

June 1, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Minnesota Manufacturing Associations Launch Statewide Bus Tour Fund Campaign to Inspire the Next Generation Workforce

**Donations Will Help Schools Across Minnesota Participate in October's Tour of Manufacturing Month**

**Minnesota** – Manufacturing associations from across Minnesota have joined forces to launch the **2026 Minnesota Manufacturing Bus Tour Fund Campaign**, a statewide effort to remove transportation barriers and ensure students have access to firsthand manufacturing career exploration opportunities during **Tour of Manufacturing Month** this October.

The campaign, running **June 1 through August 28, 2026**, seeks to raise funds that will be distributed to schools throughout Minnesota to help cover transportation costs associated with student tours of local manufacturing facilities.

Participating organizations include:

- Arrowhead Manufacturers & Fabricators Association (AMFA)
- Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association (CMMA)
- HWY2W Manufacturers Association (HWY2W)
- Lakes Area Manufacturers Alliance (LAMA)
- Minn-Dak Manufacturers Association (MDMA)
- Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association (MPMA)
- Tri-State Manufacturers' Association (TSMA)

Every October, manufacturers across Minnesota open their doors to students, educators, parents, and community members through the annual **Tour of Manufacturing Month** initiative. These tours provide a unique opportunity for students to experience modern manufacturing environments, interact with industry professionals, and learn about high-demand, high-wage career pathways available in their own communities.

Unfortunately, transportation costs often prevent schools from participating.

"Transportation should never be a barrier to opportunity," said Lynda Bailey, Executive Director of the Midwest Manufacturers Association. "We know that when students step inside a manufacturing facility, it changes perceptions and opens minds. This campaign ensures more students, regardless of location or school resources, have access to those life-changing experiences."

## **The Impact is Real**

The Tour of Manufacturing continues to demonstrate measurable results:

- **8 out of 10 students** report that manufacturing tours inspire them to learn more about manufacturing careers.
- More than **250 manufacturers** across Minnesota participate annually.
- Over **10,000 students** tour manufacturing facilities each year.
- One tour experience can spark curiosity, build confidence, and create a pathway toward a rewarding career.

Funds raised through the Bus Tour Fund Campaign will be pooled and distributed to participating regions and schools throughout Minnesota to help offset bus transportation expenses and increase student participation.

### **Investing in Minnesota's Future Workforce**

Minnesota manufacturers continue to face workforce shortages while offering thousands of rewarding careers in areas such as welding, machining, engineering, robotics, automation, quality assurance, logistics, and skilled trades.

By supporting the Bus Tour Fund, donors are helping students:

- Explore career opportunities available close to home
- Connect classroom learning to real-world applications
- Discover post-secondary pathways and apprenticeship opportunities
- Build awareness of Minnesota's thriving manufacturing industry

### **Sponsorship Opportunities Available**

Businesses, organizations, foundations, and individuals are encouraged to contribute to the campaign. Sponsors will be recognized through statewide Tour of Manufacturing promotional materials, social media campaigns, press releases, and participating association communications.

"Every donation helps open doors to opportunity," Bailey added. "Together, we can inspire the next generation of manufacturers and strengthen Minnesota's workforce pipeline for years to come."

### **How to Donate**

Donations are being accepted through August 28, 2026. Individuals, businesses, industry partners, and community supporters interested in contributing to the Minnesota Manufacturing Bus Tour Fund are encouraged to contact their local manufacturing association or visit campaign resources for donation information.

### **About Tour of Manufacturing Month**

Tour of Manufacturing Month is a statewide initiative held each October that connects students, educators, parents, job seekers, and community members with Minnesota manufacturers through facility tours, career exploration experiences, and workforce engagement activities. The program showcases the innovation, technology, and career opportunities available throughout Minnesota's manufacturing sector.

#### **Media Contact:**

Lynda Bailey, Executive Director  
Midwest Manufacturers Association (MMA)  
On behalf of AMFA, CMMA, Hwy2W, LAMA, MDMA, MPMA, and TSMA  
Email: [lynda@midwestmanufacturers.com](mailto:lynda@midwestmanufacturers.com)  
Phone: 800-654-5773

**Campaign Dates:** June 1 – August 28, 2026

**Tour of Manufacturing Month:** October 2026

**Invest in Curiosity. Inspire Possibilities. Strengthen Minnesota. Join us in opening doors to the future.**