



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 6, 2023
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**APEX, the Lake Superior Perkins Consortium and DEED Coordinated Regional
Manufacturing Tours for Regional High School Students**

Duluth, MN: The Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX), the Lake Superior Perkins Consortium and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) arranged tours of regional manufacturing facilities for approximately 336 high school students on October 4–5, 2023, in recognition of Minnesota Manufacturing Month. Students from 11 school districts covering Moose Lake to Two Harbors, including Fond du Lac, had the opportunity to explore 13 companies in Duluth, Superior, Two Harbors and Chisholm. A total of 38 tours were conducted.

“The best way to understand the regional manufacturing industry and the career opportunities it holds is first-hand experience and exposure,” said Rachel Johnson, APEX President and CEO. “APEX understands that workforce development begins far sooner than when someone lands their first job. The tours were an informative and fun way to connect the region’s next generation of manufacturing professionals with locally-based manufacturers.”

The manufacturing tours were educational and transformative experiences that allowed students to see the variety of skilled and lucrative manufacturing careers close to home. Students had the opportunity to connect with potential manufacturing employers, and in turn, employers began promoting their companies to the future workforce. These mutually beneficial experiences have proven results, with many students from previous tours being hired on as interns or full-time employees.

APEX thanks the Minnesota State Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence’s Transportation Grant and the Lake Superior Perkins Consortium for covering the tour expenses, enabling the tours to happen.

Manufacturing companies that participated in the tours included APEX investor-members:

- [Altec, Inc.](#)
- [Barko Hydraulics](#)
- [Cirrus Aircraft](#)
- [Exodus Global](#)
- [GPM, Inc.](#)

and other area manufacturing leaders:

- BendTec, LLC
- Lost Forty Studios
- Frost River
- IPS Cranes
- Stanley LaBounty
- LP Building Solutions
- SCS Interiors
- ME Global

To learn more or participate in future manufacturing tours, please contact Sandy Johnson, APEX Director of Member Relations and Administration, at sandy@APEXgetsbusiness.com.

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About APEX

APEX is the private sector-led business development engine for northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. APEX investor-members represent some of the most influential companies in the region, with a collaborative approach to promoting sustainable economic growth. APEX attraction, expansion and retention efforts focus in areas including aviation, manufacturing, professional services and next generation forest products. APEX has impacted over 4,340 jobs in the region, resulting in an annual regional payroll of over \$177.9 million and contributing to over \$24.5 million in state and local taxes annually. For more information on APEX, please visit www.APEXgetsbusiness.com.