insight into manufacturing careers**
- **Generates media coverage, enhancing school profile**
- **Engages entire school community, boosting morale**
- **Aligns with academic standards**