

FLATE FOCUS

May 2026



Congratulations to the 2026 FLATE Distinguished Manufacturing Education Award Winners!

FLATE's annual awards recognize educators and industry colleagues who have stepped beyond their call of duty to promote excellence in manufacturing-related education and training on a regional and/or statewide level.

FLATE, FloridaMakes and FAITE (Florida Association for Industrial and Technical Educators) are pleased to announce the 2026 Winners!

- Distinguished Manufacturing Secondary Educator of the Year:
Theresa Waller, Electricity Program Planner & High School Instructor | Charlotte Technical College, Port Charlotte, FL
- Distinguished Manufacturing Post Secondary Educator of the Year:
Mayra Socarras, Associate Professor of Semiconductor Engineering Technology | Valencia College, Orlando, FL
- Distinguished Manufacturing Partner Service Award:
Carrie Meyers, Director of Education and Workforce Talent | Florida State University InSPIRE, Tallahassee, FL

Awardees were selected from a distinguished pool of nominations submitted from across the state and were judged by an awards committee comprised of industry representatives, FAITE board members, past awardees, and members of the FloridaMakes Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Leadership Committee (AMWLC).

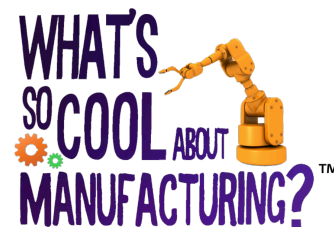
FLATE will highlight each winner individually in our June FLATE Focus newsletter.

For more information, visit FLATE.org/Awards.

What's So Cool About Manufacturing® Video Contest

On April 17, 2026, FLATE, in partnership with the South Florida Manufacturers Association (SFMA), part of the FloridaMakes network, proudly celebrated the first ever "What's So Cool About Manufacturing® South Florida" student video contest Red Carpet Awards Ceremony.

This milestone event marked the culmination of months of dedication, creativity, and collaboration. Middle school students from Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach counties stepped into the world of manufacturing storytelling—showcasing real companies, real careers, and real impact—while being guided and encouraged every step of the way by committed teacher-mentors and local manufacturers who generously shared their time, expertise, and passion for the field. Their videos were



shared across their communities — a total of 8,531 votes were cast for the Viewers Choice Award!

Congratulations to all participating teams:

- Bak MS – Scientific Instruments (Sicryo) (**Outstanding Educational Value Winner**), Coached by Shannon Owens
- Pompano Beach – Vector Climate (**Outstanding Overall Program Winner**), Coached by Orlando Morales
- Christa McAuliffe MS – Baker Hill Industries Inc. (**Career Pathway Award Winner**), Coached by Liz Laishley
- Hammocks MS – Costa Farms (**Viewers Choice Award Winner**), Coached by Lois Seaman,
- Palm Springs – WeeDoo Green Boat, Coached by Tara Simone McAlonan
- Attucks MS – Decimal Engineering Inc., Coached by Joseph Wells
- Millennium – CTS Engineering, Coached by Antonio Lee
- Arthur & Polly Mays Conservatory of the Arts – Mr. Glass Doors & Windows Manufacturing, Coached by Dr. Eric Martinez
- South Miami Middle – Miami Growth Machine, Coached by Alexander Gonzalez and Abraham Camayd

The WSCM videos can be viewed at <https://fl-ate.org/whatssocool/>.



[Read full article](#)

Building Talent Pipelines Through Education–Industry Apprenticeship Collaboration

In recognition of National Apprenticeship Week (April 26-May 2, 2026), the FloridaMakes Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Leadership Council (AMWLC) hosted a dynamic panel highlighting how registered apprenticeship programs are strengthening Florida’s manufacturing workforce.

A panel of industry and education leaders shared practical strategies for building sustainable talent pipelines and improving retention as well as closing critical skills gaps by aligning curriculum with workforce needs. The discussion demonstrated how apprenticeship programs are helping create a more resilient and future-ready manufacturing workforce across Florida. [Click here to watch the Panel Discussion.](#)

THE APPRENTICESHIP ADVANTAGE
Building a Sustainable Future
Manufacturing Workforce

Ken Patten, Manufacturing Director
BAUSCH + LOMB



Tim McKindles, Director

Ecological Laboratories



Art Houlik, VP and General Manager

KNIGHT'S
MANUFACTURING



Lea Tavani, Human Resources Director

MACK
TECHNOLOGIES



Daniel Rivera-PSC-Director, Program Development

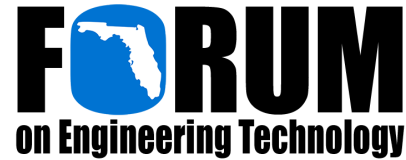
POLK STATE
COLLEGE



Learn more about apprenticeships

Spring 2026 ET Forum Update

The statewide Forum on Engineering Technology (ET) was held April 16–17, 2026 at Daytona State College, Florida. The program featured timely sessions on *AI for Educators* led by NCyTE, as well as updates and engagement opportunities from FAME USA, AMI, and ASME industry partners, highlighting emerging manufacturing trends. In addition, the Florida Department of Education and ET Forum leadership provided key updates on new ASET specialization pathways and statewide program developments. Together, these sessions offered practical insights, resources, and connections to strengthen both new and experienced faculty.



The ET Forum serves as a model for other disciplines and career clusters in Florida and for technical programs in other states. For more information about the Forum or the A.S. ET degree, visit [FLATE ET Forum](#).

Read full article

Cooler Things Made in Florida Contest

Nominate a Florida Manufacturer Now!

The **Cooler Things Made in Florida** competition is back for its second year—celebrating the innovation, talent, and economic impact of products made right here in our state.

Last year's competition generated strong statewide engagement, and in 2026, the goal is to have participation from all 67 counties. From aerospace and aviation to ag tech, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and more—if it's made in Florida, you can nominate it!



Whether you manufacture a product in Florida or know a company that does, we encourage you to nominate and help spread the word across your network.

As part of the Florida Chamber's [Florida 2030 Blueprint](#), this initiative supports our goal of making Florida a **Top 5 state for manufacturing jobs by 2030**.

Nominations Open until May 31, 2026

Events & Workshops

AMTEC Institute for Industry 4.0 Innovation Virtual Trainings May 14 & June 9, 2026

The Advanced Manufacturing Technical Education Collaborative (AMTEC) Institute for Industry 4.0 Innovation (AI3) project (NSF DUE 2350012) provides professional development opportunities to high school, 2-year technical college, and 4-year university

faculty that teach manufacturing related courses in the United States. These virtual sessions provide monthly opportunities to engage with peers, industry partners, and national experts.



- **May 14 at 12pm CT – Joint Community of Practice Session with the National Center for Next Generation Manufacturing and the National Applied Artificial Intelligence Consortium - National Insights on the Future of Manufacturing and AI**
- **June 9 at 11am CT – Innovating in Engineering and Welding Education - Unlock High-Value Tools for Welding & Engineering Labs**

[Learn more & Register](#)

AMTEC Institute for Industry 4.0 Innovation In-Person Educator Trainings May 19-20, June 16-17, Oct 6-7 | Owensboro, KY

AMTEC's in-person 2-day workshop offers hands-on training in Industry 4.0 technologies that instructors can bring back to their classrooms. For high school, technical college, and university faculty teaching advanced manufacturing and related courses. Click on flyer for full details. **Travel assistance and stipends** are available for instructors who meet program requirements.



[Learn more & Register](#)

2026 FAME National Conference May 12-14, 2026 | Jacksonville, FL

FAME is the New American Model of Manufacturing Skills Training. From its inception with Toyota to its evolution into The Manufacturing Institute in 2019, FAME has expanded across the nation, supported by nearly 450 esteemed manufacturers. The program provides an unparalleled apprenticeship-style training program where participants earn while they learn, gaining top-tier technical expertise by integrating core manufacturing competencies, professional practices, and authentic hands-on experience. **There is currently a chapter in Florida at Daytona State College. Considering a chapter in your region? The national conference is an opportunity to learn more and collaborate with leaders from across the FAME network.**



[Learn more & Register](#)

STEM Educator In-Person Solar Institute (FREE) July 7-9, 2026 - Madison, WI

Funded by the CREATE Energy NSF ATE National Center, the institute is designed to build educator confidence and content knowledge in solar energy, system performance, and energy careers. Lessons are aligned for classroom use and adaptable across middle

school, high school, and introductory college-level STEM courses. The Solar Institute Includes:

- Hotel for two nights.
- **\$600 Stipend** paid to each participant upon completion of the institute
- **Equipment awards valued at up to \$1200** available to each participant funded by the CREATE Energy NSF ATE National Center

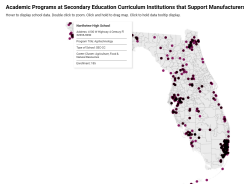
To apply



Register by June 4 for Early Bird Rate

Resources

FLATE's Manufacturing Matters Dashboard



A tool highlighting manufacturing education, careers, industry, and their impact on Florida's economy. Search for manufacturing education programs across the state, narrow to a particular skill. Students can find a program to enter; Manufacturers can find employees with hands-on training.

Manufacturing Matters Dashboard

FLATE Webinar Series - Watch on Demand

- Insights into the Workforce of the Future (2025)
- AI & Machine Learning Workshops (2025)
- Data Analytics in Manufacturing (2024)
- Necessary Skills Now: Resources for Integrating Employability Skills into Technical Programs (2024)
- Edge Computing: A Feasible & Integrated Approach to Collecting System Data
- A Universal Programming Approach for any make of Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs)
- Best Practices for your CNC Course or Program
- Overview of AI in Manufacturing



- Overview of Teaching PLCs
- Leveraging an Open Lab to Provide Greater Access for Students in your Manufacturing Program
- Developing Local Articulations to Increase Enrollment in College Programs
- How to Create Work-based Learning Opportunities
- Recruiting Strategies Best Practices
- Robots for AI and Industry 4.0 Training and Demo
- Creating Videos using Classroom Projects and Student Success Stories
- How to Increase Student Diversity in ET Programs
- How to Develop ET Dual Enrollment or Early College Programs
- Cybersecurity for Manufacturing Series (4-part)

View Webinars on Demand



flate.org



[FLATE wiki](http://FLATE.wiki)



madeinflorida.org

Florida Department of Education Resources



Florida's Workforce Education Initiative

With Career, Technical and Adult Education (CTAE), you can train for a better career quickly and affordably.



Apprenticeship programs are a proven training method benefiting job seekers and businesses.

Check Out Our Previous Newsletters:

[April 2026 Focus](#) | [March 2026 Focus](#) | [Jan/Feb 2026 Focus](#) | [Newsletter Archive](#)

FLATE | 201 E. Pine Street Suite 735 | Orlando, FL 32801 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!