

INSIDE THE JOB MARKET



Charleigh Pulley 12, looks at a "lava lamp" she made using cooking oil, water and food dye during Hoosac Valley Middle School's annual STEAM Night last March. Flying Cloud will conduct a STEAM Challenge Night at the Berkshire Museum on Oct. 22, just one of many STEM and Manufacturing Month activities.

GILLIAN HECK — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

Fall into opportunity: Celebrating STEM and manufacturing in the Berkshires

October shines a spotlight on STEM and Manufacturing Month — two areas that are essential to the Berkshires' future.

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Autumn is my favorite time of year in the Berkshires! The crisp air, colorful leaves, glowing bonfires, football games and outdoor activities make this season special — and, of course, there are those delicious apple cider doughnuts from our local farm stands.

Fall is also a great time to celebrate the many workforce opportunities happening across Berkshire County. October shines a spotlight on Science, Technology, engineering and math (STEM) and Manufacturing Month — two areas that are essential to our region's future.

Statewide STEM Week: Oct. 19–23

Did you know that six of the top 10 jobs in the nation are STEM-related? Here in Massachusetts, more than 40 percent of employment is connected to innovation industries, including clean energy, information technology, defense and advanced manufacturing. The Berkshires are home to more than 50 companies in these industries, creating exciting opportunities for workers of all ages.

The Healey-Driscoll administration has designated Oct. 19–23 as Massachusetts STEM Week, encouraging educators, students, businesses and community organizations to celebrate STEM through hands-on learning, lessons, demonstrations and events. This year's

theme, “STEM Starts Now,” reminds us that it’s never too early — or too late — to explore STEM.

There is plenty happening throughout the Berkshires, including:

- STEM exploration at MCLA with students from Abbott, Clarksburg and Hoosac Valley schools
- A “Launching into STEM Week” planetarium show and owl-banding demonstration at Hopkins Observatory in Williamstown
- “Nature Unleashed” homeschool days at the Berkshire Museum
- An Introduction to Rocketry program with David Doyle at the Berkshire Innovation Center
- An uncharted wild animal demonstration at MCLA’s Center for Science & Innovation



An owl-banding demonstration will be held at Hopkins Observatory in Williamstown as part of a "Launching into STEM Week" activity. STEPHANIE ZOLLSHAN — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

- Flying Cloud’s STEAM Challenge Night at the Berkshire Museum on Oct. 22
- Company tours at Boyd and other high-tech businesses for area high school students

And that’s just the beginning! Visit [Mass.gov/STEM](https://www.mass.gov/stem) to learn more about STEM Week activities.

MassHire is proud to be part of the Berkshire STEM Network, with MCLA serving as its backbone. The network brings together educators, community leaders and industry partners to help students discover the many educational and career opportunities available in STEM — right here in the Berkshires.

October is Manufacturing Month

Manufacturing has deep roots in Berkshire County. Beginning with mills powered by our region’s rivers and streams in the 1800s, manufacturing has evolved into a highly technical and innovative industry that remains an important part of our local economy.

Today, Berkshire County is home to more than 60 manufacturers, making manufacturing the region’s fifth-largest employment sector, with more than 4,500 local residents working in the industry. And the jobs are changing. Modern manufacturing relies on technology, problem-solving, creativity and skilled technicians.

Forget the old image of the factory assembly line — today's manufacturing careers can involve advanced machinery, engineering, robotics, design, technology and quality control. Skilled technicians can earn competitive wages while building products that reach customers locally, nationally and around the world.

Our local manufacturers produce an incredible range of products, including armored vehicles, specialty paper and laminates, submarine turbines, specialty glass, medical plastics, surgical training models, high-end pet food, violins, veterinary ventilator equipment and national defense products. The diversity is remarkable — and there are many more stories to tell.

Manufacturing also has a significant economic impact. For every dollar spent on manufacturing, another \$1.89 is added to the economy, and each manufacturing job supports additional employment throughout the Berkshires.

Building the Workforce of Tomorrow

The good news is that there are many pathways into advanced manufacturing and other STEM-related careers. The Berkshire Workforce Board connects residents with certificate and degree programs through Berkshire Community College, McCann Technical School, Pittsfield Public Schools and the Berkshire Innovation Center. The MassHire Berkshire Career Center can also connect qualified job seekers with on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities.

Whether you are a student discovering STEM for the first time, an adult considering a career change or an employer looking for skilled talent, there are opportunities to explore. This October, let's celebrate the people, businesses, educators and organizations helping build the Berkshires' workforce — and remember that STEM starts now, and advanced manufacturing is alive and well in Berkshire County.

For more information about workforce training, career opportunities and local programs, visit MassHireBerkshire.com and follow the #BerkshireWorkforceBoard on social media.

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