



# Manufacturers' Digital Whistle

February 2025 Newsletter

## LAUNCH Apprenticeship Program



The LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network was formed in 2018. It offers successful ***union-neutral***

apprenticeship opportunities for manufacturers and distributors. LAUNCH collaborates with the workforce and education systems of the region's community colleges, K-12 districts, and two Workforce Development Boards.

By integrating apprenticeship into companies, LAUNCH acts as an intermediary and education provider for businesses adopting the apprenticeship model. In addition, LAUNCH provides regional resources for developing programs and increasing pathways into apprenticeship both in traditional apprenticeships and new and innovative programs. The MCIE is working to conduct workforce-related surveys that will help to guide these programs.

## Upcoming Events:

### **March 19, 2025: Walker Manufacturing Group Tour for Manufacturers**

**Only 8 spaces for manufacturers left!** Join industry leaders at our exclusive event to explore how Walker Manufacturing Group has been successfully implementing Toyota Production Systems (TPS) since 1988. Exclusive to manufacturers and distribution

management professionals. A waitlist is available for all others. For more information, contact Debbie Smith at [dsmith@mfgcouncilie.com](mailto:dsmith@mfgcouncilie.com).

## **June 2, 2025: 2nd Annual Manufacturing Charity Golf Tournament**

Save the Date and Support Manufacturing and Manufacturing Careers!

This event is a fun and pivotal fundraising occasion where sponsorships will play a crucial role. As a respected 501c3 organization, your support would significantly enhance our efforts to champion our industry and the communities it serves. Through your participation, we will provide a minimum of five scholarships to students who are enrolled in manufacturing pathway programs.



The event will return to the beautiful Bear Valley Country Club, 13229 Spring Valley Pkwy, Victorville and include contests, prizes, lunch and scholarship awards.

For more information: visit [www.mfgcouncilie.com/golf](http://www.mfgcouncilie.com/golf) after March 4th.

## **MCIE, HR Network Group & IEGO Partner for a Successful Workforce Convening**

**February 13, 2025**, the Human Resource Network Group (HRNC) hosted the Manufacturers' Council and the Inland Economic Growth Opportunity (IEGO) at the CSI/NUCOR Conference Center, in Fontana for an in-depth discussion focused on workforce development in the Inland Empire's Distribution and Manufacturing sectors.

A key highlight of the event was the launch of the **2025 Workforce and Business Engagement Survey**, a collaborative effort to gather critical insights on talent acquisition, retention, and development. This initiative will help shape regional strategies and ensure that education and training programs align with industry needs, strengthening the local talent pipeline.

Attendees also received an exclusive preview of the preliminary survey results via a **live dashboard**, offering real-time workforce trends and data. This initiative provides essential feedback that will guide future strategies for economic growth.

MCIE extends a **big thank you** to our partners **HRNG and IEGO** for their collaboration in making this event a success! Special recognition goes to **Eileen Angulo, Chief Solutions**

**Officer, HR Solutions, and Eduardo Cruz, Sr. Human Resources Manager, Louis Vuitton**, for representing HRNG, as well as **Matt Mena, Executive Director, IEGO**, for his leadership in this initiative. Their dedication to workforce development continues to drive positive change in the region.

We also want to express our **deep gratitude to our sponsors: LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network, Norco College, and Moreno Valley College**. Their generous support made this convening possible and continues to strengthen efforts to build a skilled workforce for the Inland Empire.

MCIE is proud to be part of this ongoing effort to support manufacturers and workforce development in the Inland Empire. Stay tuned for more updates as we analyze survey responses and develop actionable solutions for local employers.



*Nick Schultz, consultant to IEGO, leads discussion on Workforce needs.*

## **Economic Update:**

- (Jan 31) – For 2024, employment in the Inland Empire grew as reflected in both the household survey (+17,600 or 0.8%) and the establishment survey (+22,600 or 1.3%). In addition, because the labor force grew by the same amount as employment (0.8%), the unemployment rate basically remained the same (it actually fell slightly from 5% to 4.9%). (SB Sun)
- (Feb 7) – The national unemployment rate in November fell to 4.0% from 4.1% according to the Labor Department. Employers added 143,000 jobs last month. Healthcare, retail, and social assistance were the main drivers of the increase. Employment declined in mining, quarrying, and oil & gas extraction. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- (Feb 23) – No rate cut is expected at the next Federal Open Markets Committee meeting on March 19. No cut was made at the January meeting with a statement

reading “respondents generally judged that policy rate reductions would occur later than previously assessed.” Meanwhile, inflation metrics ticked up slightly at approximately 3.0% nationally. (Forbes)

- (Feb 21) – The South Coast Air Quality Management District is amending regulations on paints used frequently in automotive and equipment applications, moving towards a gradual ban on two VOCs (volatile organic compounds) that had previously been exempted, making the ban effective in 2030 to give paint manufacturers several years to reformulate. The board is seeking to move industry practice towards waterborne paint. (Auto Body News)

## Sarah Johnson Joins the MCIE Team



We are delighted to welcome Sarah Johnson to our staff as Event Operations Director. She has served with various associations in the manufacturing sector and is currently the Chair of the Women in Manufacturing (WiM) California Chapter where she advocates for women’s advancement in the industry. To read more about Sarah, visit <https://mfgcouncilie.com/staff>.

## Membership Updates:

- Interested in hosting an MCIE facility tour? Contact us at [contact@mfgcouncilie.com](mailto:contact@mfgcouncilie.com) for more information.
- Interested in exclusive articles and content on business and policy topics? Join the conversation by following us on our [LinkedIn](#) page and other social media platforms, [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#), or check out our [Linktree](#)!
- The MCIE is committed to the development of our workforce at every stage, including getting young girls and boys interested in invention, creation, and STEM disciplines. If you know of a library or school near you that might be interested in receiving a book donation to inspire our next generation of young manufacturers, contact us at [contact@mfgcouncilie.com](mailto:contact@mfgcouncilie.com) with your suggestion.

## Additional Resources:

**Tax Credits:** [California-Competes-Tax-Credit-Fiscal-Year-2024-25.pdf](#)

**Wind & Fire Disaster Assistance:** [California wildfires | U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

**Small Business Loan Program:** [7\(a\) loans | U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

## Plan to Become a Member in March:

- To continue to receive notices of meetings and events.
- For priority inclusion in member events and invitations to sponsor manufacturers' only events.

For more information on benefits and pricing, visit

<https://mfgcouncilie.com/membership>

**Current Members, please watch for your annual dues renewal notice sent to your email address.**

Have a profitable March!

Molly

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